

Hi fellow fanciers,

It is Saturday March 17, 2007. We woke up to a thick layer of snow. You better get used to it we live in Canada after all.

One of our pigeon friends sent me an E-mail about 6 weeks ago, asking me why I don't write my letters doing the winter time.

To be honest I look after my birds in the wintertime by giving them minimum care. Actually I wished they would go down South in the winter and come back with the robins in the spring!!

My reply to the fellow who asked me why I stop writing in the winter time was that I need some time away from pigeons in the winter.

I told him as soon as the robins are back I will write my first letter.

On Wednesday March 14<sup>th</sup> I walked into my backyard and two robins were sitting on the lawn to greet me. It reminded me that I had made a promise to somebody!!



What do I mean by minimum care? I feed a mixture with 25 % of barley in it. As soon as I see any barley in the tray I will feed that section the next day. Water is refreshed twice a day. No medication is given during the winter. No birds are let out until April. Breeding is started in February and I have just started to band a few young ones. If a couple does not want to mate up they can pick their own mate.

If I do not like the mating they get the eggs from a pair I do like. Simple simple simple is my motto.

Cleaning? If the weather is mild only.

In April I check all my racers. I look for birds that put on too much fat in the wintertime. They go on a diet, with just a bit of barley being given, that is it.

I apologize to clubs who put on shows etc. in the winter. This Dutchman concentrates on family life and jobs around the house in the winter.

I wish you all a great racing season in 2007 and I intend to do everything possible to be great competition for you.

[Tom](#)

P.S. On March 15<sup>th</sup> there was an interesting article in the National Post.

German scientists said that they found a tiny iron oxide crystals in the skin lining of the upper beak of homing pigeons laid out in a three dimensional pattern that might help the

birds to read the Earth's magnetic field. "We expect that the pigeon-type receptor ...might turn out to be a universal feature of all birds", says Gerta Fleissner at the University of Frankfurt. She is a writer for the journal Naturwissenschaften