

A Tribute to Louis Van Loon, Frank Aarts & Ernie Rossi - 3 True Champions!

by Tony Rossi
Racine, WI

I never had a pet and as any adolescent child would do, I urged my parents to consider letting me have one. My father told me that we would be moving into the country soon and when we did, we would build a pigeon loft and we would get some pigeons. Well, at five years old, I had no idea how this would change my life. You see, dad had pigeons in Italy before immigrating to the United States and his first love of pigeons had stuck as it would with me also.

We didn't fly our first race until I was eleven years old. The year was 1964. We had a modest loft that fit about 25 youngsters, and possibly 25 old birds. We kept about 6 pairs of breeders and Dad always said, "Make plenty of room for the good ones. Never overcrowd." I can still hear him preach!

Well the first year was quite an experience. We flew our first season with about 20 youngsters. You know, I can still remember each and every one! One in particular was my pet. I called him "the white one." He was a gift from a gentleman named Elmer Liegler of Racine. We flew the birds for five weeks, and I cried each Sunday when we didn't win. My dad just laughed, but I knew then, I didn't like the feeling of being late.

I remember running home from school and flagging the team as long as I could, over and over again. The 300 mile race was approaching rapidly and I decided to save my allowance of 10 cents a week in order to wager a bet on the white one! I can still remember shipping the birds at the old Progressive Flying Club, at that time there were over 85 members

just in that club, and Racine had three clubs! I remember waiting in line for the secretary to figure my sheet and tell me the cost I owed. I can still remember Thor Jensen, Leo Brown, Ewald Lange and Tony Bohman patting me on the back and wishing me luck. The two dollars I wagered was like five thousand today for me. I was so excited.

The next afternoon turned quickly into dusk. I waited and waited and waited. It seemed like a lifetime and no pigeons. My dad came to sit for a while until his uncle came over and took him aside that afternoon. He told him that his father had passed away suddenly in Italy! My father was a strong man, but I remember that afternoon the tears that came from his eyes. Dusk turned into dark. The bright ball of a sun was just a fraction of a glimmer to end a very long day for me. Dad came outside and told me to come in. He said the pigeons won't fly at night and it was much too dark for any to come now. I was just too stubborn, a trait that is still with me today.

All of a sudden, my eye caught the flicker of a bird flying, fast wings beating as if it were frightened. I stood up and thought it was some bird or perhaps a bat. But wait, it is white, yes, yes it is! Being too short at age eleven to reach the trap box, I screamed to my dad, "The white one!" Without hesitation, he ran outside and shook his head. He said, "Anthony, you were right. He came for you!"

Mom drove me to the club. Dad was just too upset to come, and being eleven years old, I truly understood. I remember walking into the club at around 8:30 pm. I can still remember the faces of at

least 10-15 men that were waiting at the table. I remember putting our clock down, setting it on the table ever so gently. But I knew something was different that night. Not one person said a word until I asked where the rest of the clocks were. You see we had a two hour limit to return the clock after you clock, and I was used to being late and I expected tonight would be no different.

Suddenly Al Jensen said, "Son, why did you bring your clock in?" I looked at him in total confusion. I said because I have a pigeon. They looked at me and three of them said, "Son, you must be mistaken. No one has a pigeon in the entire city. The weather was just not good. You must have clocked a bird from a past race."

I (an 11 year old) looked at them and said, I clocked my white one and it's pooled across! If you don't believe it, open the clock and see for yourself! All the men in the room started to laugh. Oh yes, the "white one" was the only day bird on the first 300 mile race that I ever flew in a 85 member club.

On the way home, Mom said that the white one came home that night because Grandpa wanted us to know that he was in heaven, and to this day, I think she was right.

I think the "white one" got me hooked me on pigeons for keeps! The next season he won the first 300 mile yearling race five minutes ahead! That was it. He went into the stock loft and now resides on my basement wall resting on a branch. Although he is stuffed and just a memory, he is very dear to me and reminds me of some very good days with my dad.

I can't tell you how many families of pigeons that I went through

since I received my first pigeon in 1958. An old Belgium flyer by the name of Julius Verhaeghe gave me a pair of birds in about 1963-64. Julius was a typical Racine flyer that didn't believe in giving birds to anyone. I can still remember him bending down in his upstairs loft and looking at me. My dad was standing above with his usual trusting look and confident smile. Julius said, "I will give you these two birds, but you must promise that if you do not want them, they must come back! Being only 10 years old, I promised and felt like I was taking home a winning lottery ticket. I was so very proud. What a wonderful memory for me.

