

Pigeonsport.net

Eye sign response by Roger Mortvedt

I was checking my email last night and came across the Pigeonsport.net I read several of the articles including EYESIGN-An Alternative View, by Alan Wheeldon and three of the responses. The response by Jim Brown was the most challenging to the original article.

The original article says that eye sign is utter rubbish and the response agrees that 90% of the eye sign theorist's are not only wrong in their version of sign but claim to know the "answer" only to fill their pockets with money and place themselves on some ego-driven pedestal as the only man in town with the real answer. So far we are all in agreement. A few years ago a pigeon flyer, originally from Australia, came to the United States. He had written a detailed book on eye sign. His claim was that he had traveled all over the world examining and photographing the eyes of champions. He had the answer. He had come across the "speed lines", the "distance lines", the "clusters", etc. etc. etc. He had irrefutable evidence! And who could deny him? The man had been all over the world, seen it all, documented facts, wrote a book. He was the messiah of eye sign! He held seminars (for money). He graded hundreds of lofts, also for money. What soon followed, I'm sure, was that hundreds upon hundreds of birds were destroyed based on this man's conclusion that these particular pigeons had no value. Nice. What also followed over the next few years is that this man took up residence in a local hotbed of pigeon flyers and began to compete. His results were less than average. He continued to race for a few seasons until he raced himself into obscurity. Did he have the "answer"? Obviously not.

I know of another somewhat tragic example of a man back in the Midwest. He was somewhat "well to do", ripe for the kill. He was selected by another self-proclaimed expert in eye sign to go to a neighboring country to view some of the greatest racing pigeons in the world. Only a "select few" are allowed to visit this loft each year, and this year you are "it". What an honor! This man was allowed to view birds that had the greatest eye sign in the history of pigeon racing (according to the expert). I'm sure you can guess the rest. He spent upwards of \$4,000 each for some of these self-proclaimed "future" champion breeders that never bred a bird worth ten cents. Nice.

Just one more tragic example and then I'll move on. A reasonably successful flyer, locally, decided one day that he had the answer. Eye sign. He retired from active racing for the following 3 or 4 years to do some selective breeding amongst his own colony of successful flying

pigeons. He knew, without question, what the answer was and he was going to breed for it within his own colony of good pigeons. He told me, personally, that the first year he bred close to 400 youngsters and killed all but 10 of them. Those 10 went in to the breeding loft along with his original stock and the next year he again bred 400 youngsters. This time he only had to kill 360 of them. Nice. After 3 or 4 years of this insanity he began flying again. Results? Absolute disaster. He had taken a competitive family from near the top of the race sheets to near the bottom. Terrific.

How many others have taken "theories" to the extreme and destroyed what was once a competitive family of racing pigeons? Many I am sure.

The author of the response, Jim Brown, while agreeing that most of the eye sign "experts" are in fact "quacks" (my words), the Pobors and Bieches as well as a selected few others HAVE THE ANSWER and their racing records prove it. That may very well be so and I will not sit here and refute the accomplishments of these two very highly respected pigeon flyers. My problem is this, out of the several thousand pigeon flyers all over the world, tens if not hundreds of who claim to be an eye sign experts, WHO DO YOU BELIEVE? Is Pete Pobor's theory the same as Alex Bieche's? If not, who is right? I know very little about Pete Pobor so I won't tread upon unknown ground but I do know Alex Bieche. One thing I know about Mr. Bieche is that he spends a lot of time abroad bringing in PERFORMANCE PIGEONS as well as children from these race winners and Ace Pigeons. Is it because they are proven performance pigeons or is it that they have the eye sign he is looking for? I should be seeing Alex pretty soon so I'm going to ask him.

Here is another thing that bothers me. In my 40 plus years of flying pigeons I have come in contact, many times, with various eye sign graders. They handle the bird, look at the wing, examine the back, and either use an eye box or eye glass and check out the eyes. This one's a breeder, this one's a flyer, this one's a multi-purpose, this one's junk, kill it. Never, I repeat, never, has anyone told my WHY the differences in the eye would or could determine what the bird was capable of doing. To me, when you look at something and then claim that what you see is gospel you should also be able to explain WHY. Is eye sign better eyesight? Is it superior intelligence? Tell me, exactly, what it is in this bird's eye that makes him a breeder, a flyer, etc. Yes, it's something you see but exactly HOW does this change the course of this pigeon's racing and breeding potential? I need to know WHY or I'm not convinced, but that's me.

Eye sign isn't the only culprit. How about wing theory, body type, size, color. The list goes on. This bird is too "short", this one too "long". Pull on a bird's beak, if he resists keep him. If he doesn't, cull him. Check his forearm, that will tell you if he is a short distance or

long distance bird....right. There is no end to this kind of crap. This brings me to a real life story that I experienced myself about 5 months ago just after the close of our Concourse Old Bird Races. We flew a 528 mile race, followed by a very tough 560 mile race. A couple of weeks after the last race I was visited by a few neighboring pigeon flyers. I had won the 528 mile race taking the first 5 in the club and 5 out of 7 in the concourse. I clocked 5 widowhood cocks in 12 minutes from the 528 and had 2 of only 4 day birds on the 560. As I was showing these flyers several of my widowhood cocks I also managed to work in the birds that had excelled on these particular races. One guy was an "eye" man. He liked a couple of them but wasn't impressed with the others. Another was a "wing" man. He liked a couple as well, different ones than the eye man. Another was a "beak puller" and some of them resisted while some did not. The 5 cocks that were ALL Registered AU Champions, multiple race winners or top 1% clock birds on many occasions from 100-560 miles were ALL JUDGED DIFFERENTLY. A careful examination of their race records prove that, in fact, they are all EQUAL.

So what is really important? Let me say this, if you are showing pigeons you must breed for the "perfect" type, the show "standard" that will get you that 1st place ribbon or trophy. If you are to enter your pigeon in an eye sign show you must breed for a pigeon that has what that judge "thinks" is the perfect eye. If you are racing, you breed for performance. Like breeds like, in most cases. If the birds that are in your loft today are the result of several generations of top race performing ancestors you have 90% of the problem solved. It doesn't matter what the eye sign of the grandfather was...if he was a winner. When you load the gene package with winners what is this newly hatched youngster going to draw from...genetically? You guessed it...winners. The probability, or at the very least the possibility, is that whatever physical or mental traits the winning ancestors had are going to be passed on to that pigeon. Generation after generation of breeding top performing pigeons together can do nothing but improve your colony.

If eye sign indeed has merit then every performance pigeon has it. You don't have to look for it, he has it. Load your gene package with performance pigeons and, if eye sign is the reason, you have it. If eye sign is NOT the reason, you are still covered because you are breeding from performance stock. Give it a try, it works.

And by the way, I did get to meet with Alex Bieche this past weekend. He does not want to be classified as an eye sign man. He looks at the eye like everyone else but, in his words, the eye is ONE of SIX things he looks for in a quality pigeon and he does NOT agree with the eye sign "theory" of Pete Pobor. Yet again, another example. Two top pigeon flyers. Both regarded by some as experts on the eye. One only puts 1/6th value on the eye and that 1/6th does

not even agree with the other expert. Makes you wonder, doesn't it?
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