

Fantail pigeon fancier

by Jennifer Barr
What looks like a Toby jug, flies like a helicopter, and sounds like a gurgling rain barrel?

Give up? Why, a fantail pigeon, of course. According to Ad Woodley of Bronte St. S., breeder of prize fantails and helmets for seven years, raising pigeons is one of the most interesting and economical hobbies a youngster can get into. Ad should know, he was a 4-H leader for years and years—25 to be exact.

When Ad retired from dairy farming in 1962 and sold the Bronte St. farm on which he'd lived since 1921, he and his wife Rita built a comfortable home on a corner lot of the farm. Taking up carpentry for a living still didn't keep Ad busy enough, so he looked around for a hobby.

Showing is in his blood, he states. His grandfather showed Brahma show chickens at the Berlin Fair in 1908 (before Berlin became Kitchener) and showed until he died. Ad showed pigeons and exhibition poultry as a boy, bicycling around to school fairs with a box of birds on the back wheel. When he had homer pigeons, he only had to cart them one way. On the return journey he'd let them go, and they'd arrive home before him.

Ad was winning prizes with his birds even then, although the prize money amounted to only 10 cents.

"That was quite something," he chuckles.

Ad Woodley reminisces and he can go back further than early showing days. His ancestors were the first white settlers in Galt, arriving by ox cart. There's still a little park in Galt where they lived.

By the time Ad took over the home farm in Milton, he was a died-in-the-wool showman. He showed fine Holstein cattle at the C.N.E. for years including the reserve champion Holstein bull.

When the Woodley girls were born, Lorna (now Mrs. George Greenlees of Jordan Station) and Marilyn (now Mrs. Robertson of Jarvis) were both very active in 4-H as well. Their father had been in 4-H as a boy and later a leader for half his life.

You can't get showing out of your blood, Ad Woodley feels, so a pigeon loft was built on the Woodley property in 1970. He says he loved poultry and birds, but "Rita wouldn't have any chickens around," so he decided on pigeons because of the small room and amount of feed required, an ounce of grain a day," Ad explains.

Ad hardly raises his pigeons in a packing crate, he has a beautiful Woodley-built loft complete with pigeon holes, individual apartments, and feeding quarters for each family. In an eight by 10 foot area divided into two lofts and feed storage, Ad can handle 10 breeding pairs.



AD WOODLEY shows off a prize bronze tailmark, one of the fantail pigeons he raises in his Bronte St. S. home. Pigeon raising and showing is an ideal hobby for a youngster, Mr. Woodley feels.

"That's enough for anyone who wants to show."

The two lofts hold the fantails and the helmets in separate quarters. Moderns and rollers have shared the quarters in earlier days. Ad would like to get some tumblers to add to his collection. There are more than 200 breeds of pigeons so it should be a while before he runs out of choices.

The prizes won by the Woodley birds include special of the show at the Royal in 1976; special of the show at the C.N.E. in 1977; reserve champion at Guelph Poultry Show; champion young bird at the Canadian Pigeon Fanciers show, and many more.

Even though the room and feed requirements of a few pigeons are modest, it takes a few years of learning before

good birds are bred. Ad and Rita spend a large portion of their spare time travelling in the car to visit other breeders, compare notes and pick up or trade a few birds. Ad goes to all the shows but Rita isn't sure she likes those, she prefers the visiting. Shows can be boring for a non-participant, she feels.

Before any show, the chosen birds must be washed and prepared. Careful bathing in detergent and rinsing out the feathers, is followed by fluffing, drying, and vaseline on the legs to bring out the red color. The identification band must be cleaned with an old toothbrush, explains Ad, or the judge will think he's looking at a dirty bird.

For any youngster wishing to get into pigeon raising, Ad recommends going to one of

the many shows available and asking questions. Bird breeders are a helpful lot, says Ad, and will always give advice and assistance to anyone starting out.

There are several breed associations to join and books to be read. A good breeding pair of pigeons shouldn't cost more than \$20, advises the expert, although prices of \$300 and \$400 to \$1,000 have been paid for special pigeons.

Listening to Ad Woodley, it seems as if pigeon fancying is the ideal hobby for anybody with a backyard. It's inexpensive, absorbing, social, and rewarding. As if that isn't enough, the resulting guano (bird droppings) are guaranteed to fertilize a garden so extensively, the vegetables grow giant-sized in no time.

In your lawn

Attack chinch bugs

That summer-green lawn may be harboring hairy chinch bugs, so homeowners should plan their control campaign now.

Dr. M.K. Sears, an Ontario Agricultural College entomologist, has received funds from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food to do research on these pests. He says they hatch from eggs laid in late April or early May.

In hot weather, the rust-colored, white-striped bugs feed on the crown and succulent stems of turf, bent grass being a favorite.

Chinch bug damage is usually noticed in early to mid-July, when dry sunken patches of grass appear.

The homeowner may think the bugs are spreading in the lawn, but the blotches indicate the areas in which the females laid their eggs after leaving winter hibernation sites in nearby hedges, fence-rows or tall grass.

