

The Park West Tenant

Vol. 17 No. 5

The Newsletter of the Park West Village Tenants' Association

Summer 1992

SECURITY: THE PWVTA AND MANAGEMENT

On April 30 a PWVTA committee met with Rudy Kratt and Carmen Giegerich, the Park West Village manager and assistant manager, to present PWVTA demands for improved security in the Columbus Avenue section of Park West Village.

The committee was established by the Executive Board, and included Mary Gay Harm, President; Sophie Elam, representing 788 Columbus Avenue, and as Chair of the Quality of Life Committee; Lucille Donte, representing 792 Columbus Avenue; and Carl Harm, representing 784 Columbus Avenue, and as Chair of the Legal Committee.

The PWVTA demands included: tighter control by lobby guards over the entry of visitors into the Columbus Avenue buildings; the securing of basement doors and the installation of alarms; improvement of the intercom system; and the reinstatement of daily vertical building checks.

Concerning the public grounds around the buildings, the PWVTA demanded more outdoor security staff, with additional attention to parking lots and a more visible security presence. Management was also asked to provide more training for the security staff, and to request and share with the PWVTA a police department survey of security arrangements.

Management made no commitment either to the basic demand for improved security or to the specific recommendations of the PWVTA. It was asserted that the number of staff assigned to security duties in the Columbus Avenue buildings and grounds had not been reduced, but that difficulties had arisen because of the seniority rules that determined which workers were laid off when the four Central Park West condominium buildings hired Hall's Security to replace the Park West Village security staff in that part of the complex. (Park West Management

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RENT GUIDELINES SET

The Rent Guidelines Board (RGB) at its final meeting on June 22 voted for rent increases of no more than **three percent for one-year leases** and no more than **five percent for two-year leases**. These increases apply to leases taking effect between October 1, 1992 and September 30, 1993.

The Board also voted for a five percent *vacancy allowance*, an additional increase that landlords may apply to the initial rent of a vacant apartment. Oda Friedheim and Galen Kirkland, the tenant representatives on the RGB, resigned in protest against the *vacancy allowance*.

Several Park West Village tenants attended the public hearings and testified. In her testimony, PWVTA President Mary Gay Harm criticized the use of the Price Index Study to determine rent increases, rather than consider actual expenditures and profits. She stressed the need to preserve affordable housing and prevent additional homelessness in New York City.

MUGGINGS in PARK WEST VILLAGE

Since the brutal mugging of a woman at 788 Columbus Avenue around 6 p.m. on March 24, when she was severely beaten in an elevator and then her car was stolen, there have been more muggings on the Columbus Avenue side of Park West Village.

● On May 20 at 10:15 p.m., a woman who walks with a cane was mugged on the sidewalk in front of 784 Columbus Avenue. The attacker, another woman, walked past the tenant to the front door, apparently to make sure there was no guard in the lobby. She walked back to the victim, who hadn't yet reached the door. Threatening her with a pair of scissors, she snatched the victim's gold chain she was wearing that had great sentimental value to her. The victim tried to resist the theft, but the attacker pushed her to the

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remains responsible for the tennis court strip.)

Since the April meeting, management has informed PWVTA of the following changes regarding security:

1. The number of security officers who patrol the Columbus Avenue grounds and the tennis court strip has been increased from eight to ten, with two on duty on each shift.

2. The lobby guards are called *concierges*. Their employer is *not* Park West Management, but instead is *City-Wide Building Service Corp.*, under the aegis of the Helmsley organization.

3. During business hours, the security phone (222-4300) will be answered in the management office; after business hours, a security guard is supposed to answer and respond, as in the past.

Despite these changes, serious security problems persist. With only two officers on duty per shift, if one is needed inside for a building emergency, or to check the tennis court strip east of Columbus Avenue, then just a single person is available to patrol the entire Columbus Avenue grounds. Any emergency that requires more than one guard leaves the outside area absolutely vulnerable.

The security phone is still not always answered. Furthermore, the walkie-talkies that the security officers use for communication are not always operative. The security phone outside 792 Columbus Avenue is inoperable. The *concierges* in the Columbus Avenue buildings do not have telephones.

