

"ALWAYS CHAMP"

Written by Wm Murkley Jr.

February 11, 1990

Having contributed a couple articles for the up-coming "Roller Special", I still felt a void in something I could write with interest and meaning. This article will deal with mostly meaning.. The main part will be that we as humans have a tendency to put off until tomorrow what we could or should do today. Or just plain wait until that subject is no longer with us and than speak up. It has been 20 yrs since I met this fine gentleman and I have covered this area about 10 yrs. ago and many have come and gone since that time, so its time to renew my article.

In starting out with any breed or new project, there generally is a lot of study that needs to be done in order to meet perfection in that area. One can read, see first hand, listen to those educated on the matter etc. etc. Being new into the Baldhead circle at this time I had mountains of matter to learn. I read, I listened, I looked but I had a burning desire to learn more. My final decision was to go to the source, that being the one who has the best & had for 30+ years in the Baldhead circles. Who else but "Mr. Baldhead" himself Mr. Ted Nieman of Brookfield, Wisconsin. I was very fortunate to have such a celebrity of the Baldhead community right in my backyard so to speak.

**"Mr Baldhead" Ted Nieman at age 73 and
Bill Murkley at age 28**

Making a few arrangements I found myself inside of Ted's loft in the fall of 1970.. I will always remember the line up of quality I witnessed on that day. Creams, Reds, Yellows, Blacks, Red Bars, Almonds before my very eyes! UNBELIEVABLE!! Seeing is believing & being a rookie it didn't take an Albert Einstein to see why this guy was deemed "Mr. Baldhead"

I acquired 3 pair of real show rollers from Mr. Nieman to start with and several since. In the past 20 years I learned what makes Mr. Nieman tick.. Believe me, he isn't the run of the mill ordinary guy. I recall him telling me his father use to call him, "A diamond in the rough" when he was growing up. Today his father would be very proud of him and his accomplishments and would certainly say that he polished that diamond to its utmost over the years.

I would query him on many areas of the Baldhead and would always wonder and ask, "What do you do to get your birds in such tremendous shape and condition?" He would say, "I'm not telling you everything and some things you'll have to just learn on your own!" THAT DROVE ME UP THE WALL!

After several years he finally told me what he did when I couldn't figure it out. Here it is.... "NOTHING" It is bred right into them! At first I wasn't willing to swallow that simplified statement but after some more time in the breeding pen I realized he was being square with me. Anyway that's just one small area of the past 20 years we've covered together. I don't believe one person ever asked more then I did of Ted. He always was willing to help whenever asked on.

We traveled to several Louisville Nationals together and I enjoyed hearing of the roads he covered in his 30+ years of rollers and with such humor. Many of those who have come to know Ted realize he is one of a kind. So humorous and helpful whenever he can be and extremely witty!

He has brought the Baldhead to such perfection & distributed that perfection more than anyone Baldhead breeder could ever think of. He is always deep in quality and can afford to always help someone. He could have kept them all to himself like some might, but he would rather promote them and see others enjoy them as much as he does.

He has held many offices over the years, including the URCA, WBRC, WRC (the old original one back in the late 50's), NPA etc.

Ted was very instrumental in getting the WBRC (Wisconsin Baldhead Roller Club) off the ground, which has become very popular today. Having won champion Baldhead at numerous shows and very consistently for 50 yrs. What all this means is Mr. Nieman deserves to be called Champ whenever I call or write I address as such he will always say Ex-Champ.

Ted will always be champ in my eyes. He has had some health problems in the past and just when your ready to count him out and down for the count he is back and competing in high fashion. He has taught me more about Baldheads, be it in the show room or in the anatomy and about life itself. For that I am forever grateful.

Yes, I am fortunate that Mr. Nieman lives in my backyard, just 80 miles away, but more so that he has been part of my life in which he has made a difference thru his teachings in my wins and in my association with others.

Marked rollers are called PENSOMS! I'll-make a motion Champ that Baldheads are called "NIEMAN ROLLERS"

Thanks for everything Ted, you have made a difference in my life and you will "Always be my Champ!!"