To check the lawn for chinch bug infestation, Dr. Sears suggests cutting out the bottom of a gallon-sized can and forcing the sharp edges in the soil. Then fill the can with water. Stirring the contents forces the red-colored nymphs to float to the surface where they can be seen easily.

"If this is done 10 times in the front and back yards in suspected areas or on the edge of dead patches and any bugs are found, there are probably enough to justify treating the lawn. It is cheaper to treat the lawn than to let chinch bugs ruin the grass. Laying sod or reseeding is expensive."

One chemical treatment in the first three weeks of July has proven effective because the total population is present by that time. Early treatment misses the bugs because they may invade from untreated areas, or hatch from eggs unaffected by the insecticide.

—Be sure you spend the July 1 holiday weekend in Milton, there is a full program lined up for the Community Day celebration.

—Some farmers have begun haying operations.

Diazinon, chlorpyrifos and carbaryl are recommended at the rates specified by the manufacturer.

Dr. Sears advises sprinkling the lawn for an hour after application of the insecticide to help penetration. This floods the chinch bugs from their protective cover so they contact the chemical.

Hairy chinch bugs have been a nuisance in Ontario metropolitan areas since 1971. Some homeowners have been plagued yearly but research has not established why some lawns are infested more than others. Early diagnosis of these pests is the first step to effective control for the summer.

Study engines

By David Agnew

The June meeting of the Halton 4-H Tractor Club was held at the John Deere Country Mart in Acton, June 21. Vice-president Doug McPhail opened the meeting with the 4-H Pledge. Russell Murray and the

members made a sketch on paper of the parts of a diesel and gas engine. Dwight May was at the meeting to discuss a Junior Plowing Match for the members to prepare for at achievement day.

The meeting was adjourned by Doug McPhail.

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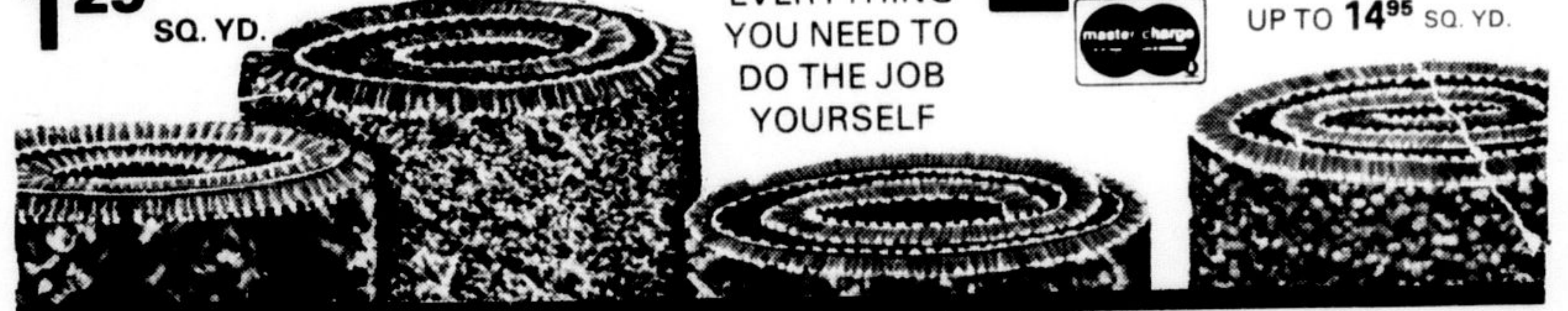
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WINDOW STICKER seen in the back window of a car caught the attention of the photographer. It's true, too!

Champion Farm Page

Queen contest seeking entries

While autumn may seem still a long time off, preparation is underway to hold the second annual Milton Fair Queen contest.

The contest is open to girls 18 years of age by August 15, 1978 and not over 23 years of age by the same date.

Last year four girls entered the event, but it is hoped more girls will enter the competition this year, according to Hazel Reid, assistant co-ordinator of the contest.

"We would like to have as many as possible," she said, and added the competition is open to girls living in the town as well as girls living in the countryside.

Until last year, the Milton Fair featured a 4-H Queen and Princess, said Mrs. Reid. Contestants must either attend Milton District High School or be served by Milton, Georgetown or Campbellville mail route or be participating in any 4-H club work in Halton region.

Mrs. Reid stressed the competition is "not a beauty contest."

"We want a girl to represent our fair, and she does not necessarily have to be beautiful," she stated.

Contestants will be judged on general appearance, deportment, personality, a short speech and a private interview.

Competitors must also have a basic knowledge of fairs and local happenings in Milton, continued Mrs. Reid.

There will be three judges for the event, but at this time they have not been named.

The competition is scheduled to take place Friday evening, Sept. 23, in Milton fair grounds.

The winner must attend all

necessary events representing Milton Fair for one year, including the C.N.E. Queen of the Fairs Contest.

Entry forms may be obtained through Mrs. Reid, R.R. 2, Georgetown at 877-8429 or through Ruth Bousfield, R.R. 4, Milton at 878-7462. The deadline for entries is Tuesday, August 1.

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