

What's In A Name?

Ken Easley – September 2018

Back in the old days a pigeon would pick up a name because of something that caused us to identify him in conversation. When talking to my dad or grandpa we would say things like you know the small one the ring fell off of when he was little. Those sentences get shortened over time to the lost band cock. I saw one in Germany with a similar name in the Gunther Prange family. The bird was called Ringlose. I knew immediately what was behind that name. We come up with names like the pied hen, the Broke Wing, or the fighter, sometimes because of how they act.

Over the years many other famous pigeons received their names the same way. Birds like Peg Leg, Squeaker, Bumblefoot, or Thickneck. I have a dear friend who had a cock named Bones. I handled that pigeon and believe me he felt like a sack of bones. He almost culled the pigeon but was persuaded to try it as a breeder because of his great background. To his amazement it bred well. As a boy I had birds like Cinnamon or freckles because of the color. You will always have a Whitey, a Big Red, or a Blacky. A famous Dark check is Black Power of Hardy Kruger. He produced Black Pearl, the olympic Champion in Germany. Some names are not as attractive like Mousey. Maybe an unattractive little gray pigeon that could fly like the wind.

I have been looking at some of the names now and it is interesting to say the least. Some birds get a name before they do anything to make us give them a name. The Name Kannibaal is a

good one because he is said to have eaten up his competition. He was a KBDB champ. Understanding some of the names gives us a little information about the bird sometimes too. Klein means small, so when you see names like Klein Figo or Klein Dirk, it means little Figo or Little Dirk indicating that the pigeons are most likely small specimens. I have a daughter of Klein Figo and she is very small. My son named one of our birds Big Mamma for obvious reasons.

I thought the name Birdy was a good one. A great hen with a terrific racing record. Some guys change the names of the birds. I have heard it is unlucky to change the name. I doubt it but I think it may be unwise. One of the more notable name changes in recent history was the Color of Water. She was very similar in racing prowess as Birdy. She raced near the top throughout the SAMDPR. I absolutely liked her name and was disappointed when I saw her name was changed. I can't even remember what it was changed to. Oh wait, it was Goddess or Sun Goddess? Anyway, she will always be Color of Water to me. I watched her every week during the races. I bred and entered the 1st Ace Winner at SAMDPR in 2016 named Mukiwa. It means "Hated" in some African languages or also loosely translated means "White Boy in Africa" as in the book written by Petter Godwin. Mukiwa actually placed higher overall in the car races than Birdy or Color of Water but they placed higher on the final. All great pigeons with names that became memorable because of their outstanding performances.

Another great name is Never Say Die. What a pigeon! This pigeon came home on an incredibly tough, headwinds, long arduous final race at Sun City. A perfect name for an incredible

win. I can't imagine David Clausing's surprise to see this name come up on the big screen in Africa at the final. A thrilling moment frozen in time. My heart would have exploded with surprise and pride.

Some pigeons are named for their origin which can be nice and especially helpful if they were not flown. It reminds us of what they are and why they deserve a shot in the breeding loft. One of my favorite top producers to ever grace my loft is Konbird. His father is half brother to Konstantin and his mother is sister of Birdy. So Konstantin/Birdy became shortened to Kon-Bird.

I enjoy names like Good Aim, 3rd prize in Sun City and bred by Gerard Koopman. He was indeed on target. There was a pigeon from Mexico one year that tore up the skis in Africa and it had a really good name, "Violence". What a neat name that was. A few other names come to mind like Mix. A straight to the point name for what the pigeon was, a mix breeding of several top performers at the Million Dollar Race proving that top performers will produce another if you work the blood correctly.

A noteworthy pigeon is the German bred pigeon who produced Rubellos, 1st SAMDPR 2012.

I was there in South Africa at the final along with a few others. One of my fellow countrymen eventually purchased the father of Rubellos on PIPA. I bid on it but I remember what I was thinking when I bid on it....why would the guy sell the pair unless it was what he considered a one shot deal so I backed off bidding. Big mistake. His name is now Sun City. He proved his worth once again as a top producer breeding a second 1st prize winner for his new owner. Also noteworthy was the blood lines of the

mother. She was a product of 1st and 2nd prize at the SAMDPR, Said in Spun Silver and Untamed Desert. Again, super pigeons from Germany and Netherlands with nice names.

SAMDPR pigeons will always be remembered for what they accomplished. It was when they were pure, before the commercial explosion afterward. Just raw power standing there after the race to be admired by all who saw them. I love a champion. Money comes and goes but having a champion is something special that no amount of money can give you when you love pigeons.

I was elated to win the bid on Puggle after the SAMDPR of 2017. He was the first cock to arrive at the loft all alone and out front in the history of the race. I knew this was special and went after him. He was 1st to the loft but trapped after another group of pigeons arrived. That didn't bother me. It was a technicality to a stellar performance. While looking over the pedigrees of the birds who arrived and trapped in 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th I noticed something that really grabbed my attention. The 2nd prize was Sunce and she was bred in a way that would make the perfect mate for Puggle. They both were crosses but both had some common ancestors in the background. This could be the start of something very special so I purchased her too along with 4th, 5th, and 6th prize. I have been enjoying them every day and am very happy to see them in my loft. Their youngsters are very nice and just plain old fun to look at and watch grow each day. Really a privilege for me to have them. I hope they race well and continue the legacy. I purchased the parents of Puggle to have that piece of the puzzle as well. Nice doesn't begin to describe these

pigeons. They are definitely a higher grade pigeon. Puggle is a funny name but the important aspect is what he accomplished.

