

# The New York Times

## City Room

Blogging From the Five Boroughs

July 6, 2010, 1:45 pm

## End Times: Dog Interviews, Bike Ads and Prince

By *J. DAVID GOODMAN*

Signs of the apocalypse:

- 
- NEW YORK  
ONLINE**
- 1) The heat.
  - 2) Co-op boards that **want to interview your dog.**
  - 3) The pop star Prince declaring the Internet “**over.**”

Enough has been said about the first end-times situation, but the second howls for some deeper thinking. For instance, can you coach a dog for his big sit-down with a cheerless co-op board? Some local dog trainers believe you can.

**“It’s usually the old co-ops on Central Park West, Fifth Avenue and Park Avenue that want to interview the dogs,” a Manhattan dog trainer, Elena Gretch, told Brick Underground. “They want to completely control the environment they’ve created.”**

Ms. Gretch counsels four approaches to the dreaded dog panel: 1) Avoid it altogether by proving the dog is a certified good doggy citizen (something [the American Kennel Club can do](#)); 2) Train the dog not to bark at a doorbell or a knock at the door if a cruel board member decides to test him that way; 3) Get the dog to lie still for the whole interview; 4) Be small (co-op boards give pooches over 25 pounds particular scrutiny.) And, just to be safe, it might be a good idea to groom your mutt ahead of time — because you can tell a lot about a dog’s financials by the silkiness of his coat.

Up in the 52nd Police Precinct in the Bronx (Bedford Park, Fordham, Kingsbridge, Norwood and University Heights), residents appear less concerned with the behavior of dogs than they are with that of local civil servants, some of whom have taken to illegal parking with the apparently tacit consent of the police.

As **Boogie Downer notes**, at least one irate resident has been snapping photos of flagrant parking violations and uploading them to [UncivilServants.org](#), a Web site run by [Transportation](#)

[Alternatives](#), the advocacy group, and devoted to [exposing misuse of parking permits by government employees](#).

Also clogging up streets in another corner of the city, according to **Sheepshead Bites**: [bicycle billboards](#).

Spotted on Emmons Avenue in Sheepshead Bay, the bike-powered advertisement raises questions about whether such developments are destroying the visual landscape of a community, saving energy by replacing similar but truck-mounted ads, and/or putting other cyclists in danger by jamming up the bike lane with their considerable bike bulk. Could such ad campaigns grow more common with the expanded network of bike lanes?

Perhaps. After all, online advertising — in fact, the whole of the Internet — is so over, the musician Prince [told a British paper](#), The **Daily Mirror**, which also happens to be giving his latest album away free with its July 10 issue. The physical — CDs, ads in real life — is back.

“The Internet’s like MTV — at one time MTV was hip, and suddenly it became outdated,” Prince said in an interview with The Mirror. “All these computers and digital gadgets are no good. They just fill your head with numbers, and that can’t be good for you.” Prince, of course, prefers more cryptic symbols.

*Postscript:* not surprisingly, this architecturally unsound blog post was produced in [the city’s ugliest building](#), according to a new ranking from the American Institute of Architects. Though, as **The Awl** points out, the same association is touting [this lovely structure](#) on its Web site.

So maybe it’s just the heat.