Nothing has been done to reinstitute vertical building checks, or to exercise tighter control over entry into the buildings, or to secure the basement doors.

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Contributors to this issue:

Judith Bloch, Sophie Elam, Pat Graham, Carl Harm, Mary Gay Harm, and Emily Margolis. Computer graphics by Chuck Tice.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Park West Management employees are a vanishing breed. They are long gone from the Central Park West condo buildings where each Condo board employs its own building staff, and together the four buildings have employed an outside agency — Hall's Security Analysts — to handle security on the grounds and in the buildings.

In the Columbus Avenue buildings, recently the building staff — porters, handy-men, *concierges* — became employees of City-Wide Building Service Corp. (see previous article: *SECURITY*). The security force for these three buildings remain as Park West Management employees. No matter which corporate name applies, *Park West Management is responsible for supervising all employees in these three buildings.*

LOBBY DAY / MAY 12

More than six hundred tenants from all parts of New York State rallied in Albany on May 12 for the annual *Tenants Lobby Day*. Assemblymember Howard Lasher, the Chair of the Assembly Housing Committee, said he heard "the message of need for affordable housing." Assemblymember Alexander "Pete" Grannis, former Chair of the Assembly Housing Committee, spoke against the luxury decontrol bill. Both Lasher and Grannis spoke of the need to restore the Building Code Enforcement funds which were cut from the budget.

The PWVTA delegation met with Ed Sullivan, our Assemblymember, and with Vicky Mayo, staff member for State Senator David Paterson. At both sessions, President Mary Gay Harm stressed the need to strengthen our tenant protections.

Special thanks are due the many tenants who—though unable to go to Albany themselves—contributed their funds for the bus trip. They, along with all those taking part, helped make it a most successful day!

Our New Look

Our newsletter is now formatted for easier reading. Volunteer your time or your computer by calling Emily Margolis, Chair of the Publications Committee, at 864-5996.

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sidewalk. When she struggled to her feet she was slammed to the sidewalk again.

A man then came up behind the two and the attacker ran off with him. As the victim came to the entrance she saw the lobby guard returning to his post. The victim was admitted to the hospital and had to stay for more than two weeks.

● On May 28 around midnight a woman living at 792 Columbus Avenue was attacked beside her building. The man tried to steal her handbag, but she fought him off, suffering a badly bruised arm as a result.

She could not find a Park West Village security guard outside. There was no answer when she phoned the security number. She was unable to report the incident to Park West Village security until the next day.

● At 8:30 p.m. on July 1, an eight-year-old boy who lives at 788 Columbus Avenue was returning from the candy store when he was accosted in front of Woolworth's by two eleven-year-olds standing by the parked cars. They punched him in the head and took his money and purchases.

If you have been mugged recently on the Park West Village grounds or know someone who has been victimized—or if you have had *any security problem*—let management know, and let the Tenants' Association know too. You should be able to reach management by calling 222-5121. The PWVTA number is 662-2610.

WILL SECURITY ANSWER?

In 792 Columbus Avenue on Saturday, June 6, a Park West Village tenant became stuck in the elevator. She rang and rang the elevator alarm, but no security guard responded. Fortunately, another tenant managed to get her out. When she went outside to find a security guard to report the problem, none could be found.

Will security answer?

