Canadian Racing Pigeon Union Inc.

March 16, 2013

The City Clerk
71 Main Street West
First Floor,
Hamilton, ON
L8P 4Y5

Attn: Mayor Bob Bratina
All City Councillors

Re: Responsible Animal Ownership PED09303 (c) (City Wide)

Ms. Sue O'Dwyer, General Manager, Animal Services has advised us the Responsible Animal Ownership Bylaw, Part 6 is being re-looked at and she has been instructed to file a report with respect to Part 6 by no later that Monday March 25, 2013.

We further understand this matter is going to Planning Committee on Tuesday April 30, 2013 and to Council on Wednesday May 8, 2013. We respectfully request standing at the Planning Committee meeting and at the subsequent Council Meeting if required.

Attached please find two articles I hope you will find interesting, Perceptions vs. Reality and a letter from the Chief Medical Officer of Health that states pigeons pose no greater a threat to health than dogs or cats.

With respect to racing pigeons defecating in flight, it is well known that racing pigeons cannot defecate in flight for their feet cover their vent. Remember these birds are athletes, they defecate prior to flight. The following video link may give you a better understanding of this subject.

http://www.pigeonrescue.co.uk/pigeonpoopthefacts.htm

If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact myself.

Respectfully

Steve Walsh
Secretary
Canadian Racing Pigeon Union

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Tillsonburg, ON N4G 5X2

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Perceptions versus Reality

HOMING PIGEONS

The following article is being reproduced on our site with the kind permission of the American Racing Pigeon Union

PERCEPTION vs REALITY

Thank you for investing just a few minutes to learn more about the incredible feathered athletes know as Homing Pigeons. This brochure was prepared by the Avian Assistance Council, a group of attorneys from around the country who have both a professional and a personal interest in the welfare of these birds.

In the course of the next few minutes, you may find that your own mental picture of pigeons is changed. We hope so, for we are well aware of the commonly held notions and stereotypes. Our registered Homing Pigeons really are birds of a different feather! They have been among the most noble servants, not to mention warriors, of mankind. We further hope that you may appreciate the rights of your fellow citizens to engage in the hobby of keeping these special birds.

Thank you and we welcome all requests for additional information.

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HISTORY

Modern pigeon racing had its beginning in the early 1800's in Belgium. However, man has long used pigeons as pets, as a source of food and as message carriers possibly as far back in time as 5,000 years ago.

Neolithic man began taming animals around 8,000 years ago. The pigeon, a seed eater would have been relatively easy to domesticate. Certainly, as man began to grow grains, the pigeon is a species that would have naturally gravitated around human settlements and farms.

At the height of the Moorish Empire, The Arabs used pigeons as messengers. In the dark Ages and Medieval times, from Baghdad in the Middle East to the Barbary Coast in North Africa, Arabs officialdom employed carrier pigeons. Genghis Kahn also reputedly made use of pigeons as his empire expanded.

Carrier pigeons were a major component in the expansion of the industrial revolution. Reuters News Agency was begun with homing pigeons. The symbol for many European postal systems is a stylized figure of a carrier (homing) pigeon, to this day.

Pigeon racing in Belgium probably began with the use of Persian messenger pigeons as the foundation stock. Crossed with local pigeons, the modern racing homer gradually developed into what we know it as today. That development continues unabated.

The first long distance pigeon race was in Belgium in 1818. In 1820 a race was flown from Paris to Liege, and in 1823 from London to Antwerp. By 1870 there were 150 racing societies in Belgium and over 10,000 lofts. Neighbouring Holland became fascinated with the hobby and wholeheartedly joined in. After 1875 the hobby of pigeon racing gained popularity in England. Today there are approximately 90,000 lofts in both Belgium and Holland while there are some 100,000 lofts in England.

The hobby was introduced to the United States in the nineteenth century. It also gained a foothold in parts of France. It is now becoming popular in Japan, Taiwan, Canada, Australia, South Africa and Mainland China. There are flyers in India, Argentina and Hungary. However, the birthplace of the sport as we know it Belgium, remains the center of the fancy.

