

Bob Mink

Small Team Flyer

by Mike Becker

Bob started keeping pigeons at the age of 12 and like most of us he had a menagerie of different breeds. In 1948 he got into racing pigeons by joining the Little Rhody Club. In 1950 the Rhody club members joined the Rhode Island club and Bob has flown there ever since.

Bob is always one do his part for the club. He has served on the race committee and board of directors. He has been both club and combine race liberator for many years. Starting out as assistant race secretary to George Walker, Bob naturally took over the race secretary position when George left and has been in that position for 25 years.

Bob married when he was 23 to Marie, not only his partner in life, but also with the pigeons. Bob ran a training truck and sold feed out of his house for many years. While Bob was putting in 56 hours working the fire department and building houses part-time, Marie would sell the grain, drive the training truck and clock his many winners, and that's not to mention raising four daughters who also helped out with the birds. They won many races against very tough competition (121 club and 250 combine lofts).



Bob Mink's loft

In 1990, after 35 years with the fire department, Bob retired. He built a new loft and took in Owen Kelly as his flying partner. Owen was the treasurer of the Rhode Island club and had just sold his house and the birds were all gone, so it was an ideal opportunity for both of them.



Bob coming out of his loft

1990 was also the year Bob thought he'd try widowhood flying. For many years Bob had flown the natural system and won many races against over 100 flyers. It was hard for him to comprehend how the system would work and still be successful, but upon winning the second race of the old bird season and how the birds flew on the system, Bob was sold, he never looked back.

1990 was also the year Bob took his first trip to Belgium. He traveled with Tony Melucci and of course with Tony's many contacts in Europe Bob met many of the present day champions. It was both an educational experience as well as a great social visit. While there Bob bought a son of "The Tarzan" from Silvere Toya. This blue bar cock raised him some beautiful outstanding birds. A son "702" flew for 10 years including 30 long distance races. He won two 500's and a 600. He in turn raised three 500 mile winners, two of which were 500 mile New

England Open winners.

When Bob got home from his first trip to Belgium, loaded with many new ideas, he asked his partner Owen to pay a visit to see Bill Howard. Bill was a very successful widowhood flyer in Southern New England and flew a beautiful family of Imbrecht pigeons. Owen came back with an outstanding blue bar splash cock. At the same time, Bob paid a visit to Walter Cook, who also flew Bill Howard birds. He came home with a 300 mile combine winning blue bar hen. They bred the two



“Silver Fox”, AU 93 RI 217 with his mate 451

together and raised 1306, a winner of nine 300 mile diplomas, two of which were for first place. In 1993 the Rhode Island club held an auction of birds brought in by Tony Melucci from the Morris-Scheers loft of Belgium. Bob and Owen bought a silver Morris-Scheers hen who they mated up to 1306 and this pair produced Bob’s famous “Silver Fox” 217. “Silver Fox” flew for nine years and has won 66 diplomas, but most impressively was his record of First AU Ace Middle Distance Pigeon for four years in a row, 1997 - 2000.



AU 90 RI 862

Aside from being known as a good pigeon man, Bob is also recognized as being very charitable and a hard worker for today’s children and young adults. Bob has put in twenty years as a scout master, trying to develop our young people into responsible adults. As you may have read in the Sept. 15, 2007 issue of “The Pigeon Digest”, Bob has put allot of time and effort into a scholarship program for the junior members at the Rhode Island pigeon club. Bob and his family have been putting on dinner functions for seven years.



AU 89 RI 481

Sometimes its a steak fry, sometimes a ham and beans supper, but always a bird auction, a raffle and the finale is a bingo game. A number of club members have also donated very generously to this fund over the years, starting with the late Ben Ambler who kicked off the program with his generosity. All the money collected from these functions is put into the bank in the form of savings bonds, which the junior members compete for



Inside Bob’s youngbird loft section

each week. The bonds are awarded each year at the awards banquet and when they turn 18 they are given a check for all the bonds they received as junior members. Over the past seven years 14 juniors have participated in this program, which has distributed to date, in the form of certificates and actual checks, \$22,000.00. What a great way to give our junior members a little jump start into college or whatever career path they have chosen.

Bob is a great believer in working with a small team of high quality birds. This way you know your birds individually and you receive the greatest amount of satisfaction from the experience. Bob trains hard, not far, but often. He is a great believer in paying attention to details, both in loft management and in the individual birds themselves. Bob ships only a few birds to each race, but rest assured these few are all prepared and ready to vie for the top position.