

Here is a brief summary on how John got into racing pigeons. He started with pigeons as a young man in Greece in the early 80s flying the popular high flyers (Greek Nose Divers or Voutes). Twenty years after John moved to the United States he got back into pigeons in 2004 by obtaining some Voutes from his friend Peter in Massachusetts. When the local feed store shut down John was told he could get feed from Tommy Axson, who just so happened to be the president of the local racing pigeon club. When getting feed John kept looking at the homers and asking Tommy questions. Then on a visit John's daughter Maria asked for a pair of white homers from Tommy. Being the good dad John picked up a pair and kept them in rabbit hutch. They got homed to the "loft" and John started taking the birds to work and having them fly home. He was hooked! Next was getting some pigeon racing magazines and learning about them on the Internet and starting to fly in the local club.

In 2010 John got a team of YBs from multiple sources and he started racing with the local club. In 2011 YBs John actually did pretty well finishing 3rd Average Speed, 3rd Master Loft and 1st Champion Loft. In 2012 and 2013, he was 1st Average Speed, 1st Champion Loft and 1st Master Loft against an average of 20 lofts in the club/combine. Since that time John had hit his stride and he was becoming one the lofts to beat in the local club/combine races in both OBs and YBs. One of his highlights was winning nationally 2nd place AU President Cup in 2014-2015 as recognition for both his success in old birds and young birds.

As often happens, John was loving racing and competing in the local club, but one loft racing caught his eye as another mountain to try to climb. He started trying to figure out who was doing well in OLR and talked to several of them about what it takes to be competitive. One of the first people he started talking to about OLRs was Joe Nemelka. Joe gave John some birds and told him that one of the best one loft racers in the country and somebody he could trust lived not too far from him – Carey Tilson. So after the introduction to Carey from Joe, John made the trek to visit Carey and came back with some birds and some eggs off Carey's top pairs. That trip to Carey laid the foundation for John's current success in both club and one loft racing. Combining the original birds from Joe, the trip to Carey Tilson and several other key purchases John made has proven to be the basis for success in both club and OLRs that has continued up until this very day. In 2014, John had a good year in the OLRs and in 2015 he was likely one of – if not the – top money winning OLR breeder in the United States. That success is continuing until this very day with 2017 proving to be another good year so far with several top finishing positions.

John feels a strong sense of gratitude and appreciation for those individuals that gave good advice, provided good birds and directed him in what pitfalls to avoid in this pigeon game. Specifically, John acknowledges that the following individuals contributed to his success: Tommy Axson, Tony Trezza, Joe Nemelka, Carey Tilson, Thomas Baldwin, Kenny Rhodes, Frank Esposito, Danny Hutchins, Merl Emerson, Frank McDonough, and Mike McKinney. John is also very grateful to those who asked him to participate in the Omaha Grain Belt Seminar and Auction and to provide some birds directly off his top pairs.

For those who don't know John you are truly missing out on getting to know one of the truly good guys in the sport of pigeon racing. He is the first one to congratulate someone on a win and humbly brushes off with a kind "thank you" when someone congratulates him. He works hard in every way to support his local club and the sport as a whole.