At present there are approximately 20,000 registered racing pigeon lofts in North America. In the past five years interest in pigeon racing in this country has been growing. It is though that this is mainly due to the popularity and escalating number of young bird futurities. This hobby has developed into a wholesome backyard sport in which the entire family can participate. The tendency toward enterprise and competition is nicely met by this trend in the hobby.

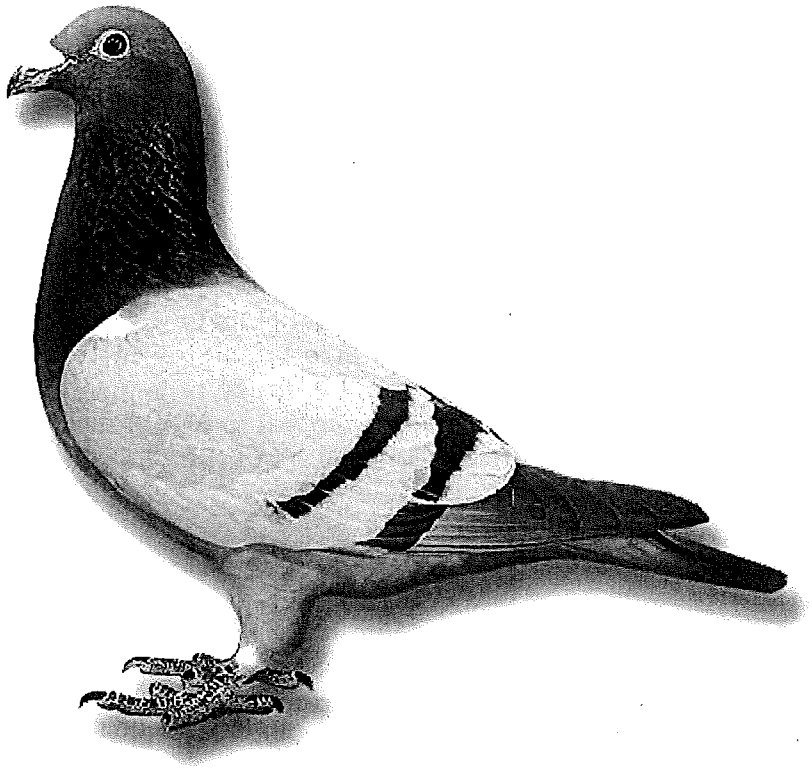
The Canadian Racing Pigeon Union, American Racing Pigeon Union and the International Federation of American Homing Pigeon Fancies have joined together to form the National Pigeon Association. This Association will eventually become a federation of the sport.

COMPARISON OF RACING PIGEONS WITH OTHER BIRDS

Many local governmental officials mistakenly believe that registered racing pigeons are the same birds as the wild pigeons, which overpopulate town squares, public buildings and parks; they are not. In fact, registered racing pigeons are kept and

revered like birds of all kinds, such as parakeets, parrots, cockatiels, macaws, doves, hawks and falcons.

Registered racing pigeons are admired by fanciers for their superb athleticism, determination, and loyalty to their home lofts and owners. Because they are expected to race home from distances up to 600 miles in a day, racing pigeons must be in perfect health, well fed and cared for daily.



Registered racing pigeon fanciers are expected to meet a higher standard than those set for the maintenance and care of other birds. The registered racing pigeon is an athlete. Racing pigeons compare favorably with other birds kept by the American public. Considering cage bird and birds of prey (hawks and falcons) kept for falconry and propagation, racing pigeons meet and exceed most of the same legal and general maintenance requirements.