Five years later, it was a 500 mile race and my dad and I were waiting. Here comes 1856, direct off the "Verhaeghe Hen." Wow, I thought to myself, "Do you think we have a good one dad? Do you think it is possible?" My dad was a friend of Pete Boghosian, a tremendous flyer at the long dis-

tance races. Dad said, "Let me drive over by Pete and see if he has one?" I waited at home and was almost jumping out of my skin waiting. Dad came home and said, "I think we have a good one Anthony. Pete still doesn't have a bird! The Verhaeghe Hen bred many winners for us through the 60s and early 70s but being as competitive as I was, this just wasn't enough.

You see, in Racine the only races that really meant a hoot were the 500 mile races. In old birds we flew 3-500s, 1-425 mile and two 300s. In young birds we even flew a 500 mile race. If all you old timers can remember back that far, we didn't have Internet weather, we didn't have accurate forecasts or for that matter, a phone call was a big deal. The birds just went up! I can remember good flyers like Clayton Kovac, Henry Wells, Don Meter, Al and Sam Paragamian say, if the weather is good, they should be let go.

Most of our races during the 70s were all second day races. In Racine, in the month of June, we always get some kind of cold headwinds. A usual speed for the Huron, South Dakota station (535 mi.) was about 1200 ypm. So you see, we should be clocking about 6 a.m. the second day.

Well, the man to beat in those years was only one man, Pete Boghosian! I think the guy flew 30 500 mile races in succession and never missed the diplomas. I remember him raining pigeons in the second day while his neighbors, at least 8 lofts within 300 feet, would have nothing.

Although I could beat Pete on almost any other race, he owned the 500s! This drove me nuts! I worked two jobs in order to buy pigeons that could beat this man: Fabrys, Huysken-Van Riel, Devriendts, Sions, etc., etc. The Verhaeghe pigeons were fantastic, but just couldn't finish the job on the long ones. Although my results were nothing short of fan-

WinSpeed-1

GREATER CHICAGO COMBINE Weekly Race Report

10/21/01-21:02

Page 1

Name: OPEN 300

Released: 08:40

Birds: 1632

Young Bird Race

Lofts: 74

Station: AMES

Flown: 10/21/2001

Weather (Rel) MS.CL., NORTH, 46 degrees (Arr) PT.CL., EAST, 55 degrees

POS	LOFT NAME	BAND NUMBER	CLR	X	ARRIVAL	MILES	TOWIN	YPM	PT
1	MORWATH J./30	0922 AU 01 LOLF	BB	C	15:22:42	281.312	09.00	1229.474	0
2	ROSSI T. /30	0457 AU 01 WAC	BCWF	H	15:51:59	298.134	05.12	1214.647	0
3	ROSSI T.	0627 AU 01 MVC	BB	H	15:53:16	2/ 30	06.29	1211.069	0
4	ROSSI T.	0454 AU 01 VAC	BB	C	15:54:14	3/ 30	07.27	1208.373	0
5	LUBERDA A./18				15:56:38	299.335	08.08	1206.572	0
6	JUSTICE LO/24	457=VANLOON 08-1453			15:55:21	297.979	08.47	1204.647	0
7	ORROCHTA J/34	627=VANLOON 6604476-6682650			16:02:03	300.823	11.25	1197.712	0
8	MEZEI & SQ/34	454-VANLOON			16:02:14	300.481	12.05	1195.854	0
9	GACS T. /20								

10 JUSTICE LOFT
11 ROSSI T.
12 ZABORSKI T/22
13 WOLLENHAUP 418

Name: FORT DODGE AUCTION

Released: 07:30

Birds: 223

Young Bird Race

Lofts: 28

Flown: 09/20/2003

Weather (Rel) clear, calm, 70 degrees

Station: FT. DODGE, IA.
(Arr) clear, LT SW, 80 degrees

POS	LOFT NAME	BAND NUMBER	CLR	X	ARRIVAL	MILES	TOWIN	YPM	PT
1	Rossi T. /2	6005 AU 03 FDL	BB	C	14:37:23	321.438	00.00	1323.675	20
2	Schinger D/13	5146 AU 03 FDL	BEED	H	14:17:30	301.695	06.21	1303.026	19
3	Pieper /11	6001 AU 03 FDL	BPD	C	14:48:23	320.744	11.54	1287.707	18
4	Pieper	6002 AU 03 FDL	BC	C	14:48:26	2/ 11	11.57	1287.560	17
5	Pieper	1065 AU 03 VC	ESPL	C	14:48:29	3/ 11	12.00	1287.414	16
6	Pieper	6004 AU 03 FDL	BB	C	14:48:41	4/ 11	12.12	1286.827	15
7	Rossi T.	6007 AU 03 FDL	BBWF	C	14:57:42	2/ 2	20.19	1263.607	14
8	Staehler E/12	6017 AU 03 FDL	BC	C	14:46:41	308.479	26.31	1243.288	13
9	Hansen R. /2	6014 AU 03 FDL	BC	C	15:03:30	319.523	28.39	1240.045	12
10	Schrank H./20	4192 AU 03 CCM	BC	C	14:45:30	305.387	29.26	1234.170	11

tastic, even winning the 500 mile state championship and all the money was not enough for me. That was only a day race. I wanted him at his own game!

