

The Park West Tenant

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The Newsletter of the Park West Village Tenants' Association

August 1988

P W V S O C I A L C A L E N D A R

Jazzmobile on 100th Street

Come on Tuesday, August 30th, 7-9 p.m.

Jazzmobile has been in existence for 24 years. Mostly professionals have performed giving free concerts all over New York and also out of town. Jazzmobile has a workshop to help talented young children. In the past two years, Jazzmobile has given concerts sponsored in our neighborhood by the 24th Precinct, The Douglas Houses and the Park West Village Tenants Association.

Come celebrate the end of summer with Jazzmobile on 100th Street. It's free and everyone is welcome.

TAKE A TREE WALK--Vic Wagner, tree buff in 400, will lead a 90 minute walk for PWV'rs on Sunday, Sept. 18 at 2 p.m. Meet at the 100th Street entrance to Central Park to circle the pond and follow the stream for a modest distance. Vic will have a printed guide (\$2 please) to stimulate "more ways to look at a tree". Reservations up to 20, first come first serve. Call or leave a note for Vic Wagner, Apt. 8M, 400 CPW, Tel. 864-5593.

A PWV INTERNATIONAL DINNER--is in the works for late October. Would you like to help plan, decorate or make a dish? Please call Lucille Donte at 662-0723.

LAST CALL FOR BUILDING QUESTIONNAIRES--We will soon begin our tabulation. The answers you provide on the building questionnaire can help improve elevator service, plumbing, heat and air conditioning, parking rights, security, etc. for years to come. Thank you to those who have responded. DELAY NO LONGER to those who haven't. If you need another questionnaire, ask a bldg. rep. or call PWVTA 662-2610 or 865-3078.

SPONSOR SHOULD NOT WIN RENT INCREASE FOR 372/382 NEW WINDOWS SAYS A-G'S OFFICE

"The sponsor should not be granted any 'MCI' rent increases" for the new windows in 372/382, since the sponsor originally stated that the windows would be replaced "at its sole expense." The Attorney General's office offered this opinion in response to a PWVTA inquiry after PWVTA learned that Helmsley intended to apply to the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) to request a Major Capital Improvement (MCI) rent increase for the new windows being installed in 372/382.

Nonetheless, the sponsor may still apply, for it is DHCR and not the A-G that calls the shots on allowable rent increases. Hundreds of tenants and owners in the two buildings signed petitions last April urging the sponsor to act in good faith and not make application for an increase.

Windows 80% "In" in 372
Installations About to Start in 382

Roughly 80% of the 415 apartments in 372 had new windows put in between April and June. Installation then stopped, largely because a sizable group of tenants and owners in studio apartments in both buildings did not want the design of studio windows proposed and would not agree to have the new windows installed. With agreement now near (see story below), installation is expected to be resumed shortly in 372 and to begin in 382, with the goal of finishing before year's end.

STUDIO WINDOW COMMITTEE VICTORIOUS AFTER ARDUOUS CAMPAIGN

Protesting the prospective loss of their present picture windows to a new window punctuated with a bar down the middle, a group of 372/382 studio owners and tenants organized last April, first to protest and then to propose an alternative. After months of negotiations, the Committee's persistence and initiative paid off. Senior officials of the Helmsley organization agreed to install an alternative design at the sponsor's sole expense both for those who had not yet put in new windows and even for those who had. It seems likely many studio dwellers will opt for the new design which includes a picture window

Lightening Struck the top NE corner of 400 CPW at 5:30 a.m. Sunday morning, June 26, sending a cascade of bricks to the bus stop below and all across Central Park West. Luckily, neither people nor cars were in the way. Management claims the strike was so severe it could not be contained by the building's lightening conductors.

Scores of PWV Air Conditioners Gave Out during the recent heat wave, leaving tenants sweltering for up to two weeks. The undermanned repair staff (divided into condo and tenant services) reportedly was up to 45 requests behind. PWV wiring came into question in one Columbus Avenue building. New air conditioners were installed in some apartments. Reportedly only two or three models are now on the market that will fit the PWV "sleeve" and they are limited to 11,700 BTU's which will not sufficiently cool the larger PWV rooms. PWVTA is looking further into these questions: if you have information or can help, please call the PWVTA hot line: 662-2610.

A Water Shortage in PWV--From June 15 to June 22 four buildings (784, 788, 792 Columbus and 372 CPW) were without water for intermittent periods of 2-12 hours. 382 followed suit a few days later.

PWVTA checks with the City Dept. of Environmental Protection indicated pipe installations underway at CPW and W. 106th Street necessitated the closing of one of the regulators which may have reduced water pressure. Combined with very hot dry days, pressure could have been reduced to the point where pumps in the affected PWV buildings automatically shut off.