1. Registered racing pigeons are banded as very young birds to permanently register them and mark them for record keeping and racing purposes, as are cage and falconry birds.
2. Racing pigeon fanciers follow strict medical regiments to ensure health and to prevent disease. Falconers and other bird fanciers attempt to emulate racing pigeon fanciers' standards for health excellence. Presently, there are a number of veterinarians in the U.S. whose singular specialty is racing pigeon medical

treatment.
3. Falconry birds are maintained in housing based on standards set by federal and state laws and regulations. Cage birds are normally housed indoors, except for certain kinds of doves and fancy show pigeons which, like racing pigeons are kept outside. Virtually all racing pigeon lofts are built to standard equal to those for falconry and cage birds. The C.U has set minimum standards for lofts and their construction and for maintaining these birds' facilities
4. Most airlines will accept equally racing pigeons, cage birds and falconry birds. Racing pigeons must be shipped by air in specially designed containers. In cases of international air shipment, all birds must be accompanied by a veterinarian's health certificate.
5. When racing pigeons are imported from Europe or other countries of origin like falcons, hawks and cage birds, they have to be kept in quarantine. Department of Agriculture Officials require a health quarantine of imported birds to protect native species of wild birds kept by people. The quarantine period for pigeons is presently thirty days.

Since racing pigeons, fancy show pigeons, cage birds of all types and falconry birds have been kept for centuries, national officials in Canada and in almost every nation in the world recognize their importance to culture, history, education, companionship and recreation. Consequently, these officials do not distinguish among birds as to type or use. Standards are set to assure that all birds are treated humanely. Means are provided to put all of the birds in commerce through national and international shipment.

Registered racing pigeons and their handlers take their appropriate and rightful place next to others who keep birds for companionship and recreation. Prohibitions against keeping and racing pigeons are no more justified than they are for denying the keeping of beautiful parrots and macaws, or hawks and falcons. When racing pigeon fanciers are denied their right to keep and fly their birds in a reasonable manner, while their neighbours may keep cage birds or hawks and falcons, there arises an element of bias and discrimination. This is not justified, and most public officials recognize this when they understand the needs of racing pigeon fanciers.

CLUB STRUCTURES

THE RACING PIGEON SPORT IN Canada is made up of clubs, combines, concourses, associations, federations and national organizations. There is one national organization for all racing pigeons in Canada, the Canadian Racing Pigeon Union Inc. The "CRPU or CU" was founded in 1929. The CU issues club charters to groups who have a minimum of five members.

The national organization set uniform rules of conduct and where necessary, national race rules. The national organizations are policy making entities whose involvement in local affairs is to handle rules interpretations and accept appeals on disciplinary matters. The CU Article 1 is designed to enhance the sport and assist its members. Individual clubs are responsible for enforcing the national rules and

regulations, race rules and the Code of Conduct. Any member who feels that they have been aggrieved at the local level may then appeal to the national level.

Clubs and or Combines are responsible for conducting pigeon races, which include setting the dates, distances, and providing transportation and care of the pigeons to their release point. Officials called Race Secretaries are in charge of checking the weather conditions to make sure that birds are not released in extreme weather conditions which would jeopardize their ability to return home.

Combines, concourses, associations and federations cannot be uniformly defined. These are not entities which are chartered by the national organizations. A combine or concourse is usually a collection of different clubs, which band together for economic and competition reasons. Two or ten clubs, for instance, may get together to fly as the "Up North Combine". In that situation each club would generate its own results and award first, second, third etc. places within the club. All the clubs race results would then be consolidated into a single race result which would be the combine result and again would issue diplomas which are awards for an individual bird's achievements in a particular race for first, second, third etc.

Occasionally, two combines will then get together for an even higher competition standard. These larger organizations may be called concourses, federations or associations to distinguish them from the combine. In such situations, there are club winners, combine winners then federation/concourse/association winners.

These combines provide a reasonable rate of transportation of the birds to race points (shipping costs).

PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERNS

Are humans at risk for disease from racing pigeons? Are the neighbours of a pigeon fancier in any danger from the birds kept in the loft next door? These questions have been exhaustively researched by experts. Their finding is that neither show nor racing pigeons pose any health risk to humans greater than the risk of keeping dogs, cats, turtles, hamsters, exotic birds or any other living pet.