I know you all heard of the cliché, "The grass is greener on the other side." Well, these words fit my situation perfectly. The late 1970s were approaching and I think it was about 1977 when I finally conned Pete into trading me a pair of babies for the same from me. I can still pick those two birds off any perch in America. I remember them that well; two little blue check hens. Kind of ugly, but strong as hell! I put them on my team against about 50-60 loft mates and flew them the entire 1977 season.

Well, I had a great season, but the two Boghosian hens were kind of stinky! Not even in the clock after at least five entries! The last race of the year was a 425-mile young bird special. The daylight was short as the race was flown the beginning of October. The race was really a clean-up race at the end and almost everyone shipped heavy in hopes of finding a good one from the worst they had. If I remember correctly, I shipped about 30 pigeons against a large field of entries.

The weather was headwinds and overcast skies; no chance for day birds that day for sure. The next morning I started my watch when just after sunrise came my first bird. Wow! Five minutes later a second arrived. Wow! ...and not another bird for two and a half hours. I think you already know the answer. The two blue check hens from Boghosian were my first two birds that morning. I don't think they won the race, but I know they were very close to winning and for sure, they beat the hell out of my team.

Although I am not the brightest star in the sky, I learned the most valuable lesson in my pigeon flying career that very morning. That lesson is still implemented today in my breeding tech-

niques and always will be. Some will say that the two hens coming early that morning was coincidence. Some will say luck. I say you make your own luck in this world, and I was convinced that the only pigeons I wanted in my loft were from Pete Boghosian. Pete passed away in 1980 and I had the opportunity to purchase his entire loft of pigeons. Although dad and I won first combine average speed in the Sportsman's combine 1978 and 1979, I would not pass this chance of a lifetime by. I disposed of our entire family of "Verhaege" pigeons and concentrated only on this super long distance Boghosian Stassart family.

Dad and I concentrated our efforts thru the 80s with great success at long distance racing; winning average speeds, many 500 mile races, and even combine young bird average speed. Now that I had what I always wanted, was I satisfied? Again, you know the answer... not really. You see, the truth was that part of the fun was trying to beat the master Pete Boghosian! After he passed away, our racing membership was on a quick path to extinction. Just a few short years earlier we boasted 3 clubs with a total membership in an area approx. 5 miles wide and 3 miles deep with about 125 members. With the numbers declining and lack of interest on the 500s, my long distance team of hopefuls didn't seem to be where it was at.

Around 1990 my mother was diagnosed with cancer and passed away in summer of 1992. Within 6 months after, Dad fell victim to the same cause and passed away in March of 1993. To say the least, from 1990 - 1993, pigeon racing was a low priority for me. In 1993 I moved to a new location in Racine and built a new loft on twenty acres of property. It was not easy taking the birds from Dad's loft and re-starting without him. At this time my family consisted of my wife Denise and four children:

Marie 9, Ernie 6, Nick 4, and Valerie 1 years old. Now I started a new foundation for us as a family and with the pigeons.

Settling down in my new house as I was overlooking my team of birds, I realized my goals for the 1990s and even past the new century would be with open style racing and more emphasis on young birds. The problem with racing in Racine, Wisconsin for many years, was that all the birds came together and really didn't need any brains. I can remember when my dad and I were waiting with droppers and a feed can, seeing a flock of forty birds go over our loft and if we didn't drop a bird then, we would be forty places down the sheet. Where we used to live, we had at least 25 lofts straight east of us and one second meant the race.

Well, this was changing and where we were now living, we were extremely lucky to be able to fly with no less the six different combines! Just so no person can say I am exaggerating, I will list them; Chicago Combine, North Valley Combine, Sportsman's Combine (Racine-Kenosha), North Central Wisconsin Combine, Rock River Racing Combine, and the Milwaukee Western Concourse, Midwest Organization. Ok, all these combines have open races, specials and auctions that allow us to fly.

Please bear with me readers because I am showing you the evolution of my thinking for a reason. In order for you to understand my madness, you must know a fraction of my history, or what I am about to show you will be meaningless. So now I am in my new house and loft and plan to do just the opposite of what I set out all my life to do. I planned to change pigeon families once again. The year was 1994 and I decided to concentrate on young bird racing only. With a growing family, and owner of a rapidly expanding construction company, I decided to stop old bird flying completely. My true passion for long distance

racing had to be substituted for 300-400 mile young bird specials and speed was more important than endurance.

