

ENC 1101 DIAGNOSTIC

SMALL READING AND IN CLASS ESSAY

Please read the article below then answer the prompt that follows it. Please remember to discuss the answer with appropriate grammar, language, descriptions, and details. Remember, this diagnostic is not graded, but will be looked over carefully to ensure that you are placed in the appropriate class. Results of this essay will be discussed in a forthcoming class.

The following is an article by Ginia Bellafante on the *New York Times* titled “Using DNA to Fight Dog Owners’ Discourtesy in Brooklyn.” This article was published on July 30, 2015:

On a frigid Wednesday evening in January, 40 residents of One Brooklyn Bridge Park, a condominium complex converted from an old printing factory on the Brooklyn Heights waterfront, gathered at Wag Club, a dog grooming and training service on the ground floor, to discuss an issue that had been stirring tensions in the building. Dispersed among the 440 or so apartments are about 175 dogs of varying sizes, breeds and dispositions. As it happened, some of their owners had been behaving badly.

Something had to be done, but what precisely? For some time, dog waste had been a persistent problem, especially during inhospitable weather, when people were allowing their pets to relieve themselves in stairwells and corridors.

Because there was no “hard data” on the issue, as one memo from the building’s board of managers to residents put it, the staff had been instructed to keep a record of incidents for the month of December. During that time, the memo revealed, there were 52 reported occurrences, “a mix of diarrhea, feces, urine and vomit: found on virtually every floor including the main lobby and north and south lobbies; found in all five elevators and with the staff cleanup time ranging from 10 to 50 minutes (average time roughly 20 minutes) per incident.” What was happening wasn’t merely gross, it was also getting expensive. So in December the board decreed that all dogs in the building had to be registered and have their DNA tested, allowing stealth excrement to be matched to what we’ll euphemistically call the dogs’ wayward owners.

The condominium that has begun using DNA testing of the animals to punish owners whose pets have left waste in the building. Science was going to be the new sheriff in town because appeals to courtesy were not working.

In the way that some conservatives worry that marriage equality will ultimately lead to people walking down the aisle with their goats or their half-sisters, some dog owners feared that DNA testing would open the gates to a new era of unstoppable oppression and tyranny. At the building meeting in January, which lasted about two hours, one woman, according to some of the residents who attended, wondered aloud whether the new testing policy would encourage nefarious conspiracy. What if someone didn’t like her, she speculated, and what if that person decided that the best way to express that distaste was by framing her with fecal evidence?

Theoretically you could get back at the person who had the last glass of punch at the Christmas party by following her as she walked her dog, retrieving the waste she deposited in the garbage and leaving it relatively close to her door.

Is forensic investigation the only effective combatant against the outsize entitlement that inevitably infects life in so many buildings in New York? When the board of managers and staff at One Brooklyn began researching DNA testing, they found a product called Poo Prints, the subsidiary of a biotech company in Tennessee. Since its introduction four years ago, more than 1,000 apartment and condominium buildings around the country have started to use it. In Italy last year, the City of Naples began a genetic-testing program to deal with dog waste, fining violators \$685.

Since enforcement of DNA testing began at One Brooklyn in May, seven matches have been made, and fines of \$250 attached to each. One resident has been found in violation twice. But overall the program has proved to be a significant deterrent. “There’s a shaming aspect, no question,” Mr. Eisenstein said. “Just knowing that we’re going to find you, that the board will know who you are and that we’re not going to be sympathetic about why it happened, that’s a lot.”

ESSAY PROMPT

Please summarize the article in 1-2 paragraphs, and then respond in a paragraph whether you agree with the condominium’s decision to DNA test dogs as a preventative measure, whether you disagree with the decision, or if you have a more complex position.