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For the Birds

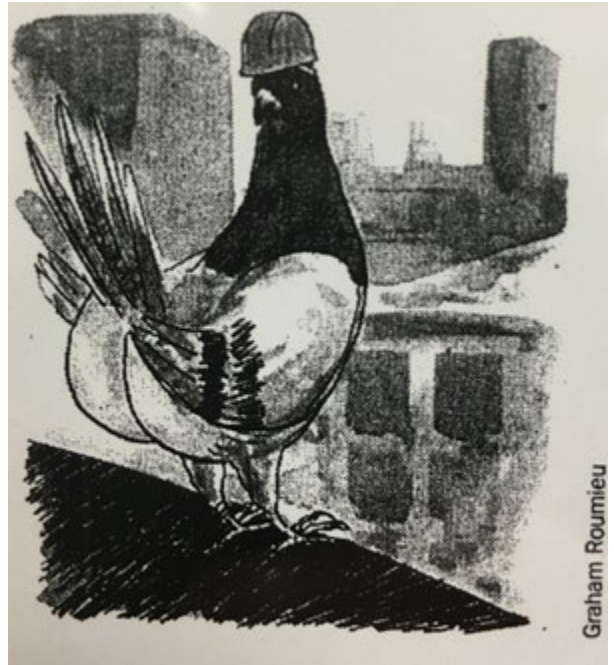
By Sheila Muto, Staff Reporter of The Wall Street Journal

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Architect Sid Schlomann's business has gone to the birds.

Mr. Schlomann, an in-house architect for the U.S. Postal Service who helps manage construction, renovation and repair matters in the New York metropolitan area, has turned his attention to the unsightly and unsanitary droppings and property damage caused by pigeons and seagulls.

The U.S. Postal service last year began trying to clean up the pigeon-droppings problem at the two-block-long Farley Post Office building, a historic structure in New York City- a portion of which is being converted into an addition to the Penn Station railroad terminal. This summer, part of the building will be used for the Republican National Convention.



"The building has been very much in the news in recent months," given the Penn Station conversion project and the upcoming convention, says Mr. Schlomann. "That's what triggered the need to spruce up the building" and try to get rid of the pigeons. "It was unsightly with white streaks running down the columns" of the building, he says, which isn't a good backdrop for new conferences.

To deal with the pigeon problem, Mr. Schlomann says about \$100,000 was spent to purchase and install netting and an electric track system developed by Bell Environmental Services, a pest-control company based in Parsippany, N.J. the tracks, which are laid out on the building's window ledges, give pigeons a nonlethal electric shock.

Phil Waldorf, Bell Environmental's president, believes the pigeon population has grown substantially in New York, in part, because a few years ago, the city banned the use of a pesticide that caused hallucinations and even death in pigeons.

Meantime, Mr. Schlomann is contending with birds of another sort at a mail-processing plant near John F. Kennedy International Airport. Crafty seagulls have discovered they can crack open clams they find at a nearby beach dropping them onto the roof of the processing plant. Mr. Schlomann believes those fly-over drops have been the cause of roof leaks at the facility, "it's an ongoing problem," he says.