

# The Park West Tenant

Vol. 14 Number 1 The Newsletter of the Park West Village Tenants' Association February 1989

## HOW SECURE IS YOUR APARTMENT?

PWV Faces Outbreak of  
Burglaries, Purse-Snatchings, Hold-ups

This issue discusses recent examples of crimes in and around Park West Village and what PWV tenants, PWV Security and the NYC police can do to reduce the incidence of similar crimes. It updates our July 1986 newsletter on the same subject. The PWVTA Security Committee thanks Park West Village Security, police officers from the 24th precinct, and tenants who have been recent victims of thefts in and around PWV for their help in providing information.

### Recent Crime in PWV

In the last four months (Oct. - Jan), more than two dozen burglaries\* and nearly as many purse-snatchings and muggings\* have taken place in PWV buildings and on the grounds. Restaurant delivery personnel have been held up on PWV elevators and in front of buildings. Car vandalism is on the rise. Hardest hit at the moment are tenants in 392 and 400...but no building has escaped the thieves' attention.

\*Burglary is a theft in which the thief has no contact with the person whose property he is stealing. Robbery connotes contact between the thief and the victim: mugging (where the assailant uses or threatens physical force), purse-snatching, and hold-ups are forms of robbery. So far we have received no reports of injury to tenants in recent crimes.

### When and How PWV Thefts Happen

The vast majority of burglaries take place during working hours, between 10 am and 5 pm. Purse-snatchings and hold-ups have been reported around the clock.

In almost all the recent burglaries, the thief used pincers to pull out cylinder locks without plates--a method of operation (MO) police say takes only seconds. (Plates slow the process and so far have been a deterrent.) Empty apartments, instantly noticeable because of 'dummy' locks and no guard plates, have also been entered, the thieves then climbing around, up or down to the next balcony and breaking into an occupied apartment from the adjoining terrace.

Mostly money, jewelry, cameras and items small in size have been stolen and packed into a valise or suitcase also taken from the apartment. Most apartments in this latest siege of burglaries have not been vandalized.

Multiple purse snatchings and a few muggings have been perpetrated on PWV grounds, in the PWV parking lots, on 97th and 100th Street, and around the subway entrances.

### IF YOU SUSPECT A POSSIBLE BURGLARY

- o If you hear or see someone you don't know trying to enter or coming from an apartment on your floor--or even a maintenance, security, delivery person or tenant inspecting doors or ringing bells--please call PWV Security: 222-4300 or 222-4335.
- o Report your name and apartment and the apartment or floor where you have seen the questionable person(s), and describe them. Security will endeavor to be tactful in their inquiry of such persons and to embarrass no one. Several burglaries might have been headed off or caught if neighbors had called earlier. One robber was caught by PWV Security as a result of one tenant's good description and another's prompt call.
- o Please also call PWVTA Security chair Carol Springstun, 864-6054. Tenant descriptions and reports help us alert other tenants.

### AND IF YOU HAVE BEEN BURGLIED

- o The Police Department asks that you call 911 immediately, preferably from a neighbor's apartment. Report there has been a burglary and tell the operator where you will wait for the police. The police ask that you do not enter your apartment until they arrive (usually 15-30 minutes) as anything you have touched may reduce evidence they need.
- o Call PWV Security (222-4300 or 222-4335). Ask that they wait for the police to arrive before touching the door or entering the apartment. Note: The police are making special efforts to solve our current burglaries and request everyone's cooperation in protecting evidence.

\*Call Carol Springstun, 864-6054, PWVTA Security Chair, or one of the Security Committee reps in your building (see list below). We'll try to help with both immediate and follow up steps.

\*Later--even the next day--list descriptions of what has been stolen, for possible use by police, for insurance, tax deduction and hopefully even recovery.

