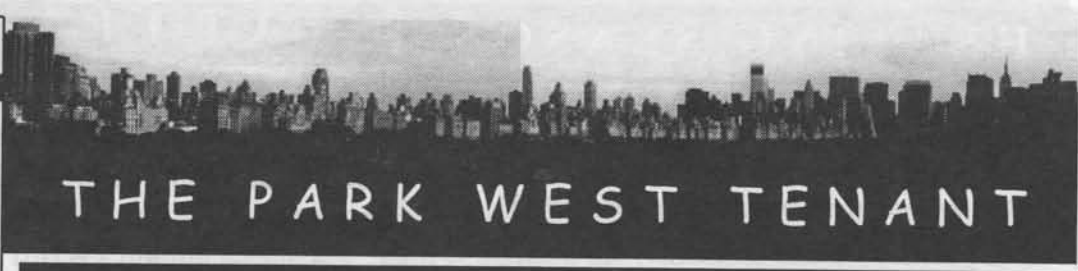


Feb/March 2004
Volume 29, Issue 1

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THE PARK WEST TENANT

Join the Fight to Restore Our Rent Laws Now

PWVTA History To Be Archived

Do You Have Back Newsletters or Materials?

In its 28-year history, PWVTA actions have made significant contributions to improve tenants rights throughout the city and the state. This record will be preserved and made available to a wider public through archiving it in one of the city's major libraries. We are now collecting and sorting files and back newsletters. If you have materials you think might be useful, please call Win Armstrong at 212-865-3078. We'll share highlights of our history in future newsletters!

Board meetings are open to all PWVTA members, and are held at the Ryan Health Center on 97th Street at 7:30pm, the 3rd Monday of every month (excepting holidays). If you are a member, please join us!

When the New York State legislature passed an eight-year extension of the rent control and rent stabilization laws in June 2003, the protections for rent-regulated tenants immediately began to erode. And if you think that you will always be able to afford your rent-stabilized apartment, think again. Because the 2003 bill did not repeal vacancy decontrol, hundreds of thousands of currently regulated apartments will be de-regulated by 2011, making it much harder for a diminished tenants community to win another renewal of rent protection laws. It is not improbable that in 2011 the governor and legislative leaders-whoever they are - will allow the laws to expire. Now is the time that we must push our elected officials - Democrats and Republicans alike - for real action. We cannot afford to wait! The message to both the Senate and the Assembly is clear: What the legislature did last

June is unacceptable. By continuing vacancy decontrol and thereby allowing tens of thousands of apartments to be deregulated every year, legislators failed tenants and unfairly rewarded landlords. Now it's time for our elected representatives to go back to work and fix what they did, and tenants must be ready to meet them with these demands:

1. Reopen the issue of rent control and rent stabilization now.
2. Repeal vacancy decontrol before it reduces the supply of rent-regulated affordable housing any further.
3. Protect tenants from unfair rent increases, evictions, harassment, and other threats to our homes. There are dozens of needed reforms, including tightening of the provisions for owner use evictions, better protections for senior citizens and tenants with disabilities, relief from Major Capital Improvement rent hikes, and more.

Join The Fight Continued on page 2

SAVE THE DATE

Wednesday, March 31st at 7:30 pm for The Annual PWVTA membership meeting.

ATTENTION

Rent-Stabilized Tenants in the CPW Buildings

Have you experienced a reduction of services in your apartment, or had difficulty getting your appliances repaired (such as air conditioner, blinds, splintered tiles, stove, etc)? If so, please send a detailed description of your problem and managements response to your PWVTA building representative. If you replace the landlord's refrigerator or other appliances with your own, you should obtain a receipt when the landlord reclaims his property. There is no fee for maintenance - this service is included in your rent.

HEATING SEASON

Heat must be supplied to tenants in multiple dwellings from October 1st to May 31st if:

- a) The outdoor temperature falls below 55 F between 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. each apartment must be heated to a temperature of at least 68 F.
- b) The outdoor temperature falls below 40 F, between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. each apartment must be heated to a temperature of at least 55 F.

If you do not have heat in your apartment, call the management office, and also leave a message on the PWVTA hotline to report the outage. You should also call the City's central complaint number (24 hours/day) at 311.

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4. Pass legislation to place Mitchell-Lama and project based Section 8 buildings under rent stabilization if their owners take them out of those government supervised programs.
5. Restore home rule powers to New York City and for the first time extend home rule powers to suburban municipalities-so that in the future our local governments will be able to protect our rights without Albany's involvement.