ZOONOSES. This is not a Dr. Spock character. This is the term for animal diseases that can be transmitted to humans. Rabies, salmonella, toxoplasmosis and streptococcus are a few of the diseases man can get from animals. Rabies comes from raccoons, skunks, foxes, bats and dogs. Salmonella can come from chicken eggs and turtles. Toxoplasmosis is found in cat feces and Streptococcus can be carried in a dog's throat.
In addition, roundworms are transmitted to humans by contact with dog, horse, cow and cat feces. Ticks can cause Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain Fever.

None of these diseases are caused by pigeons. This is because pigeons have no common vector with humans. Parasites are vectors. Pigeon parasites cannot and do not live on or in humans, and vice versa. One reason is that pigeons have a

body temperature of 107 degrees. Their parasites cannot live at our cool 98.6 degrees. Dogs and cats, on the other hand, have temperatures of 101.5 to 102. This is within the range of human temperature and each can, to some degree, accommodate the vectors of the other.

The keeping of domestic racing or fancy pigeons, a hobby enjoyed by thousands of Canadians, is occasionally challenged because of false and misleading information related to the common feral pigeon which populates nearly every city park. Common or feral pigeons bear the same relationship to domestic racing and fancy pigeons as wild mustangs bear to the thoroughbred racehorses. The serious breeders of racing and fancy pigeons consider feral pigeons a nuisance.

Registered racing and fancy pigeons are kept in specially built and equipped lofts. Fancy pigeon are seldom; if ever let out of their lofts. Racing pigeons, also known as homing pigeons, are kept inside their lofts by fanciers except when they are on training flights or competing in races. In either case, they are on a strict routine. They do not "laze" about on buildings or neighbour's homes, as the common, unbanded feral pigeon is wont to do.

By today's standards, pigeons are neither fowl nor poultry. According to Steadman's Medical dictionary, fowl are galliformes, such as chickens, guineas, quail, peafowl, pheasants and turkeys. Ducks and geese are in a family called anseriformes, which are water fowl. Poultry refers to birds that are raised to provide meat and eggs for human consumption. Fancy and homing or racing pigeons are not raised for neither, but for exhibition, hobby and sport. Pedigreed racing pigeons are generally considered to small a species to be raised for table use.

Pigeons are in a family called Columbiformes. They are monogamous, mate for life, and both parents care for the young. Both males and females produce a "milk" in their crops for feeding their young. Young pigeons are fed in the nest until about one month of age, at which time they can fend for themselves. The offspring of fowl can scratch forage and feed themselves almost from the instant of birth.

PIGEON ZOONOSES

There are three "conditions" related to pigeons that can affect humans. These are Chlamydia, Fungal Infections and Hypersensitive pneumonitis. Chlamydia are microbes that are neither bacteria nor virus, but cause respiratory problems in a multitude of animals, including cats. It is contracted through contact with bird feces and dust from bird feathers. Chlamydia in pigeons is usually very mild, hardly causing any symptoms in the birds, much less humans. In fact, pigeons are so resistant to it they have been used as test animals in diagnosing subspecies of Chlamydia.

Precautionary measures like wearing a surgical or dust mask and wearing rubber gloves while cleaning the cages or loft protects against the possible exposure to

this microbe. Despite an estimated 18 million bird keepers in the United States, according to the CDC, there was only 50 to 100 cases per year through 1993, making it one of the rarest diseases in medicine.

Fungal infections can affect humans, and animals may be part of the infection cycle. Accumulated droppings under proper conditions can be a source of fungal growth. The infected droppings can be from all types of animals, including pigeons. The fungus produces a mild respiratory infection that can go practically unnoticed. The fungal spores are inhaled during cleaning of cages and lofts, just as in the case of Chlamydia. Regular cleaning of lofts and cages prevents this situation.

Hypersensitive pneumonitis, often called "pigeon keeper's lung" is similar to " coal miner's lung", "parakeet breeder's lung", "canary breeder's lung", and "parrot breeder's lung". It is not a disease in any sense of the word. It is an allergy to dust from pigeon feathers. It is not a disease that can be transmitted, just as hay fever cannot be transmitted. More humans are allergic to dog, cat and rabbit "dander" than to pigeon "dust". And if the racing and homing or fancy pigeons are kept in a loft, the chances of a neighbour suffering an allergic reaction are nil.

