

Traveling to the convention for show birds motivated the group to aim for a school trip to the 2004 AU National Convention in Tampa.

In order to raise funds for the travel and accommodations, the group conducted a one-loft race. With the help of Queen City Racing Pigeon Club and donations from all over the United States, they were able to fill the loft with race birds for the three-race event. Race results were posted at their web site located at www.eyes-tothe-skies.com.

The first race, conducted in mid-October, was from 100 miles.

Donald Ham and Russell Brewer with the Southern Skies Club joined the kids to watch the birds come in. A special thank you goes to Everett Stenman for being liberator for this race and Charlie Moore liberated the next release out of Selmer, TN. Continental Breeding Station had the high point pigeon (2561 CBS 04 AU BB).

The generosity of all the donors made it possible for the students to visit "Little Belgium" area in Florida, and the AU convention.

Students, parents & teachers prepared for the trip. They departed on a Tuesday night at midnight and stopped at a rest area in Alabama. By Wednesday evening, they were at the Gulfcoast Homing Club clubhouse.





While at the clubhouse, the group enjoyed a delicious meal.



Students got autographs.



Mr. Shumaker shares a student's pigeon journal with Tom Erskine, AU Vice-President.



AU officers pose with the students at the clubhouse: Steve Lawler, AU Secretary; Tom Erskine, AU Executive Vice President; Herb Cartmell, AU By-Laws Advisor; and Frank Greenhall, AU President.



The group gives Crazy AI his check for his pigeon placing in the top ten.



The entire group poses with the Hackemers at their loft.



Mrs. Vanderwall had lunch ready for all the guests at the youth race.



Students with AU Board and Zone Directors.

"A special thank you to Everett Stenman for his help and expertise with our one loft race. Without meeting Everett, I would have never started this project.

Thanks to Art Sager, Terry Fountain, Fred Werner, and Darwin Hayes for their donation of pigeons to be sponsored for this race.

We appreciate the wonderful hospitality of the Gulf Coast Homing Pigeon Club and the gifts from the Ladies Auxiliary.

Finally, to all the pigeon fanciers who entered pigeons and non-fanciers who sponsored pigeons, please know how much your donations meant in making wonderful memories for my children." *Ronnie Shumaker*