



Bob coming out of his loft

Bob Mink

June 2, 1930 to June 11, 2015



"Silver Fox" 217 with his mate.

The pigeon world, the scouting world and the world of firefighters all lost a most valued member in one person, Bob Mink. Bob passed away peacefully at his home on Thursday, June 11, 2015. Born in Providence, RI, he was the beloved and devoted husband of Marie P. Mink for over 62 years. Bob was a firefighter with the Providence Fire Department for 35 years, retiring in 1989. As an Eagle Scout, Bob took the Boy Scouts out camping throughout New England for many years. He was a member of the RI Racing Pigeon Association for over 70 years. He loved raising and racing homing pigeons. This passion brought him all over the world, winning many awards. He enjoyed gardening, more often than not, sharing his bounty with his neighbors and family. Bob was a great Dad and Hero to his four daughters and nine grandchildren.

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 was always one to do his part for the club. He served on the race committee and board of directors. He was 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 was in that position for 40 years.

In 1990, after retirement from the fire department, Bob 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. 1990 was also the year Bob thought he'd try widowhood flying. For many years Bob flew 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 Toye. 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 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.

With Bob it wasn't only him and his birds' accomplishments. Bob (and his family) worked hard to raise money for the junior members' future. Sometimes it was a steak fry, sometimes a ham and beans supper, but always a bird auction, a raffle and the finale was 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 was put into the bank in the form of savings bonds, which the junior members competed for each week. The bonds were awarded each year at the awards banquet and when they turned 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 was distributed, 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.

For Bob, to be greatly missed, is an understatement. He was one of a kind that every pigeon club would have greatly appreciated and prospered from.