In conclusion, pigeons are no more likely to transmit disease to humans than any other animals, wild or domestic, and much less likely than most. Other pets, like dogs and cats, are a far greater public health risk than the pigeon. One can be bitten, scratched, knocked down, frightened or mauled by dogs and cats.

As with all pets, if cleanliness and common sense are used, the slight danger from infection from pets, including pigeons, is greatly outweighed by the proven psychological benefits and advantages of keeping and caring for them.

LOFT NOISE LEVELS

Almost everyone is familiar with the cooing sound made by doves. Pigeons make similar sounds. The flapping of wings is usually the loudest heard in a loft. When birds are in flight, they are silent, except for the sound of the wind through their wings.

The AU commissioned a NOISE SURVEY of pigeon lofts and proximal areas in October of 1995. Terracon Environmental, Inc., of Kansas City, MO., performed the tests on four lofts in the vicinity of Oklahoma City, OK. The results of the tests were calculated in decibels (dB.) using the "A-scale" weighting network. A-scale weighting makes the monitoring instruments less sensitive to certain high and low frequency sounds in much the same way that the human ear is less sensitive to these same sounds.

To help understand the results of noise tests and for comparison, the soft rustle of leaves is 10 dB. The noise level at night in an ordinary bedroom is approximately 15 dB. This is about the same noise level one encounters on a walk in the woods. A quiet street in the evening with no traffic is 30 dB.

A library's noise level is 35 dB, while conversational speech is 60-70 dB at a distance of three feet. This is why the librarian always shushes you. A business office with computers, copy machines and movement of people makes around 65 dB of sound. Average street traffic is 85 dB, while a rock band howls at 110 dB, more than Niagara falls at 80-90 dB, but still less than a jet aircraft at take off which generates 125 dB at 100 meters distance.

Where do pigeon fit into the scheme? At the Terracon test sites, noise was measured in lofts 2,000, 600, 200, and 100 birds. Surprisingly, the 600 bird loft was louder than the 2,000 bird loft, but just barely. These sites recorded 59.2 dB and 61.1 dB respectively. The 200 bird loft made 54.7 dB of noise while the 100 bird loft, probably the most common size for American fanciers at the peak of population, recorded 52.9 dB. These readings were taken INSIDE THE LOFTS.

Therefore, INSIDE a 100 pigeon loft, it is about as noisy as people speaking in conversational tones. Actually a bit less, because normal speech is about 60-70 dB. Common sense dictates that at 20, 30 or 40 feet distance, the noise levels would be commensurately less. It would seem that the noise level of site, then, would not be at a level that could be considered a nuisance, since it is at a lower level than normal conversation.

This conclusion was supported by Terracon in a study of the 100 pigeon loft. A monitoring device was put on a fence line approximately 25 feet from the loft. Tests revealed a noise level of 57.4 dB during the day and 55.4 dB at night. The pigeons were then REMOVED from the loft and the noise level tested again. The daytime average was 49.1 dB while the nighttime average was 44.6 dB.

The source of noise with the pigeons REMOVED was attributed to street traffic from two thoroughfares, one approximately 300 feet from the loft and the other approximately 100 feet away. Additionally a slight "whistling" was caused by wind passing between slats in the fence and a "squeak" came from a ventilator on the fancier's house.

There is no such thing as "absolute silence". Life is full of noises from uncontrolled sources. Wind, rain, thunderstorms, birds, traffic, construction noises and the like are part of modern life. Although the perception of "loudness" is a subjective phenomena, it is considered doubtful that any of the average sound levels recorded during the noise survey of the pigeon lofts would be perceived as "loud" by the average individual.

