

## Relief for Big City Residents

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I like to say Omaha is a great place to live but you wouldn't want to visit there. Unless you are a College World Series fan or a Berkshire Hathaway shareholder there is little reason to choose Omaha as a destination for a vacation (or... let's be honest... even a weekend). Someday it might be known as the home of the Muse but for now it remains a hidden gem on the prairie. Folks around here are mighty friendly (if I could channel Buddy Epsen for a moment). In contrast folks in truly recognizable "big" cities (NY, LA, Chicago et al) have a reputation for... well, let's just say impatience. I go most days in Omaha without *ever hearing a horn honk*, but it's hard to go a few minutes without hearing a horn in NY or Boston. I used to think this impatient, slightly rude state of mind was simply cultural, but my recent trip to the big city changed my mind.

### Take a Load Off and Sit a Spell

What I found is that a side affect of the human density of a truly large city is that restaurants and gas stations are more protective of their facilities. To put it another way it is really difficult to find a public restroom in a big city. I'm pretty sure there is an episode of Seinfeld where Kramer has this exact problem. In fact, I can think of at least 8 restrooms I'm free to use within a 1 block radius of my office (not that I am that prolific), but do you think I could find a restroom in down town Newark NJ? I had to drive 4 miles to Home Depot before I finally found one - and I would just like to publically apologize here and now to "Jean", the lady working in Bathroom and Fittings.... but that's another story.

Why are big city folk surly and impatient? My theory is that they are all furtively looking everywhere for a place to relieve themselves. They simply need more access to restroom facilities. After my experience I am resolved to no longer see city folks as large groups of impatient and naturally truculent people all climbing over each other for a place in line. Instead I will see something different. I will see a bunch of people who are desperate because they have no place to go.... I mean, they need to go and they have no place... to go.. because they really really have to go... but they can't. Let me try again. I see a group of people who are really uncomfortable because nature is calling and they are suffering from the unfortunate dearth of facilities (better, but still a little clunky). It might also explain how break dancing got its start in the city - an extension of the peepee dance perhaps.

So here's to you bigger city folk - I hope you find what you are looking for, and I hope it has been recently cleaned. President Obama, if you are listening, how about setting aside some of that stimulus money for some nice cavernous restrooms for the folks in downtown Newark. I'm pretty sure they are shovel ready. Now I'm off to make a contribution to the campaign to reduce the size of the fine for public urination.