

# The Park West Tenant

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The Newsletter of the Park West Village Tenants' Association [info@pwvta.org](mailto:info@pwvta.org)

April 2010

*For tenants with rent under \$1000 and have rented for more than six years*

## APPELLATE COURT TO HEAR APPEAL OF RGB MINIMUM RENT INCREASE DECISION

For the last two years the Rent Guidelines Board (RGB) has ordered rent increases that had an "alternative minimum." That meant that tenants whose rent was under \$1000 and had lived in their rent-stabilized apartments for at least six years (and the apartments had been rent stabilized all that time), had to pay a HIGHER percentage increase as follows:

For 2008, they had to pay the higher of 4.5% or \$45 for a one-year lease renewal, or the higher of 8% or \$80 for a two-year lease renewal.

For 2009, they had to pay the higher of 3% or \$30 for a one-year lease renewal, or the higher of 6% or \$60 for a two-year lease renewal.

Legal Aid lawyers pointed out that this RGB order resulted in poorer tenants, who had no place to move, paying much higher increases. The Supreme Court, New York County, in a decision dated January 20, 2010, said that the Rent Guidelines Board could not do that.

The RGB appealed, and the case is now before the state's mid-level court. While the Appellate Court agreed to hear the case, however, it kept the lower court judge's ruling in effect — so that the "higher of" increase does NOT apply (at least for the moment).

See the text of the lower court decision on the website of the Rent Guidelines Board at [housingnyc.com](http://housingnyc.com).

### Correction: March 2010 edition

Under "PWVTA Support for Federal Lawsuit" we stated "...PWV was developed in the 1950s pursuant to a federally funded urban renewal program...", though the article should have stated "...federally funded slum clearance program...".

For more information or questions, please write [Legal@PWVTA.org](mailto:Legal@PWVTA.org).

*If the landlord has charged you the alternative minimum of \$30 for a one-year lease renewal or \$60 for a two-year lease renewal, please be sure to ask for the lease to be revised as required by the courts.*

## MEMBERS ELECT OFFICERS FOR 2010

The PWVTA met at the Ryan Health Center April 20 for its annual election of officers.

Elected to office: Maggi Peyton, President; Albina De Meio, Vice President; Jane Bender, Treasurer; Gloria Scorse, Secretary; Miriamne Spector, Membership Secretary.

## Raccoons in the Morning

Five mornings out of six, rainy days excepted, my wife and I cross the street and enter Central Park at Boys' Gate on West 100th Street. It was around 6:15 when out for our morning walk around the city's glorious park, and as always we had our eyes out for them:



The raccoons that lived for years in a horse chestnut tree planted way back when by Frederick Law Olmsted, the park's co-architect. (This we discovered in Edward Sibley Barnard's *New York City Trees* and excitedly shared with others: "A stately horsechestnut, planted by Olmsted, stands....south of the Pool at the West 100th Street entrance.")

We regularly spied the mom and her little ones — usually two but some years three. We'd see them, bent low in their furs, striped faces almost touching the ground, coming home after a night's foraging; we'd see them, peeking their faces from the hollowed-out spaces where they lived in Olmsted's horse

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chestnut; we'd see them, out for a little exercise up in their treehouse, climbing out on branches, climbing back, squeezing (sometimes backwards) into those hollowed-out spaces.

We took to calling them *raccoonies*: "Did you see any raccoonies this morning?" My wife and I start our walks together, but I usually go farther, so we return at different times.

Mostly we saw our raccoons on the way into the park. Sometimes, one or the other of us would see one or more of them on our way home. On serendipitous mornings, we'd catch them going and coming.

The morning of June 3, 2008, we hit the raccoon jackpot: we saw two youngsters up in the horse chestnut, and then a few minutes later three grownups alongside the cut-through to the park's east side. (How do I know it was June 3, 2008? You don't see five raccoons in one morning without making a note of it!)

I know, I know... raccoons can be pesty, even dangerous. Upstate friends have had their vegetable garden ravaged more than once by the masked nighttime marauders. An acquaintance in Brooklyn was startled to discover a raccoon in his attic, slammed the door, called the police, and cowered in a locked bathroom until they arrived to remove it.

But our raccoons gave us only joy; they gave us "little bursts," the sort that Elizabeth Strout wrote about in her Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *Olive Kitteridge*. "Big bursts are things like marriage or children, intimacies that keep you afloat...you need the little bursts as well: a friendly clerk, or the waitress who knows how you like your coffee."

Or raccoons in the morning, charging up your heart as you head into Central Park.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This story was sent to us by a tenant in response to the story of the stray raccoon in the March newsletter warning about rabid creatures. See PWVTA.org for current information from the City.

The PWVTA Dog Run Committee reminds tenants in the Columbus Avenue buildings to **PLEASE RETURN THE PETITIONS** that were distributed earlier this month. For more, download it at PWVTA.org.

**RGB PUBLIC MEETING AND VOTE ON PRELIMINARY GUIDELINES**  
Wednesday, May 5, 5:30pm-9:30pm at The Great Hall, Cooper Union (7 E. 7 St.) for the public meeting prior to the final vote on June 24.

The PWVTA Executive Board regularly meets on the third Tuesday of the month, except July and August (see PWVTA.org for info). The next Executive Board meeting will be held Tuesday, May 18, 7:30pm, at the Ryan Health Center downstairs. Doors open at 7:00pm for cookies and community. PWVTA members and associate members are welcome to attend.

Produced by the PWVTA Communications Committee. Contributors: Charles Berger, Lucille Michelle Donte, Dean Heitner, Emily Margolis, Maggi Peyton, Eileen S, Gerald E. Scorse, and Chuck Tice. To help report, edit, compose, design, or distribute, call the PWVTA Hotline: 212-662-2610, or write Commo@pwvta.org. Submit content articles to: Editor@pwvta.org

**JOIN YOUR NEIGHBORS – RENEW NOW!**  
**PLEASE RETURN THIS MEMBERSHIP / ASSOCIATE 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 10025-0339  
Name: ..... Building: ..... Apt: ..... Phone: .....  
 Rent-stabilized tenant  Market-rate tenant  Renting from private owner  Owner Email: .....  
 Check for **2010 membership dues** enclosed, payable to PWVTA  \$40  Other\*: \$ .....  
 [Condo owner] Check for **2010 associate membership dues** enclosed, payable to PWVTA  \$35 .....  
 Check includes additional contribution to Legal fund. Amount: .....  Check for MCI Legal Fund only: .....  
★ If you cannot make full \$40 payment of your annual dues, please pay what you can.  
Your membership card will be delivered to you.