Well, what do I do now with a loft full of the wrong kind of pigeons. I felt that buying birds from a tremendous young bird flyer from perhaps Holland or Belgium would be my best bet. I know that they fly with great numbers of pigeons and their birds had to break for home from the start or they couldn't win.

I bought several European books and wrote five letters to young bird specialists mostly from Holland. I liked the way they mass liberated with great numbers versus a smaller field from Belgium.

After receiving answers to my letters, the decision to purchase was very easy. The remarkable results of a loft from Tillburg, Holland was sweeping the European papers. Frank Aarts of Holland had just won 5 first national young birds races in a very short period. He was willing to sell off his best pairs of breeders, father and mothers to his first national winners, young directly off his national winners!

Now what more could I ask for?

I talked to my good friend, Fred Pieper from Milwaukee, and discussed my ideas with him. Fred was not only a friend, but a person that was in my opinion the number one pigeon expert in the country. His remarkable talent for racing has made him along with the Pieper family name legends in Milwaukee for over 50 years. Fred's first inclination was for me to keep my money in my pocket. He felt that they would only send poor quality pigeons to me and this he experienced personally many times before. Well, my other option was to buy locally, but I just couldn't forget about the great numbers of birds that the Dutch fly against vs. smaller numbers from the US.

My mind was made up. I called

Frank Aarts and told him that I wanted to make a purchase from him. Now this is where I got kind of nuts. I wanted to make a total commitment to a new family of pigeons but didn't feel like dinking around for years until I hit the right pairs. So, I made sure I bought enough from his best to sift through the debris and hopefully find a few diamonds. Now I will tell you what I bought from him and I am kind of embarrassed about it yet. I imported from Frank Aarts 140 pigeons in one year from all his best pairs and best flyers. That is not the end of my madness either.

I studied Frank Aarts' pedigrees at great length and talked with Frank on many occasions. He kept referring to "De Louis Van Loon cock" as the foundation to his colony. Most of Frank's birds were Van Loon-Janssen/ Van Loon-Meuleman, but the Van Loon always seemed to stand out. Frank told me that in his opinion, Louis Van Loon was the premier loft of all Belgium and to this day many lofts go to the old master for a bird or two to strengthen their colony. I asked Frank if he knew Louis Van Loon. He said they were very good friends and he lived just minutes away from Tillburg, Holland in a town called Poppel, Belgium. Frank told me if I wanted, he would take me there to visit. Hmmm! Do I have the nerve to ask my wife? Hea, wait... I'll make it a family trip and then I will tell her there! Getting off the plane in Amsterdam was no easy task with four children, all under age 12. Frank Aarts and his wife Brenda picked us up at the airport and we were off to Tillburg! Brenda was gracious and provided a tour for my wife and kids to a theme park in Holland and Frank and I had the afternoon alone to enjoy pigeons.

We first looked over his colony and I was totally impressed with the birds and with Frank himself. It was not hard to understand the level this man was at after spend-

ing several hours with him. He has total dedication to this sport and was not missing a beat. The birds were everything that you would expect to see at a world-class loft and Frank added the final touch with his inspiring knowledge and enthusiasm.

Next we were off to Van Loon's home in Poppel, which was quite exciting for me. Frank had all good things to say of this man and ranked him among the best ever of all Belgium. I won't go into much detail of my visit with Van Loon here, other than to say he was everything that I had expected; poised, articulate and no nonsense. His position was 100% dedication to his pigeons of which he kept as a family since 1950s. I will tell you that his feeling towards pigeons was that the bloodlines were everything, and without the good birds, you were not going anywhere.

As luck would have it for me, and contrary for Van Loon, his health at that moment was bad. You see, he just came home from the hospital with some sort of chronic respiratory problem that the doctors blamed on the pigeons. Van Loon's wife was not keen on him continuing with the birds, but Van Loon said that he would have them until the end. He was very interested in selling 50% of his loft in order to cut the numbers down and make things better for him. He allowed me to rummage thru the stock loft and various other sections and without a doubt, this man possessed a unique family of inbred pigeons. I was impressed on the large rooms with few pigeons, kind of normal in Belgium but, none the less, impressive to me.

I left the yard that day with a deal to purchase 119 pigeons from the master of Poppel. Now all that I had to do is figure some way to tell my wife. She already knew I was nuts, but even this was way beyond what I even could tolerate. Let's see now, hummm... 140 pigeons from Aarts, and 119 pi-

geous from Van Loon. Come on, that is absolutely nuts! But again, let me explain the methods of my madness because there is a solution. Well, I did return to the United States and yes, with my wife and family. Kind of shaky for a while but, none the less, we were still a unit, for the time at least.

