

IMAGE, WHAT IMAGE?????

By Duncan MacGregor

Go and wash your hands, the tea is nearly cooked. What's that? You'll have to talk louder I can't hear you for the sound of the water. That boy, what's wrong with the boy? He seemed like a nice young fellow to me. Not interested you say, how on earth could he get interested, you sat out there on the veranda earbashing him about how wonderful you are and that you'd do him such a favour by getting rid of some of your old stock to him and even then you tried to make money in the process.

Grab a beer out of the fridge and sit down tea won't be long. You know, I remember years ago, it must be nearly thirty years now, young Jimmy was on the way, and we were walking back home down Hemming Street when you saw some pigeons flying around. You couldn't help yourself, you were fascinated, the way they were rolling and pitching as one. Remember, you dragged me to the door of that house. In hindsight it was probably because you were too scared to go by yourself, anyway, the nice old man invited us in and after a cuppa you and him went down the back and had a look at the pigeons. Not one word all that time about how good he was, you know! You went back there every week after that.

Slave labour, slave labour you say because you had to scratch a bit of pigeon poop. Just think about it and you'll realise that he just wanted to see how keen you were. Did he sell you any of his old duds? Not likely, after a month he gave you, yes gave you four of his young birds. Good ones too, from what I can recall and he was still helping you till the day they put him in the home.

Eat your tea. What's that? I should know better than to serve you sausages. Don't be so ungrateful just eat your tea before you wear it.

When I was at the salon the other day I got talking to young Christy Bell. Don't talk with your mouth full. She's old Mrs Jansen from around the corners granddaughter and somehow the subject of pigeons came up. She called you a bunch of grumpy old men in flannelette shirts. Yes, yes I know you don't wear flannelette shirts. But, anyway, it got me to thinking and you know what? I think you lot need an image change.

Don't you dare swear in my kitchen or you'll be eating with the dog. Image change you ask, what image change? Just cast your mind back a few years and think how many members you had. Yes, I know some died and others shifted away, but did you recruit new people? Not likely, instead you put boundaries in to stop anyone new getting some sort of advantage. Rubbish, sometimes I'm sure your mental capacity is on the decline, even if the wind did blow the same for the whole season, it's unlikely to be that way all the time.

Anyway what about that time the bloke on the television said that pigeons were the 'RATS OF THE SKY'. The T.V. people came out to your club to get the other side of the story. But what did you lot do? Whinge, whinge is what you did, about everything, the greenies,

the falcons, the neighbours, the price of feed and medication or anything else that popped into your empty heads. And create an impression, what an impression, sour faced men in baggy old track pants, those famous flannelette shirts, and you with your old jumper with more holes in it than wool. That's some sort of impression. There you go again, it's only pigeon racing you say, well maybe if pigeon racing wants to survive it may have to make some sort of decent impression.

And what about when the council contacted you about the R.S.P.C.A. and the fact that they were considering placing space requirements and restrictions on the number of birds you could keep. What did you lot do? I'll tell you what you did. You stuck your heads in the sand, that's what you did.

Once upon a time nothing would be too much trouble. You used to take the birds down to the local school and let them go for the mini Olympics, now you complain that it's not far enough to toss them. So what!

Not enough members at the club is another gripe you have. Even when you did have members did you support them? Again not likely, you and your mates used to go down to the shops to buy your chips and coke because you could save a few cents. If that's not miserable I'll go home. No wonder the club is low on money. If only your lot could stop finding faults in each other and everything around you, you may just find that things will improve.

See I knew you'd like the sausages. I'll get your dessert. What, you don't feel hungry anymore? But you always eat dessert.