The 5th prize pigeon also had a special place in history being the top placing grizzle on the final since the start of the race. His name is Rene and he landed together with Tom Schillings great pigeon Little Miss Nicki and trapping behind her along with 2nd (Sunce), 3rd, & 4th. I purchased him as well and I can tell you unequivocally it was not an accident. He didn't get lucky. He is a stellar pigeon. He is a very hard nose, tough, and gritty pigeon. I sure enjoy having him. Little Miss Nicky is a happy name and I like it. I am sure she made her owner very happy on her special day. She did something that was very memorable to me. She won the race and the Zandy car. Congratulations Tom on a fantastic win.

Looking at names sometimes we find birds with names with little character or even funny. Shakespear said "what's in a name" and he is correct. The performance of the pigeon will make the name not the other way around. I have a cock that won the Hoosier 350 mile race in 2017 being on the first drop which is the way this race awards the first prize. All those who arrived in the air on the first drop are considered the winners. I agree with this thinking. I know many that don't agree and will quickly cite that the europeans use trapping order to award prizes.

I am ok with that but this isn't Europe. Think about it for a second.....350 miles is a long way for a young pigeon. He is flapping his tiny wings thousands of times to go 350 miles. Have you ever driven 350 miles in your air conditioned car with your stereo and juice bottle? It is still a long way even in the comfort of

a nice car. Imagine you're a little pigeon flapping your wings for 350 miles!!!! It is not easy and there are no accidents. I almost fall out of my chair in disbelief when I hear someone say "that bird was just lucky and followed the winners". No way my friend, poor specimens will fall by the wayside in short order on a 350 mile race. These pigeons worked their tails off and deserve full credit. They landed together and flew in the air the exact same time together. How else could it be fair? Would someone actually try to convince us that a pigeon is better because it walked 2 seconds faster to a trap door after flying for 350 miles? It's not a decathlon event where they fly for 300 miles and run the last 50 miles. They fly 350 miles and walk a couple feet to the trap. Reminds me of driving to one of my son's baseball tournaments for 7 hours and when we stop someone runs straight to the bathroom because they can't hold it another second. Is he the champ then? If it has to be decided on the roof then let it be the first one to touch the roof from the air. Seriously the trapping aspect of our sport developed naturally from having to catch the pigeon to pull the rubber band off to clock the bird. This was to prove when the pigeon landed. We have electronic clocks now with chipped bands. Improvements should not be a bad word in racing.

I think we should breed for good trapping but a far more serious endeavor is breeding for flying tenacity and homing instincts. You don't ever hear anyone naming their pigeon trapper. They name them super sonic and Lightning because they flew fast in the air like a sonic boom or a lightning strike. The breast muscle is the racing machine not pigeon legs. Airplanes don't win races because they got into the hanger the fastest. Race cars don't win because they got in the garage first. Right or wrong I am happy about the racing guys that see the logic in having a 1st drop.

There is nothing like our sport and it is the best. No jockeys to box you out of the win. No lanes to maintain, just open air flying and the fastest to the loft. That would be a great name for a champion racing pigeon, "No Jockey". I think most of us would agree we would like to have one all alone and out front on the 1st drop. One of the one loft races that has stood the test of time logging their 30th year of racing is the Triple Crown. His race is conducted by the drop. Ron was a pioneer in one loft racing and he had some very good ideas that will be missed. In his race rules each race has a separate entry fee. You pay up front but if your pigeon doesn't get basketed for the race you get a refund for that race. There isn't a more fair race in the country. He always had a 1st prize of \$100,000 based on how many points you earned. The points were awarded on how your bird being on the drop of the three races which were held in a seven day period.

A recent big name to surface is Kittel, a pigeon who was able to win the title of 1st National Ace Pigeon Sprint KBDB with the lowest coefficient in the history of pigeon racing in Belgium. I looked up the meaning of the name and in english it appears to be a white robe with no pockets? I often wonder why a pigeon can win short races and gain such a huge reputation while another pigeon can be just as effective in a world class one loft race on the short races then come up a little short on the long final and somehow they failed to meet expectations? Just things I think about.....I like a bird that can do it all too but why the standard difference in club racing and one loft racing? A pigeon that shows consistency to rise to the top again and again is special. A good test to gauge this by is looking at your own loft. How many of us have a pigeon sitting in our loft that has shown

this kind of consistency? These are the things that we look at and think about to gain perspective. These pigeons are rare and special.

Other big names that are making quite an impact are birds like Queen L of Jelle Roziers. There are some very good results coming down from this hen. She has to be very special to have such a long list of wins popping up here and there in the pigeon racing world. Great racing pigeons show themselves to be great by reproducing their genetic power throughout the line. It is like striking gold and the vein goes for miles and in many directions. Over time many will benefit from the yield. It doesn't take long for those "in the know" to jump on the bandwagon to cash in on the benefits of these jewels. And why shouldn't they? Good is good.

Have a nice year and good luck to all my friends in the sport during the races this year. Hope you have some big wins and great names for your champions.