Looking at my loft that could hold about half as many pigeons that could overpopulate our local zoo, I started making a plan. I will first tell you that my reason for importing so many pigeons was not ridiculous or un-calculated. For those of you that know me, I have never acted in a manner less then conservative and pre-meditated. This is the only way to get the absolute best from a certain family of birds and with some patience on your part, I will continue on with my story.

The first step was to enlarge my loft as to accommodate comfortably at least 90 pairs of breeders. Ok, simple arithmetic tells

you that that's 180 pigeons, and I have 259 pigeons coming. So, I planned an auction to sell off approx. 80 imports. Well the birds came in and Fred Pieper and I went thru the huge task of picking out the pigeons for the auction. We used pedigree and conformation for selection, and we did this in a very short period of time. None-the-less, we sold many very outstanding pigeons and did get down to the number that I could hold.

Next step was to breed from 90 pairs of pigeons and test the group by basket only. How the hell can you do this you ask? Well, let's see. Tony Rossi can handle about 80 youngsters, Fred Pieper of Milwaukee takes about 40, Dave Baker of Chicago 30 babies, Bob Barnes Jr. of Detroit takes about 25, Dan Bounagorio of New York takes 30, Mike Dagastino of CT takes about 30, and several other friends take lesser amounts. Everyone agreed to the deal that the two best birds come home to me.

I did this for about two years with these gentleman and the results were almost phenomenal. The bad part of this story was that nobody ever expected the results that these birds accomplished, but in every case, these friends sent me their combine winners, futurity winners, ace pigeons, and even an AU Hall of Fame winner. I won't bore you with long lists, but I will highlight a few spectacular results from each friends' loft and the birds that they graciously sent back. I know that this was not easy.

Mike Dagostino from CT flew 40 miles longer then the majority of the New York competition boasting about 100 members and won combine average speed and two first combine wins with Aarts-Van Loon pigeons. Never before had anyone from his area ever thought of winning a race yet alone winning average speed against the best of New York!

Bob Barnes Jr. had 3 first combine wins, First Combine av-

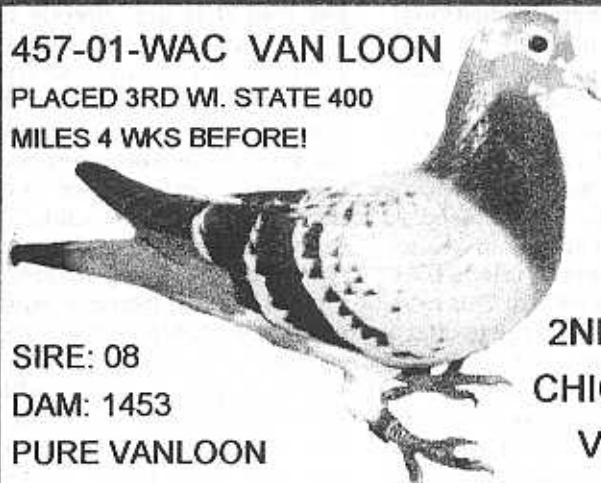
457-01-WAC VAN LOON

PLACED 3RD WI. STATE 400
MILES 4 WKS BEFORE!

SIRE: 08

DAM: 1453

PURE VANLOON



2ND, 3RD, 4TH
CHICAGO OPEN
VS. 1632 P.

627-01-NVC VANLOON

1ST NVC OPEN VS. 862
P. 3 WKS. EARLIER

SIRE: 6604476-BELG

DAM: 6682650-BELG

LOUIS VAN LOON



454-01-WAC VANLOON

1ST 167 MILES AND 40TH
500 MI. VS 1651 P.

SIRE: 6604157-BELG

DAM: 6316402-BELG



THIS AMAZING TRIO PLACED 2ND, 3RD AND FOURTH IN THE 300 MILE CHICAGO OPEN! THE AMAZING STORY WAS THAT THE WIND WAS NOT IN THEIR FAVOR THE ENTIRE RACE! THEY BROKE AWAY FROM 1629 PIGEONS AND SHOCKED THE ENTIRE CHICAGO COMBINE!

erage speed. One hen was a double combine winner and two years in a row Van Loons won the "first ace pigeon" of his combine! two years in a row my daughters entered the Detroit powder puff 400 mile race and won first place both years, once for Bob Jr. and again for his mother!

Dan Bounagorio's results were, first combine average speed Long Island combine three years in a row! Danny entered one outstanding hen for IF Hall of Fame and place high in the standings!

Fred Pieper won, gosh, I am guessing, but probably 15 first combines over the last 7 years and two pigeons in particular, "The Hawk" won first ace pigeon North Valley Combine and many times first club and combine! "Hawk Jr." bred from a brother to "The Hawk" also won first Ace Pigeon Milwaukee Western Conc., winning three first combines including 3rd overall Midwest 500 vs some 1699 pigeons.

