



## WHAT A DAY!

*By Michael Beat*

Joe Kelley has been coming up from San Diego for several years now. I must extend my greatest thanks to a devoted Tippler enthusiast who has been full of determination. In the past, he seems to come up and time either Rex Leon or myself whenever we have a good team that appears to have a chance at doing well. However, it seems that Joe never gets to see the real good times as he's always quick to disqualify us whenever he can. Last fall he got me for the team being out of sight over the limit. Yet the team of five birds did continue and ended up flying into the dark on that day. But finally, his efforts paid off; Joe was well rewarded. This is how the day went:

Joe tried to get me to release the birds one hour before sunrise. I didn't want to do that because the FTA is still on a 1/2 hour before sunrise rule. I told him that I'd make up the time in the night flying at the end of the day. The last feed, which consisted of only canary, was given about 10:30 PM on Saturday 6/20/92. I had flown some young birds for Joe on Saturday and they had flown into the dark until 8:54 at which time we dropped them. On this night the sky was dark but we could spot them well. The temperatures throughout the day made us wonder if the Old birds would fair well. I gave the team a drink and went to bed.

At 4:30 AM, Joe got me stirred up and out of bed. I went to the loft and turned on the lights. I then placed the individual water bottles into each of the three kit boxes and watched them through the wire. Each bird eventually took a drink. I gave them each about 5 peas to stimulate their appetite if they were inclined to eat more. But they only gobbled up the peas and barely touched the canary seed which was still in their feed cups. I thought they were ready. Joe read each of the band numbers individually and then I turned off the lights. I held the kit in my hands for about 5 minutes while the birds adjusted their eyes to the darkness. There were clouds above; it was 100% overcast. When Joe said that 5:13 AM had been reached, I tossed the three at once directly straight up. They rose up together and then took off. Sunrise, as listed in the *Los Angeles Times*, was 5:43 AM. This would be my start for both the FTA and FTS.

Throughout the day, the birds remained in sight the entire time. If anyone has seen Joe's zealous timing techniques, you would see that he records sightings about every 15 to 30 minutes-sometimes more often. The birds

flew very high all morning long. As the temperatures rose, I was anticipating that they would drop to a lower altitude. But they did not. The clouds were almost completely gone by 9:10 AM and the sun shone brightly. However, the birds did not come down. They remained very high until late afternoon at which time they dropped to medium height. There never was a strong breeze but only a mild one. One very nice thing about their style was the fact that they never were apart from each other. They kitted superbly! About 6:00 PM they did come low a few times to "look" at the loft, but their tails were still tight and they never faltered or spread their tails. Early evening, they did set to raking but only short distances. As darkness fell, the birds stayed very close to the loft and remained directly overhead most all of the time. They flew medium height but would sometimes yo-yo to lower altitudes and higher altitudes. They flew very typical to their normal routine. The night was better than Saturday for night flying. The birds were clearly seen the entire time making it enjoyable to sit in the driveway and watch them fly. It was quite apparent that these birds were going to fly well under these conditions so Joe and I quickly grabbed the record lists and started to calculate how much time I needed to break the 17:00 mark. With the birds doing well when the 17:00 mark was hit we began to entertain thoughts of the United States record. We called Rex Leon and he told us over the phone that it was 17:18. But even

when this was approached we could see that the birds were doing too good for just that. In fact, the cocks were clapping at the hen even this late. I could hear them make this sound from time to time. To me, I felt that the birds stilled had much energy. Soon thereafter we passed the North American record and we were ecstatic! Joe suggested that I drop them and take the record. I, however, felt that because the birds had not faltered in anyway, they should be allowed to continue until one of them shows signs of fatigue or the like. I was ready with a remote control switch to turn on the lights and two droppers in my hand, poised ready to go. The small hen began to lag behind the kit twice but always managed to catch up on the turns. I finally saw that one bird had separated and was not with the other two. At this time I did not hesitate for even a minute but informed Joe that it was time. I switched on the lights and released two droppers. I then released the rest of my dropping staff and began to pull the birds in. They behaved like in normal dropping patterns. I even told Joe which birds to expect first. It happened just so. The Red Bar Spread was first down and the small Light Print hen was last down. The birds preened themselves for a few minutes and then I trapped them all without difficulty. We then checked the band numbers. Surprisingly, the birds still had energy left in them. Between Joe and myself, there should have been at least one heart-attack. I cannot express how truly excited I was and how pleased my birds have made me. The countless hours of night training have finally paid off.

