

## **SOME PEOPLE DON'T LIKE SURPRISES**

### **Part 1**

**By George Lechner**

**One thing about raising American Giant Homers is that you can't be 100% sure what color you may get out of a pair of birds. This is one of the great things about raising this wonderful pigeon. Those who have been breeding Giant Homers for any length of time can attest to that fact.**

**I remember when I first started raising Giant Homers; I was enamored with the color Recessive Red. If you know anything about the Recessive Reds in the Giant Homer, you know that they are the hardest to raise good color and quality in all the same bird and raise both those qualities year after year.**

**Well, I set out to do the best I could in that color, so I contacted a couple breeders that seemed to do well in raising good quality and color. I heard back from Gerald Hobbs of Iowa. He said that he was getting out of pigeons due to doctor's orders and I could have the pick of his loft. He also said something that I will never forget-- "He did not think any pigeon was worth more than \$17 a piece and that if you could not get \$17 each for them it was not worth raising them." Well, that seemed to make his birds worth \$17 each and that was something I could afford. You must remember this was about 25 years ago and \$17 dollars seemed to be worth more than it is today.**

**We were invited to visit Gerald and pick out what I wanted, so my wife and I took a trip to his loft, had a nice dinner and I proceeded to pick out 15 birds that were Recessive Red or ones that Gerald said I should use to raise them.**

**I kept inquiring about what other breeders thought I should mate to the Recessive Reds so I could improve the color and in some cases the quality. One breeder that I had quite a long discussion with suggested I use good solid Blacks and that would improve the color. It just so happened that he had some of the best in the country and I ordered three pair to be sent to me.**

**The next breeding season I mated every one of those Blacks to one of the Recessive Reds and wouldn't you know it, very few pair raised even one Recessive Red. One pair, in particular, raised in the first set of eggs, was a color that I had never seen. It looked very pretty, but sure was not Recessive Red or even Recessive Yellow.**

I asked several breeders what they thought it was and all said that it looked like a Reduced Recessive Red and it was very good color. It had a peach tint to it and every cover feather was etched in a pale Recessive Red. That pair never did raise anything but Reduced colored birds. I wrote the person whom I had gotten the birds from and he acknowledged that most of his birds had Reduced in them. If the bird was a cock, it could pop out at any time, which it did. Needless to say, all the young were hens, but that did not make any difference to me. I was still disappointed that I was not able to raise Recessive Red.

Now I have a different slant on color breeding and wish I could duplicate those Reduced Recessive Reds.