Dave Baker of Chicago made history winning first five positions on the tough JRF futurity 300 miles vs 777 pigeons with all Aarts or Van Loon pigeons. He won first, second and third average speed that year vs Chicago Combine 150 members with only 25 total pigeons on his team all Aarts or Van Loons, plus two national ace pigeons and AU hall of fame! Dave won many first combines with these pigeons!

As for myself, my record has been tremendous. Just the last four years flying with the strong North Valley Federation of appx. 80 members, I won champion loft the last four years (2002, 01, 00, 99) in Young bird competition. They also won average speed youngbirds (2002, 01, 99, 98) not to mention winning first ace pigeon of the federation (2002 oldbirds and youngbirds, 2001 YBs, 1999 YBs. Enough with that, my point here is not to brag, I am trying to show you how I proceeded to sort thru this big mess.

What was most amazing was

that the same pairs bred winners where ever they were sent. Conversely, the same junk pairs bred junk wherever they were sent. I found that the the foundation breeders bred champions for all the test lofts. This was no coincidence, it happened over and over for many years.

So now you say, after one year, the matings may have been bad. And you are right to think this. Each year I changed matings, and I did this for 5 years. What a pain in the ass, but I did it. One year I would mate them straight, the next I would cross them, the next year mix all the pairs up again! The end of the story was that certain pigeons bred champions with any mate, and those that were not good were eliminated quickly.

My record keeping procedures were well managed and I must say that after 7 years now, I finally have a line on many fantastic pigeons breeding couples, and genuine foundation producing pigeons. I found that the Frank Aarts pigeon were sensational from 100-400 miles especially on nice days. The VanLoons are more mid-distance to Long Distance pigeons. This variation proved to be a very good cross and have proven themselves over and over.

Just recently I purchased a pedigree program from John Chiang. I tried several others that I really was not keen on. This new program has allowed me to chart the breeders individually so that I could see the off springs' performance record for any loft that obtained them. Certain pigeons have certainly rose to the top and unfortunately, many didn't. I never sold an imported pigeon that I bred from. I felt if they didn't breed for me, I couldn't sell them to another. I honestly had many, many offers but never sold them. I did sell some imports to flyers, as I said earlier when I had an auction. Plus I sold some of the birds that I couldn't handle, but I never bred out of any of them

previously.

So you still ask, why did you buy so many? The answer is simple. If you search for gold you must pan thru tons of mud and dirt in order to obtain that precious metal. Do you really think you can buy just one pair or a champion bird and hit gold? Sure it is possible, but very unlikely. I tried this method for many years and sure I found good pigeons, but not a winning family that could satisfy my goals.

Let me tell you about the outcome of what I bought for example. My best breeders were not from the tremendous national winners that I paid high prices for. They were not from the golden pairs that Aarts and Van Loon barely let loose. They were from certain genetic packages that could only be found through testing and performance. Some of my most outstanding breeders are grandchildren of the winners or grandchildren of the golden pairs.

I can't tell you how many imported bands are hanging on my loft wall that are directly off of some fantastic national winner or ace pigeon. This my dear friends is how evolution produced the world we know and although I know my testing is rather limited, I used only performance as criteria and it worked. Wouldn't it be easy if all we had to do is buy a pigeon out of a big winner and everything you breed is equal to it! My friend, Mike Dagostino often says, "Joe Lewis the heavy weight champion of the world had 10 brothers and sisters. Did you ever hear of one of them." A simple but true statement, well said, Mike!

I think the secret is staying with families of pigeons and finding the super breeders within that family. Some of my most fantastic champions recently have been from Van Loons crossed with the Aarts pigeons. Just this year, I flew 8 widowhood cocks and one bird in particular won champion bird North Valley Combine. His

two best performances were the last two races of the year. 1266 won 1st place 223 miles vs. 454 pigeons on an extremely hot and humid day. This performance was outstanding because he beat his loft mate by 8 minutes that took second Federation and 19 minutes ahead of the next federation loft. Four days later he was sent to a 500 mile race from Topeka, KS, winning 2nd 500 mi., vs. 1072 pigeons on another very hot and humid day! What is important about 1266 is that his father is Janssen Van Loon, a true foundation cock, mated with a Van Loon hen! His full sister 1267 won first combine NVC as a young bird! This is an example of high bred vigor that wins races.

The Van Loon pigeons are a family that originates from very few pigeons. The Aarts pigeons are made up of national winners, mostly Janssen, with one Van Loon cock as the common denominator. Are these great breeders direct off the national winners? No, but they are down from them sometimes a couple of generations! If I were to do it over again, I think I would have to do it the same way as I did. Perhaps stay away from the more expensive birds direct off the national winners and golden pairs, but concentrate on a family of birds with winning genes.