About the team: The three birds were made up of 2 cocks and 1 hen. They are all 1991 spring hatched birds. They have been flying very well and consistent in 1992. After the disqualification from last Fall, I lost one of the team that I felt was the best bird I had ever raised (1053—Silver Bar). So then I decided to stock the birds until the spring of 1992 at which time I could then break training once again. I flew four birds throughout the spring, removing one bird before the spring competition. On that occasion, the birds flew over 15 hours and were dropped in the dark. I didn't do as well as anticipated. I put the fourth bird back into the kit as insurance and continued to train for the Long Day. I finally removed that same fourth bird two weeks before Long Day and flew the three only the last few times out. They were fed malted barley in training with a small amount (less than 10%) of regular mix added because I had run out of wheat (I usually add 1/3 wheat to barley whenever flying old birds or whenever flying over 5 hours.) In training, the birds regularly fly 8 to 10 hours with no special feed. I flew them every fourth day. I would put them into a releasing box, of which they were quite accustomed, and would call a neighbor from my place of work to put them out at the desired release time. They always flew into the dark for about 2 hours.

Of interest: Joe Kelley always brings his own paraphernalia. The timer's report form reflects the weather condi-





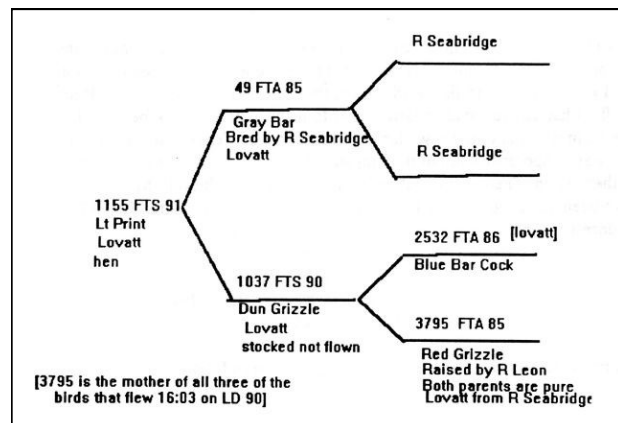
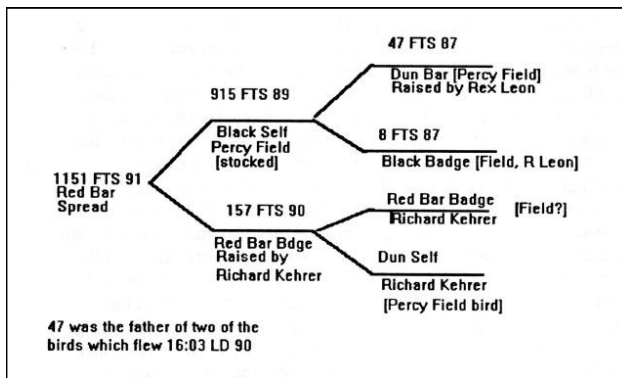
As you can see, Michael Beat has been presented with plaque by FTS President, Richard Seabridge