Throughout 2004, the statewide tenants advocacy organization Tenants & Neighbors will be mobilizing tenants in their Senate and Assembly districts, bringing tenants to Albany on a regular basis, and raising the issues of tenants' rights and affordable neighborhoods in next year's elections. We will have to target the governor, the Senate and the Assembly too, because the Assembly failed tenants in the 2003 legislative session.

The best opportunities for winning pro-tenant legislation are in 2004, when all State Senate and State Assembly members run for re-election, and then when they run again in 2006. And we must make rent protections an issue in the 2005 mayoral elections in New York City. Mayor Mike Bloomberg must be made to deliver by winning legislation in Albany, and his opponents, whoever they turn out to be, must be questioned closely about their positions. Tenants must also work to make the rent laws an issue during the 2006 election for governor. We should only support a candidate who will support the preservation of the largest affordable housing program in the downstate region

ATTENTION

MOVED IN SINCE 2000?
You Are Probably Being Overcharged!
Many tenants who moved into the Columbus Avenue Buildings in 2000 or since are being overcharged by the landlord. Some tenants have had their rents significantly reduced by filing a complaint with the NYS Department of Housing and Community renewal (DHCR). You can request your rent history by calling the DHCR at 718-739-6400. They will mail you a copy of your apartment's rent history. If you think that you are being overcharged, please call the hotline at 212-662-2610.

Contrary to what many people believe, elected officials **DO** pay attention to the opinions of their constituents, so please take the time to send your Assembly Member a handwritten letter (Hon. Daniel J. O'Donnell, 245 West 104 St., NY, NY 10025). Let him know that you are a rent-regulated tenant who is deeply concerned - where will you live when you can no longer afford your rent if the rent laws expire in 2011? Ask him to persuade Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver to not only force the State Senate and Governor to reopen the issue of rent control and rent stabilization in 2004, but to make it their top priority. It is not enough for the Assembly to continue passing one-house bills that never see the light of day in the Senate. And finally, ask what he plans to do to reverse the phaseout of rent protection laws over the next several years, and to preserve affordable housing for the future.

The stakes are high. Tenants who believe that their homes are protected by the eight-year extender are living in a fool's paradise. Forcing the legislature to revisit this issue **NOW** is the only way we can hope to reverse the erosion of New York's affordable neighborhoods, and with it the diversity and vibrancy that we all love. To find out what you can do to help preserve your rent-stabilized apartment here in Park West Village, and to preserve the homes of thousands of other New York residents, please call Tenants & Neighbors directly at 212-608-4320, ext. 401, send an email to info@tandn.org, or visit their website at www.tandn.org. You can also call the PWVTA hotline at 212-662-2610.

Landlords take extra nibble on rent-deposit \$\$ By Susan Edelman (The New York Post, 2/15/04)

New York City tenants are getting cheated out of their share of tens of millions of dollars a year in interest earned on security deposits, says state Attorney General Eliot Spitzer. With tax season in full swing, New York's 2 million tenants are now getting bank statements showing interest income on their security deposits. What the statements may not show is that most of the interest is being paid to landlords in administrative fees. Spitzer says the lopsided system stinks but is legal. Banks pay a pittance of interest on a collective \$1.4 billion in security deposits citywide. Landlords keep most of the money in fees for little work. And many tenants are unaware their checks have been chiseled.

Under a law passed in 1970, when the interest rate on savings accounts was 6 percent, landlords can keep 1 percent of a tenant's security deposit each year as administrative fee for investing the money. But interest rates have since fallen as low as 1.1 percent. That leaves as little as a tenth of a percent for tenants. "I was outraged when I found out about it," said

Lamarr Sellars, 47, a public-relations consultant who lives in Lenox Terrace apartments in West Harlem. Sellars recently received a paltry \$2.08 check from his landlord's bank, which explained the sum comprised the remaining interest earned payable after the landlord's 1 percent fee was deducted. The landlord's \$6.50 share of the interest on Sellars' \$650 security deposit is not exactly princely, but it's three times as much as his cut, Sellars said. A CUNY economics professor who lives in an \$1,800-a-month Upper West Side apartment just got a check for \$7.52 in interest. Her landlord's cut: \$18.

In 2000, Spitzer proposed that landlords keep 20 percent of the interest earned on security deposits guaranteeing the tenant 80 percent, but it stalled. Frank Ricci, a spokesman for the Rent Stabilization Association of New York City, a landlord group, called the current 1 percent payment fair, saying it covers the costs of maintaining paperwork on security deposit accounts.