Now understand one thing, I have no genetic background other than a semester course in college. My only knowledge in genetics is first hand experience through testing and race results, and for that reason alone, I feel extremely qualified. When people ask me to sell pigeons to them I always hesitate. The reason for my apprehension is because they almost always want to purchase a very small sample of my population. Now think about it, how could I condone this when I myself went to two of the most outstanding lofts in the world and spent a fortune on 259 imported pigeons! The importation agency even sent

me a Christmas card. That's how much money I spent just on importation fees!

Now of course I understand most people could not do what I did, or for that matter who would be crazy enough. But the true answer is not always what you want to hear my friends. Never forget, there is power in numbers. The more selection you have, the better chance you have to find the good ones. I think the most valuable aspect in selection was the fact that I had good friends willing to truthfully race these pigeons and give me honest feed back on their performances. Think how valuable this was. But remember the results they procured.

I often tell my friend, Fred Pieper, I could easily have purchased 259 duds, as so often you hear happens. I took a chance and I now have a family of birds that are truly performance proven thru and thru. I know this may seem as if I am bragging, but I just feel the records that these pigeons have won in the last seven years needs to be mentioned.

I will only list my results, and you need to know that this is just a fraction of their most outstanding achievements. To list all my accomplishments would be not only be a tedious ordeal but rather boring for you. I will list only the important results or what I would refer to as impressive. Please let me start with just this years (2002) results. I will summarize this particular year because not only was it outstanding, but the most recent. Of course I will not list every race, just my best results.

North Valley Federation Results. Approx. 80 members. OBs 2002: 2nd - 480 mi., 1072 b., 1280 ypm, 6-29-02; 1st, 2nd, - 223 mi., 365 b., 1583 ypm, 6-23-02; First Champion Bird Of Federation, (1266), YBs 2002: 2, 3, 4, 21, 23 - 146 mi., 494 b., 1112 ypm, 8-4-02; 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 17, 18 - 219 mi., 405 b., 1360 ypm, 8-11-02; 3, 4, 5, 10, 14, 15 - 219 mi., 471 b., 1238 ypm, 8-25-02;

10, 11, 12, 16, 20 - 149 mi., 629 b., 1346 ypm, 9-1-02; 1, 2, 3, 5, 11, 14, 19, 21 - 223 mi., 620 birds, 1353 ypm, 9-8-02; 1, 2, 6 - 261 mi., 412 b., 874 ypm, 9-15-02; (Only 38 day birds in fed. Winning against the wind); 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 - 298 mi., 283 b., 1682 ypm, 9-22-02; 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15 - 159 mi., 533 b., 1363 ypm, 9-29-02; 5, 11, 12, 22, 23 - 301 mi., 426 b., 1324 ypm, 10-05-02; 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 301 mi., 122 b., 1381 ypm, 10-05-02; 13, 14, 15 - NVC Band Race, winning \$7200.

First Champion Loft Of Federation 2523 Points; First Average Speed Of Federation 1267 ypm; 1, 2, 6, 7, 10 Place Champion Birds Of Federation (887). Other Wins From Other Combines in 2002: 6th, 31 - 301 mi., Chicago, 1539 b., 1287 ypm, 9-8-02; 1, 2, 3, 4 - 202 mi., Milw. 285 b., 1625 ypm, 9-21-02; 2, 3, 4, 5 - 321 mi., Valley, 623 b., 1335 ypm, 10-5-02; 1, 2, 11, 22 - 321 mi., Valley Auction Race, 1335 ypm, 10-5-02; 16th Overall Midwest Race 480 mi., 1402 b., 6-29-02.

2001 Results YBs North Valley Federation: 8, 9, 1, 11, 12 - 149 mi., 523 b., 1396 ypm, 8-5-01; 7, 14, 205 mi., 822 b., 861 ypm, 8-19-01; 1, 6, 11, 245 mi., 467 b., 1370 ypm, 8-26-01; 2, 3, 39, 123 mi., 719 b., 1290 ypm, 9-1-01; 9, 11, 12, 13, 1415, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 149 mi., 754 b., 1270 ypm, 9-16-01; 1, 14, 17, 20, 32 - 245 mi., 862 b., 1486 ypm, 9-30-01; 1, 6 - 245 mi., NVC Band Race Special \$2500; 8, 9 - 205 mi., 554 b., 1225 ypm, 10-7-01.

First Average Speed NVC Federation, 1306 ypm; First Champion Loft NVC Federation, 2565 Points; 1, 4, 5, 9, 10, 13, 18, Champion Birds NVC Federation (1260). Other Races Flown In 2001: 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 - 321 mi., N. E. Open 501 BIRDS, 1420 ypm, 10-6-01; 2, 3, 4, 11, 37, 38 - 298 mi., Chicago, 1632 b., 1214 ypm, 10-21-01; 3rd - 391 mi., Milw. State Champ, 252 birds; 9-

8-01; 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 - 302 mi., W.S. Derby 264 birds 1405 ypm, 9-22-01.