However, two buildings in the complex (392 and 400 CPW) did not experience a water stoppage nor did many nearby buildings with whom we checked.

During and after the water stoppage, management staff worked on water pumps in the affected buildings and cleaned the water tanks in all buildings.

In a letter addressed to the Commissioner of the Dept. of Environmental Protection, PWVTA President Win Armstrong outlined the problems and specifically requested an inspection, by the Water Dept. of all seven PWV buildings to ascertain existing or potential problems in obtaining adequate water for the complex.

Tenants are strongly advised during hot dry spells to keep on hand whatever water supplies they deem necessary should further water stoppages occur.

Subway noise will at last be reduced for 400 tenants by the now-being-installed device which will close the open air ducts under the grates along CPW when a train passes by--thus containing the sound. A handful of tenants in 400 have dogged the City agencies about the resounding noise that drowned speech and shook floors over the two years that major repairs to the IND line--now nearly completed--have been underway.

The Rent Increases passed by the NYC Rent Guidelines Board for the period October 1, 1988 to September 30, 1989 are 6% for a 1 year lease and 9% for a 2 year lease. The "Vacancy" allowance was jumped to 12%. Tenants renting apartments for under \$325 a month will have to pay a supplementary \$5 a month. Increases are expected to be lower next year, an election year.

A Cautionary Note--The phone booth at 100th Street and CPW has reportedly been used as a hangout of late for purse snatchers waiting passersby getting off the bus. PWV Security and the 24th Precinct have been alerted. Please be watchful.

Elevators have trapped tenants in several PWV buildings in recent weeks. There have also been serious malfunctions in all buildings. PWVTA is undertaking a consolidated campaign to restore safe and dependable elevator service to all buildings. The Condo boards also have plans in the works to improve service. PLEASE REPORT ANY INCIDENTS OF ELEVATOR MALFUNCTION TO PWVTA'S BLDG. REEPS OR USE THE ELEVATOR FORM WHICH WILL SOON BE PLACED UNDER YOUR DOOR. These can help everyone identify and get problems corrected.

Recent additions to PWVTA's Board include 382 alternate reps Joyce Bialik, Apt. 14D, and Claire Dockery, Apt. 10U, tel: 866-6061, who were elected at a recent meeting of 382 floor captains and bldg. reps.

The Farmers' Market is open every Friday at 102nd Street and Amsterdam Avenue, about 8:15 a.m.-5 p.m.

PIGEONS ON YOUR PORCH? HINTS TO DISPEL THEM

Many PWV residents cannot use their terraces: the pigeons have taken over. Feathers, feces and even baby pigeons occupy the space. The Dept. of Health placed violations on 372, 392, 400 and 788 in July for pigeon filth.

What can we do? and not do? Here are some suggestions collected from PWV's bitter experience:

Worth a Try:

- a. Owls, windsocks, pinwheels, and strips of cloth or foil that rattle or fly in the wind. Move them from place to place.
- b. Water pistols (You may not use any more lethal weapon.)
- c. Cats--fake or real. One tenant has offered to rent or lend her cats.
- d. Chicken wire.
- e. Rice and red pepper mixed.
- f. Remove protective coverings under which they like to roost. Even let a fan blow where they like to rest.

Not Worth Trying:

- a. Mix-a-lite--4 inch steel needles. Dangerous to people.
- b. Roost-no-more and other stiff glues. The pigeons learn to fly over or under and you lean on your rail and get stuck. Messy and really impossible to remove. OK for ledges but not porch railings.
- c. Poisons, traps, and even B.B. guns are illegal.

Pigeon feces can cause lung problems: be careful how you clean up.

Psittacosis can be caused by breathing in a fungus in pigeon droppings. Wet the droppings before you sweep them up. Psittacosis, also called parrot fever, can cause headaches, nausea, fever preceded by a chill, and respiratory problems.

PLEASE DON'T FEED THE PIGEONS IN PWV

Take feed (and pigeons) to the park, please. Management and PWVTA hope to cooperate in a program to reduce the pigeon population.

Note: If you have suggestions that may help your neighbors, please send them to PWVTA, Box 20339, Park West Finance Station, NYC 10025. We will try to publish them in a future issue.

PLAYGROUNDS ARE FOR EVERYONE

The Playground Committee is still in full force attempting to improve the safety conditions and aesthetic value of the 6 PWV playgrounds. (Indignant grownups have complained to the Committee that the playgrounds are used not only by children, but by adults who both traverse and recreate in them!)