LAUNDRY ROOM UPDATE

Most tenants in Columbus Avenue Building try to grin and bear the tribulations of a lost sock, the shortage of available dryers, and damp clothes at the end of the cycle. Having damp clothes hung around the apartment-covering all available surfaces regardless of the size – always with the hope that tomorrow your things will be dry when removed and "Hi Rise" will make the broken dryers work properly. But to no avail – instead you walk in and find that the prices have gone up. You no longer get 30 minutes of drying for \$1.25 – you must now pay .50¢ for 10 minutes. When you add this up you will pay \$1.50 for 30 minutes or \$2.00 for 40 minutes and so on. The price for the small washing machines went from \$1.25 to \$1.75, and the price for the large washing machine went from \$1.75 to \$2.00. And on many occasions,

there is no hot water. And the one large washing machine that we have is broken most of the time. There should really be two or more large washing machines for buildings this size. At present, in the CPW buildings, the small washer cost less. PWVTA met with management to discuss this and the possibility of adding a one dollar bill slot for the card. So far there has been no resolution.

Thursday, April 1st at 7:30 pm for
The Annual PWVTA membership meeting.

This PWVTA newsletter issue
was prepared thanks to:

- Winfred Armstrong
- Jacqueline Brown
- Vivian Dee
- Mary Livingston
- Emily Margolis
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- Daisy Wright
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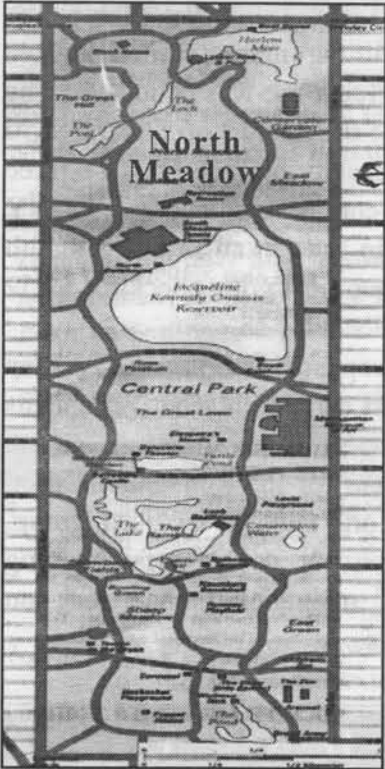
**PARK WEST
VILLAGE
TENANTS'
ASSOCIATION**

**HOTLINE
662-2610**



City of New York/Parks & Recreation

Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor • Adrian Benepe, Commissioner



North Meadow CBO

Central Park

New York, NY

Phone: (212)348-4867

Location: Cross Streets: Mid park at 97th St.

Hours of Operation

Building Hours

Monday - Friday	10am - 6pm
Saturday	10am - 4:30pm
Sunday	10am - 4:30pm

Facilities

Climbing wall

Fitness training

Multipurpose room

Programs, Classes and Activities

Open Recreation

Ages 9-18 (basketball, handball/paddleball, double-dutch jump rope, knock-hockey, chess and arts & crafts)

Call Center for more information

Adventure Programs

Call Center for more information

Camp Central Park

Call Center for more information

Basketball

Call Center for more information

Field Day Kits

Call Center for more information

Professional Development Programs

Call Center for more information

Adult Tai Chi and Yoga Classes

Call Center for class schedules and registration.

YOU ARE IMPORTANT!

JOIN NOW FOR 2004

Why should you be a member of PWVTA? Because the strength of the organization is the membership. If you want to protect your home and your rights as a Rent stabilized tenant you need PWVTA. Over the years we have had many active participants and dealt with a wide variety of issues. Read this newsletter to learn about some of them. The "renewal" of the rent regulations in 2003 will allow for rapid attrition of affordable housing. We need to present a strong front to fight this and to prevent encroachment of tenant's rights. Any apartment in New York City, Manhattan, and especially the Upper West Side, is a very hot property. This is valuable real estate, but as our homes it is more valuable!! **Please Join Today**

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

Park West Village Tenants' Association, PO Box 20339

Park West Finance Station, New York, NY 10025-0339

Name _____ Building _____ Apt _____ Telephone _____

Please make check payable to PWVTA. Year 2004 membership dues are \$40 and contributions to the legal fund are needed. If you are unable to pay \$40, please pay what you can. Your membership card will be delivered to you.