2000 Results YBs NVC Federation: 1, 2, 3, 4, 18, 21, 22 - 146 mi., 753 b., 1507 ypm, 8-13-00; 5th - 223 mi., 767 b., 903 ypm, 8-27-00; 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 34 - 167 mi., 706 b., 1490 ypm, 9-10-00; 18, 19 - 165 mi., 596 b., 871 ypm, 9-24-00; 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 18, 22 - 223 mi., 465 b., 1570 ypm, 10-1-00.

First Champion Loft NVC Federation 691 Points; Second Average Speed NVC Federation 1238 ypm; 3rd Champion Bird NVC Federation (1084). Other Races Flown 2000 YB: 1, 2, 3 - 321 mi., Fdl Auction Race 1279 ypm, 9-16-00; 3, 4, 6 - 301 mi., Chicago Open 1458 b., 1073 ypm, 10-22-00; 5, 6, 7, 8 - 106 mi., Milw. 596 b., 1250 ypm, 7-29-00; 8, 9, 10, 11 - 149 mi., Milw., 631 b., 1285 ypm, 8-5-00. 6, 7, 8, 9 - 202 mi., Milw. 639 b., 1223 ypm, 8-19-00.

Sorry if I am totally boring you. That is not my intent at all.

And please don't think I am trying to brag or highlight my results. That is not the purpose of listing them. It would be almost impossible to complete this story without a happy ending to seven years of total chaos. Please let me explain a bit about the results I have listed for you. If you look at the dates, I have showed you results that Tony Rossi won with birds bred from the Van Loons and Frank Aarts pigeons starting the first season in 1995! As you can see, our Kenosha Club is not afraid to fly with different combines, courses or competition. As I told you earlier, we are very fortunate to be able to fly with so many different combines and federations. I hope some day, all these organizations unite into one federation. We can only hope that this will happen.

What these results don't show is the number of times these birds won against the wind, extreme heat or breaking out way in front of the competition. These results

don't show the number of times Pieper Brothers and Dave Baker won against this loft with the same pigeons winning many, many first combines! These results don't show how the competition dropped off due to the sensational results that were posted week after week against all odds! Yes, I am very proud of these birds and all they have accomplished since 1995. I put all my time, faith, money and effort into two families of pigeons and am damn proud of them. If my efforts were a failure, I would be the laughing stock now being teased and ridiculed. But, as you can see, I am a very trusting person that doesn't give up. And to reminisce if I may, I knew the white one was coming home, I waited and waited till after dark... and he came home. I think I can say now, that the Aarts pigeons and Van Loons have come home for me also!

CHAMPION BIRD REPORT (WinSpeed - 3)

Printed on 07/23/02-03:12

NVC FEDERATION

Champion Bird includes: Hens & Cocks A Releases

1266 AU 01 KEN BB C 173 Pts 3 race(s) 872 Miles ROSSI 1266-VANLOON 2208941-890

4423 AU 01 NIX N/A H 127 Pts 2 race(s) 691 Miles MUSICK & SON

1061 AU 01 NVC N/A H 122 Pts 4 race(s) 679 Miles MUSICK & SON

0156 AU 00 KEN

8939 AU 99 RRP

LOFT

CHAMPION BIRD REPORT (WinSpeed - 3)

Printed on 10/13/02-09:45

NVC FEDERATION

Champion Bird includes: Hens & Cocks A Releases

0323 AU 99 CH

0456 AU 98 TWTH 0887 AU 02 KEN N/A C 243 Pts 6 race(s) 1360 Miles ROSSI

0507 AU 01 TWTH 0870 AU 02 KEN BB C 221 Pts 6 race(s) 1282 Miles ROSSI

5742 AU 00 CH 1106 AU 02 ERC BLSP C 185 Pts 5 race(s) 779 Miles S. Ciaccio

0006 AU 02 887=VANLOON 118-735

0044 AU 02 870=VANLOON 6316410-202

3836 AU 02

0844 AU 02

ROSSI

MUSICK & SON

TASSOTTI

HANSEN J

SZENTENDREI 1

CHAMPION LOFT REPORT (#4)

Printed on 10/17/01-20:23

YOUNG NVC FEDERATION

Champion Loft includes: Hens & Cocks A Releases

Total accumulated points	2565 for	61 clockings
Total accumulated points	1847 for	48 clockings
Total accumulated points	1759 for	50 clockings
Total accumulated points	1175 for	40 clockings
Total accumulated points	1096 for	23 clockings