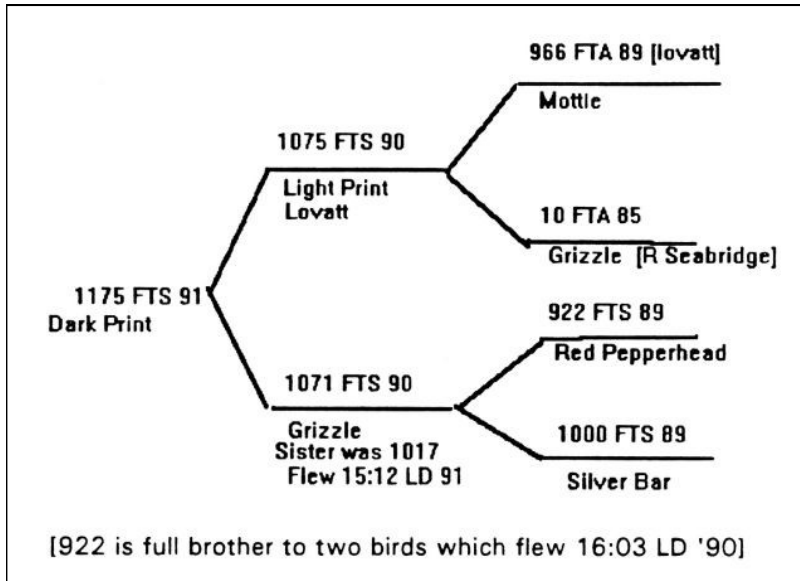


tions based on Joe's instruments. I personally feel that the temperature never was 87 degrees at the maximum. My personal thermometer got up to 85 degrees and I personally feel that this is more accurate. Joe brings his own clock. He relies on a clock that is plugged into an electrical outlet. The night before, we had called telephone time to verify the correct time. Joe set his clock to this time. During the day, however, Joe recorded his sightings according to his wristwatch of which he had set to the "master" clock. Joe dropped his wristwatch late afternoon and broke the watch. But, Joe being Joe, had another. (He had two flashlights too—just in case.) The second wristwatch was compared with the "master" clock and found to be two minutes behind the "master" clock. Therefore, when Joe recorded the final times in the evening, he wrote down exactly what he saw on the wristwatch. After the final time was taken, we went into my home and compared the wristwatch with the "master" clock once more. It was still 2 minutes behind the "master." We then filled out the report form with the final times but added two minutes to the time written down by Joe on his sightings sheet. All of this shows that it is very important to have more than one clock as the sole source of keeping track. The comments on the Timer's Report form are Joe's comments. He dictated them to me as well as all of the other information. I write more legible than he does and we didn't want to take a chance. Notice that Joe signed the form with special attention, giving his full name: Joseph Eugene Kelley. He was very excited.

I have enclosed a copy of Joe's sighting sheet so that all can see the diligence that Joe has when timing us. It was a fitting climax in my Tippler career. It is very unfortunate that things in my personal life have not gone as smoothly. I recently lost my job due to severe reductions in the state budget. I have been able to find work, but at the expense of moving away. Prior to this Long Day fly, I had already made arrangements to dispose of my stock because I am unable to take them with me to my new place in Brooklyn, New York. Just as before in the early 80's, I was temporarily without my Tipplers. I know though, that sooner or later, I will have them again. There is no doubt that pigeons are in my blood! My arrangements have been just about settled and I will be at my new address after **July 12, 1992**.

Some have asked me about the bird's relation, their pedigrees are as follows:





*Here's what the plaque states:*

The Flying Tippler Society of USA  
presents this Plaque  
as National Recognition and Special Tribute to:  
MICHAEL J. BEAT  
Who flew a Kit of Three (Old Birds) Flying Tipplers  
for Eighteen Hours and Five Minutes  
on June 21st, 1992 in a Long Day Fly Contest  
Band Numbers 91-FTS-1151, 91-FTS-1155 & 91-FTS-1175  
Joseph Eugene Kelley, Timer

We Commemorate your Determination, Commitment, Compassion  
and Achievement displayed by your Performance of the Longest fly  
ever recorded in FTS Official System Competition and realize  
like all things of Value Earned, it must be Preserved.

You have Created and Upheld a Tradition of Excellence.  
We Commend your Accomplishment and Thank you.