#### REDUCING THE CHANCES OF THEFT

Actions tenants may consider to reduce the chances of theft include:

- o GET A PLATE(S) OVER YOUR LOCK(S)--Virtually all of the recent burglaries (and many past) have been of apartments with no guard plates (or through empties with no plates). If you choose to plate just one lock, we recommend covering the top (non-management) lock. Local locksmiths will probably charge \$35-\$65 for this service. Management will install a plate over its lock for \$35 between 9-5, Monday to Friday, tel: 222-5121 or 222-5096.
- o REMOVE KEY TO TERRACE DOOR--Not foolproof, but in the past thieves have skipped balcony doors where keys were removed. Removing the key makes entry more difficult, slower, noisier, more visible--hopefully more catchable.
- o HELP STRANGERS FIND THE RIGHT BUZZER--but Don't let people whom you don't know and who do not have keys into the building, Please! In buildings where there is a concierge, you can take the person to the concierge. Any PWV resident will understand your reticence in the current circumstance.
- o CHECK OUT REPAIR AND DELIVERY PERSONS--Especially if you have not requested a repair or delivery, check identification downstairs, not at your door, or request Security to check before you open your door.

Operation Identification - The 24th precinct will lend tenants an engraving tool with which to engrave one's social security number on equipment, jewelry and other valuables, making them harder to sell and possibly easier to get back. The Operation Identification sign for one's door given by the police may be a deterrent to thieves.

- o RECORD SERIAL NUMBERS of valuable equipment and take pictures and keep descriptions of jewelry and other valuables. The police warehouse in Queens contains millions of dollars worth of property no one has identified. If the police are given serial numbers and descriptions, there is a better chance of your getting something back. The Property Clerk's phone is (212) 374-5905.
- o ALARMS--Unfortunately, many alarms go off if a pet or an unwary guest walks in the wrong place or you are slow to put down the bundles before the alarm time limit ends. PWV Security often cannot readily identify from which apartment an alarm is sounding. The NYC police report that 98% of alarms they receive are false and will not come after the third false alarm. Nonetheless, if an alarm goes off, a burglar will probably take off speedily.
- o GOING ON VACATION?--Best to let PWV Management and/or a trusted neighbor know how to reach you in case of theft, fire, flood or other mishap. Also, if you will have friends staying in your apartment, write to PWV Management with their names and give a copy to your visitor. If Security inquires--as they may do for any stranger entering the apartment--or if your guests should lock themselves out--both guests and management should be protected by your letter.
- o COMING HOME FROM BUS OR SUBWAY--PWV Security suggests using the walks through PWV rather than the streets, but avoid cutting through the parking lots where several recent purse-snatchings have occurred. Tenants who have shouted and encouraged a chase have in several instances recovered their belongings either because Security has caught the thief or because the thief dumped the bag rather than be caught with it. However, in other instances Security was inside or too far away to hear the shouts. If you hear someone calling for help, please call both 911 and PWV Security immediately.
- o KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS--Tenants are the front line of any security watch. PWV Security, the police and PWVTA all suggest a meeting of residents on each floor, to know each other and agree formally or informally on watching for and reporting any intruders.

IF YOU HAVE BEEN A VICTIM OF A THEFT, MUGGING OR PURSE-SNATCHING IN THE PAST FOUR MONTHS AND WE HAVE NOT YET REACHED YOU, PLEASE CALL PWVTA SECURITY CHAIR CAROL SPRINGSTUN AT 864-6054. INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE CAN HELP PROTECT OTHERS.

H E L P   W A N T E D

Leaders Dedicated to Continue Building a Strong PWV Tenants' Association

Offices Open for Nomination:

President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Membership Secretary

THE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING when we will ELECT OFFICERS of our TENANTS' ASSOCIATION for the following 12 months, will be held, as our Constitution directs, the second full week of March--that is, the week starting March 13, 1989.

To quote from ARTICLE VI, Sections 2 and 3 on ELECTIONS:

- "2. Any member of the Association may be nominated for office by petition of at least ten PWVTA members. No member may sign a petition for more than one candidate for the same office.
- "3. Nominations for office shall be closed three weeks prior to the Annual Meeting. In case the Annual Meeting is postponed, nominations remain closed in accordance with the date of the Annual Meeting as originally scheduled."

Three weeks prior to March 13 is February 20. That is the closing date--the last day on which petitions may be accepted.