Several years ago after obtaining signatures on a petition to improve the safety of our playgrounds, management said "playgrounds are not a priority". With conversion, safety mats are to be purchased for playgrounds in 372 and 382. However, this is not enough. Our playgrounds do not provide play space or equipment appropriate for children over a wide age range.

Four years ago a plan was presented by the Committee to management suggesting that one area (possibly behind 372 or 400) have all the equipment removed so that older children could play ball and ride bikes in this area and therefore be out of the way of the walkways and play areas of smaller children. It was also suggested that the center area have some lower slides and pyramid monkey-bars designed for smaller children. This could save money because fewer safety mats would be needed where the equipment was removed. Similar divisions could be made in the playgrounds on the Columbus Avenue side.

Recently a playground questionnaire was circulated to residents in all buildings by PWVTA, in cooperation with the House and Grounds Committee in 372 and the Board of Managers in 382. If you have not returned your playground questionnaire, please do so as we would like to have everyone's opinions and suggestions for future planning. If you need another copy, please call 865-8538.

--Frances Tome, Chair, Playground Committee

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PWVTA URGES TENANT PROTECTIONS
IN 392/400 CONVERSION PLANS

A special Board meeting was called on August 4 to discuss the role of the Tenant Association in the conversion process in 392 and 400 CPW and in relation to a negotiating group in those buildings now in formation.

Board representatives especially from the converted buildings emphasized the need for resident tenants and buyers to work together for greater protection on such issues as elevator repair, plumbing, maintenance of services and the avoidance of MCI rent increases. They stressed that their experience shows that only the sponsor gains from isolating or dividing residents during a conversion. However, other members felt that participation by PWVTA members in the conversion process would weaken the Association. After a thorough exploration of the issues, the PWVTA Board voted 16-5-1 in favor of the following resolution:

"PWVTA recognizes that some of its members may wish to take part in the activities of their buildings during a conversion process-- attending meetings, serving on committees and/or participating in groups formed to deal with the conversion. The Association, having decided not to be a party to the negotiations over the terms of purchase, does recognize that certain tenant protections may be achieved in the negotiations and that even details of a final black book can have far reaching implications for tenants. Thus, PWVTA urges any of its members who do engage in activities related to the conversion to work for tenant protections and to aim toward avoiding black book provisions or omissions that impact unfavorably on tenants."

Current Conversions Remove Housing for
Low/Middle Income

Noting that New York lacks policies to maintain or develop rental housing for its low and middle income citizens, and that conversion is reducing the current stock of low and middle income rental apartments by about 40,000 a year, the PWVTA Board reaffirmed its opposition to conversion in PWV and elsewhere. Ten additional resolutions noted PWVTA support of legislation to strengthen the position of rental tenants, monitoring the landlord's actions to prevent harassment, analyzing the provisions of the red herring and black books as they affect tenants, monitoring building conditions, providing information about the meaning and implications of conversion proposals, and working with other groups seeking to improve the plans on matters of common concern. These resolutions will be published in full in the next issue.

392/400 CONVERSION ORGANIZATION IS FORMED

After the receipt of red herrings in both 392 and 400, a general meeting of tenants in the two buildings was held on June 29. The group unanimously adopted a resolution to create an organization -- the 392/400 Committee -- for the purpose of dealing with conversion.

On August 17, tenants from the two buildings met again to elect a slate of 7 representatives from each building to form an Executive Committee of 14 to oversee the conversion negotiations for 392 and 400. The new Committee includes potential buyers, intended non-buyers and undecideds. The group notes many issues of common concern between buyers and tenants, and stresses it is concerned "with the outcome of conversion for all tenants, whether or not they choose to buy."

HARASSMENT AGAIN? TENANT ALERT!

More harried callers on the PWVTA hot line and the rising number of eviction notices posted on tenants' doors suggest management may be reinstating a harassment campaign. Please remember that at great cost in time, money and the effort of hundreds of harassed tenants who provided information, PWVTA obtained a court injunction against harassment. Your Association is still paying off the legal debt, but the injunction is in effect. If you or your neighbors are experiencing harassment, please let us know! Contact the PWVTA reps in your bldg., or Florence Wagener, 17T, 784 Columbus or Win Armstrong, 5P, 400 CPW, 865-3078 or 662-2610.

PARK WEST VILLAGE TENANTS' ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 20339 Park West Finance Station
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Sign me up as a member. Here is my check for \$35.00 to cover my dues for 1988.

Name _____

Bldg. ____ Apt. ____ Phone _____

Make check payable to PWVTA. Give it to your Building Rep. with this coupon or mail it to the above address. Please do not mail cash. (If you cannot pay the full amount, please pay what you can.)