PWVTA ACTS ON SECURITY PROBLEM

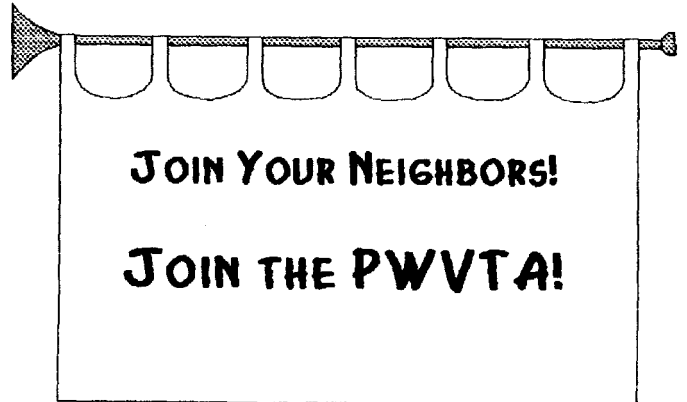
On May 20 the PWVTA Executive Board considered a recommendation made on May 14 by tenants in the three Columbus Avenue buildings "that the Executive Board support their proposed rent withholding action; prepare a statement urging tenants in the three Columbus Avenue buildings to participate, with the reasons why it is important that they do so; attach a 'pledge form' for participants to sign indicating their intent to withhold; and develop a procedure for handling the details of the withholding process."

On May 27 a special board meeting was convened to interview three tenant lawyers — Robert J. Anderson, Samuel Himmelstein, and Steven Smollens — on the requirements and prospects for a successful rent withholding action to force management to improve security.

The board voted "to support a withholding action if all the required items and the number of pledges agreed upon are in place." An Ad Hoc Committee to prepare a flyer for distribution in the Columbus Avenue buildings was established.

Members of the committee are: Florence Wagener, 784 building coordinator; Sophie Elam, 788 building coordinator and Chair, Quality of Life Committee; Lucille Donte, 792 building coordinator; Carl Harm, Chair, Legal Committee; and Emily Margolis, representing the Central Park West buildings.

The committee prepared and distributed a flyer to tenants of the three Columbus Avenue buildings and is collecting responses from the tenants.



JOIN YOUR NEIGHBORS!

JOIN THE PWVTA!

382 CENTRAL PARK WEST BUILDING MEETING

PWVTA members in 382 Central Park West held a building meeting on June 29 with officers of the Association present. Isabel Stamm convened the meeting and discussion covered a range of tenant issues. The officers present were President Mary Gay Harm, Vice President Clare Dockery, and Membership Secretary Miriamne Spector.

RENOVATIONS IN 392 & 400 CENTRAL PARK WEST

Many changes are taking place in both buildings. Sliding Thermopane windows have replaced the casement windows, pointing work on the bricks has been completed and terrace repairs are now being done.

The rear entrances have been widened and provided with a ramp and new steps. The 100th Street entrance in each building is being reconstructed, and ramps will be built. Lobby renovations should be finished in a few months.

The elevators have had mechanical renovations completed. Redecorating of the cab interior will be completed soon.

Join the PWVTA!

The PWVTA works to maintain and improve the quality of life here, to protect our rights, and deal with the critical housing issues affecting all of our lives.

Dues are \$35, or what you can afford. The power of the Tenants' Association is its membership. We want you to join us now!



PLEASE RETURN THIS MEMBERSHIP COUPON TO YOUR BUILDING REPRESENTATIVE OR MAIL TO:

**PARK WEST VILLAGE TENANTS' ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 20339, Park West Finance Station, New York, NY 10025**

Name _____

Building and Apt. No. _____ Telephone _____

\$35 check for 1992 dues enclosed, payable to PWVTA.

Additional contribution to Legal fund: \$_____.

If you cannot make full payment of your annual dues, please pay what you can. Your membership card will be delivered to you.

SCHEDULE OF PWVTA MEETINGS

The **Executive Board** will meet on Wednesday, September 16, 8 p.m., at the Ryan Health Center, 110 W. 97th Street.

Gone fishing 'til September!



★ NOTE CORRECTIONS ★ TO EXECUTIVE BOARD LISTING IN APRIL ISSUE:

792 Col	Deborah Goldsmith	866-6086
392 CPW	Evelyn Poole	864-6920

HAPPY ENDING FOR LOST IN TRANSIT

The PWVTA has reached a settlement with Manufacturers Hanover Trust concerning the checks we had deposited that were "lost in transit" in February, which we reported here in the March newsletter.

Our original deposit has been reinstated in full, and we have been reimbursed for the stop payment orders we paid to tenants.

Thanks to everyone for being so cooperative in resubmitting checks.