Nomination petitions may be submitted to any one of the following members of the Election Committee (appointed by the Executive Board):

Joyce Bialik at 382 Central Park West, Apt. 14-D,  
Carl Harm at 784 Columbus Avenue, Apt. 10-G,  
Kenneth McZinc at 792 Columbus Avenue, Apt. 15-P, and  
Bess Hecht Mitchell at 400 Central Park West, Apt. 18-K.

Please submit petitions by the closing date--February 20--no later than 9 p.m., so we can give them our wide-awake attention!

In accordance with our By-Laws, nominees are asked to submit a brief autobiography--no more than 100 words--with the petitions nominating them.

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**PARK WEST VILLAGE TENANTS' ASSOCIATION**

JOIN US -- Our Strength  
lies in our MEMBERSHIP

P.O. Box 20339, Park West Finance Station, New York, N.Y. 10025 (212)662-2610

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Building and Apt. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

\$35 check for 1989 membership dues enclosed. Legal fund contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to PWVTA. Please clip this coupon and give it with your payment to your Building Representative or mail it to the above address. Please do not mail cash. Your membership card will be delivered to you. (If you cannot pay the full amount, please pay what you can.)



## HOW PWV SECURITY WORKS

Officers patrol Park West Village grounds and buildings in three 8-hour shifts. Four dogs may accompany officers on night shifts. At least several times in a 24-hour period, each building should receive a "vertical," that is, an officer inspects the roof and then walks down one of the stairwells, looking on each floor and in each incinerator room. Security telephones are posted on the outside of each building. PWVTA has asked, and Management has agreed, to set up these phones so that residents as well as Security can use these phones to reach 911 and PWV Security. Each officer carries a stick, a walky-talky, and some senior officers carry guns for self-defense.

PWV Security's job is to protect life and property and to prevent crime. Pursuit of criminals on PWV grounds is part of the job. Anyone arrested is turned over to the NYC police. To pursue off PWV grounds--including the street, sidewalks, or park--is optional and depends on circumstances. PWV officers have caught thieves both on and off the grounds.

Lt. Leonardo Vinals, a 22-year veteran of PWV Security, heads the present PWV Security Force. The Security office is in the basement of 784 Columbus; the four dogs are at present housed in 392's basement.

In 372 and 382, the condo boards currently employ concierges on a 24-hour basis whose equipment connects to PWV Security. Under consideration are contracts to formalize the outside security services by PWV Security to the condo buildings.

**Park West Village Tenants' Association**  
**P.O. Box 20339, Cathedral Finance Station**  
**New York, N.Y. 10025 Tel: [212] 662-2610**

## THE 24TH POLICE PRECINCT

Park West Village is in New York City's 24th police precinct at 151 W. 100th Street, which covers the West Side from 86th-110th Street (Central Park is another precinct).

The Park West Village blocks are one of twelve areas in the precinct which are now patrolled in the CPOP program by a foot patrolman, whose job is to know the neighborhood, the people, to watch the street, and be available to help the community.

Some helpful contacts:

- o Deputy Inspector Walter Signorelli, Commanding Officer, 678-1811.
- o Crime Prevention Officer Weiss, 678-1803.
- o Community Affairs Officers Allen and Rosa, 678-1803.
- o Foot Patrolman John Lawson, 663-3198 or 4028.

On the 3rd Wednesday of every month, at 8 p.m., a Community Affairs meeting is held by and at the Police Department to which all neighborhood residents are welcome.

### TIPS FROM VETERAN VICTIMS

1. Carry your purse across your body if possible with the bag in front.
2. Carry a clear, plastic cosmetic case with \$10-\$20 in various bills and change. Purse snatchers only really want your cash. If you pull out and show them this "cash case" most will grab it rather than taking your whole bag.
3. If your whole purse has been stolen, have a friend or neighbor help you check the local wastepaper baskets and local grounds. Many women have found their purses in the vicinity after the purse-snatcher has taken the cash out of it, and thus retrieved their personal belongings.

### CRIME PREVENTION WORKSHOPS FOR PWV RESIDENTS HELP PROTECT YOURSELF, YOUR NEIGHBORS, YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Tues. Feb. 14, 400 CPW lobby - 7:30 pm - 24th Precinct Crime Prevention Officer Weiss and  
Wed., Feb. 15, 392 CPW lobby - 7:30 pm colleagues will provide info, answer questions.