Like loudness, annoyance by noise is highly subjective and is difficult to relate to the sound, which causes it. Noise becomes more annoying as it gets louder than the background noise on which it is superimposed. Unsteady noises or those that contain tones (such as train whistles, sirens and car horns) tend to be the most annoying. In the Terracon tests, at 25 feet, the pigeons in the 100 bird loft only contributed between 8 to 10 dB of additional sound to the existing background noise. This is equivalent to the soft rustle of leaves.

PIGEONS IN THE SERVICE OF THEIR COUNTRY

Although the US Army began using pigeons as messengers as early as 1878, it was not until World War I that pigeons became a regular part of the military establishment. On Armistice day after the first war the Allied forces had approximately 320,000 pigeons which had been used for communication purposes.

Over 54,000 American homing pigeons served in World War II. 40.000 of these birds were supplied by civilian racing pigeon fanciers. In the 5 years of service, hundreds of thousands of messages were delivers by military birds. In 1943 the British established the Dickin Medal to honor war service by pigeons. One American pigeon, the famous GI Joe was awarded this badge of courage.

In Italy the 56th British Infantry Division broke through German lines and overran a town. Allied planes were scheduled to bomb the town, now occupied by the British. GI Joe flew 20 miles in 20 minutes with information of the situation, and the bombers were called off just prior to take off. The Lord Mayor of London, in gratitude for this heroic effort which undoubtedly saved many Englishmen's lives, bestowed upon GI Joe the Dickin Medal.

The Swiss continue to use these reliable messengers in the mountains where radios function poorly or not at all. In the Gulf war, despite billions of dollars of sophisticated electronic jamming equipment, the Iraqis communicated with headquarters via homing pigeons.

Ministry of Health
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Ontario

NOV 0 1 2005

Mr. Mike van der Jagt
139 Westmount Drive North
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Dear Mr. van der Jagt:

Thank you for your e-mail to Mr. Garfield Dunlop, MPP for Simcoe North regarding diseases transmissible from pigeons to humans. It is my pleasure to provide you with the following responses to address questions you raised:

1. Pigeon droppings can carry *Salmonella*, which may cause disease in humans. The most frequent type of illness results in gastro-intestinal symptoms. The bacteria may cause more serious illness in young children, immunocompromised persons, and occasionally healthy adults. There is no evidence that transmission of these bacteria from pigeons to humans occurs with any frequency, however. There are many different subtypes of *Salmonella* and some are quite species specific, preferring to infect only one type of animal. Recent evidence suggests that the pigeon subtype does not infect mammals or poultry. Although some pigeons may carry avian tuberculosis, it is a different species of bacteria than the one that causes most cases of human tuberculosis. Humans can become infected with avian tuberculosis, but it is rare. Finally, many types of bacteria and viruses can cause meningitis. While pigeons may carry some of these organisms, meningitis in humans is rarely linked to pigeons.

2. As with most species of wild birds, pigeons can carry psittacosis, a bacterial infection spread by inhalation of the bacteria from infected droppings. The major host for this bacterium is parrots (psittacine birds), followed by water birds (shorebirds, gulls, ducks), and perching birds (passerine birds). However, it can be found in pigeons and can cause disease in humans. Newcastle disease virus, which is common in pigeons, is mostly a disease of birds, but it can cause mild conjunctivitis in humans. Histoplasmosis is a fungus that grows well in environments heavily contaminated with bird or bat droppings. Although it causes only mild respiratory disease in adults, children can be more seriously affected. Pigeons may infrequently become infected with West Nile virus, but this virus can only be transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito, not directly from birds to humans. Although avian influenza virus can be found in many species of wild birds, the primary carriers are water birds, such as ducks and geese.

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Mr. Mike van der Jagt

3. In my opinion, pigeons pose no greater a threat to health than dogs and cats. Basic precautions, such as hand-washing after handling the animals and before eating, and maintaining the health of animals in your care, are sufficient to live in harmony with these animals. For all of these animals, special consideration is necessary for young children and immunocompromised persons.

Yours truly,

Dr. Sheela V. Basrur
Chief Medical Officer of Health and
Assistant Deputy Minister

cc: Mr. Garfield Dunlop, MPP, Simcoe North