

Article from **Policy Perspectives**

(http://www.imakenews.com/cppa/e_article000797825.cfm?x=b6Gdd3k,b30DNQvw,w)

April 25, 2007

Pigeon Poop

by Ken Embley, CPPA

It was several ago, but the memory is fresh, as fresh as the poop that splattered over the shoulder of my new suit and deep into my ear. I am sure the pigeon found some measure of success with the incident, but for a young man headed to a critical appointment, the pigeon poop was an embarrassing set back.

Hey, pigeon poop is serious stuff! Did you see the *USA Today* article about the pigeon poop problem in Venice, Italy? Did you see the *Deseret Morning News* article about the pigeon poop problem in Virginia City, Nevada? Imagine touring in Venice, carefully stepping around—yet clearly hearing—little crunching sounds and fearing the sensation of a fresh squish. The smell and the sight fail to add to the ambience and you admit to yourself a fear over the possibility of a pigeon poop bomb.



Well, what about pigeon poop in our neighborhoods? Joseph, Lynnette, Tim and Eileen like going to restaurants, shopping for necessities and visiting with friends. Their situations are such that the best mode of transport is walking, except for Eileen who drives a mean wheelchair. Anyway, they live just east of I-15 by North Temple. To access North Temple businesses, they must walk under the freeway and they must battle pigeon poop.

Now you and I know there are few good answers to difficult problems such as pigeon poop. However, as with any difficult problem, you get to the point that you do not care. Joseph, for one, wants city hall to do something, anything for relief, no pun intended.

Here is how Joseph plans to address the pigeon poop problem. He knows that the people at city hall have ears but he also knows that they listen best when there is more than one voice. Therefore, Joseph plans to rally neighbors about the pigeon poop problem. Joseph also knows that the neighbors need hope—hope that together they can do something to solve the pigeon poop problem. He plans to provide that hope.

To help rally the neighbors, Joseph is developing a brochure detailing his pigeon poop plan. His goal is to change his plan into an endorsed neighborhood plan that will include at least twenty neighbors in an effort to get the attention of city hall.

Looking down the road a little, Joseph believes that city hall can help but he also knows that things work best when neighbors research the problem, consider different strategies and suggest resources to eliminate the pigeon poop. He knows city hall is receptive to residents who bring solutions to consider (a pleasant alternative to those who bring problems and then expects city hall to do the work). To his credit, Joseph wants to place neighbors in a position where they are part of the solution, not part of the problem.

Joseph asked me about his plan, hence the article. My response was that his plan looks great on paper. Joseph has a great understanding of the problem. He has identified neighbors and members of the business community who care and who can develop pigeon poop solutions. He has a plan to develop the neighborhood into a force for change by doing research, exploring methods to solve the problem and developing required resources. His plan also accounts for the

biggest challenge of all; he knows he needs to be a leader to move neighbor talk to neighbor action.

Now I know I am not the only person out there with some experience in community problem solving and Joseph can use your help. If pigeon poop is something that excites you, what suggestions do you have for Joseph? If you have anything that can be of help, let me know and I promise to pass your idea on to Joseph.

Hey, maybe we can help Joseph become a world-renowned expert in solving pigeon poop problems. I can see it now—Eileen having a pleasant roll over to the store with Tim and Lynette while they talk up a storm about Joseph, who, at the request of the Italian government, is in Venice to solve their pigeon poop problem.

I would like to know your thoughts on this topic. Please use the [post letter] function link on the right (under the picture) to post a letter to this newsletter, or send feedback to ken.embley@coppa.utah.edu. Thank you.

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