NOTE: Further sessions will be scheduled for any building that would like them. Feel free to join in 392's and 400's workshops.

Mon. Feb. 27, Drug Watch Training Session, 7:30 pm., Ryan Health Center, 110 W. 97th Street. With crack and drug dealings as close as 101st Street on the North and 96th Street on the South, it behooves us to learn how to effectively identify and report drug activity and work together to reduce it. The Westside Crime Prevention Program has given these 2-hour presentations to many groups. Join us for this one. Admission limited to 40.

PWVTA TAKES INITIATIVE

URGES MANAGEMENT ACTION, PROVIDES INFO

From the discussions and communiques on security begun by PWVTA last November with Management, the police, and community groups, here is a brief rundown on some of what is happening so far:

- o Concierges for 392 and 400 will be installed earlier than originally planned. (they started Feb. 2 on one shift).
- o All outside building telephones will be upgraded and made utilizable by tenants to communicate to 911 and PWV Security.
- o Guard plates are being put over locks on some empty apartments. (We are seeking to have them on all.)
- o Contact with some of the victims in person and by questionnaire has helped us collect information useful to other tenants, Security and the police. We'll also be working with nearby tenant and community groups to share info and take collective action.
- o Spreading the word--through the Newsletters, our open meeting on Security last month, and the upcoming workshops (see box).

HAVE YOU SUGGESTIONS? We'd welcome them. Please contact Carol Springstun, 864-6054, or any member of the Committee.

PWVTA SECURITY COMMITTEE FORMED

Please contact us if you have a problem or suggestion.

Carol Springstun, Chair - 400 CPW (6M) 864-6054

- 784 Columbus: Bernice Collins (9B) 662-2717
- Marty Fridas (6M) 662-8353
- 788 Columbus: Carol Stanczak (5N) 866-0707
- Renee Barley (9E) 866-1780
- 792 Columbus: Roger Bergman (17R) 662-5699
- 372 CPW: Chuck Tice (16X) 662-2462
- 382 CPW: Dee Lichtman (1L) 663-8257
- 392 CPW: George Cooke (3A) 663-8751
- Kathleen Marks (12D) 866-8793
- Isabel & Tom Roche (15K) 662-1777
- Judy Urrutia (3U) 866-3728
- 400 CPW: Carol Springstun (6M) 864-6054

Also Lynn Bagg, Vice Chair, Quality of Life Committee, 400 CPW, (11P) 866-6214; Winifred Armstrong, Pres., PWVTA, 400 CPW, (5P) 865-3078

PWVTA ELECTIONS COMING UP

Election season opened for PWVTA with the Election Committee's announcement that nominations are now open for the five elected officers. Members are encouraged to join the fray. (see flyer)

Winifred Armstrong and Florence Wagener, current president and vice president, indicated to PWVTA Board members in January that they would not be running again for these offices but would remain active in the Association's work.

In her personal letter to Board members (excerpted here), Win Armstrong wrote...: "I am writing to let you know that I do not plan to run for office in the Association this year. I have spent full time on this job this year and I can not afford to do so again.

"I came to this office believing that the President and the officers should represent all the members and integrate the widest possible viewpoints into the decisions of the Association. I leave feeling even more passionately that whoever follows has a special opportunity to build on our common concerns--which far outnumber and supercede our differences."

"I have also seen this year a unique opportunity for the Tenants Association to maintain and reforge links within the PWV community--a role no other group can take. I would like to participate in continuing to build those links for and through the Association."

Coming Attractions

PWVTA'S annual report, news on Helmley's attempt to raise rents in 372 and 382 through an MCI on the roofs, further election news and more will be published in the next newsletter, out later in February.

Must you give all your keys to Management?

Management is allowed access to your apartment for an emergency and for necessary repairs according to PWV leases and the law. But no one will force you to give all your keys to Mgt. unless you wish to. Most PWV residents leave a set of keys with one or more trusted neighbors.

Lament of a Mugger's Mother...

Heard on Station WWRL as we go to press...a ballad of a mother grieving--and struggling to maintain hope and faith--for her son who has taken to crack and mugging. She ends with "May God bless him...and bless us all." Amen. Ed.