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Tenant *Inquilino*

Housing for people, not profit

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PERIODICAL

Campaign to Strengthen and Renew the Rent Laws Underway

by Jenny Laurie & Kenny Schaeffer

In the spring of 2003, the rent laws that protect over 2 million renters — single mothers, senior citizens, children, working families and New York City residents in every neighborhood and income bracket from the lowest to the upper middle class — expire. These rent laws provide tenants with protection against precipitous or market-rate rent increases or unwarranted eviction, and make tenants legally entitled to basic services and repairs. In order for tenant protections to remain in place, the laws must be renewed by both the New York City Council and the New York State Legislature in 2003.

New York City and New York State control the regulation of apartments in a complicated mix. In March of 2003, the city council will have to pass legislation to renew laws that it controls — the rent control law and the rent stabilization law. The rent control law is permanent, but requires that the city council find that there is still a housing emergency. This is done via the Housing Vacancy Survey, conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Sometime in February, the city's housing department will deliver the results of that survey to the city council, and if the results show that the vacancy rate in the city is still below 5%, which seems certain, the council will be required to pass a resolution that extends rent control for another three years (until the next survey is done).

The city's own rent stabilization law (as compared to the state's rent stabilization law), which was enacted

in 1969, covers the buildings built during the boom construction years between the end of World War II and 1968. This law "sunset" or expires periodically and must be renewed by a bill passed by the city council and signed by the mayor.

The mayor and council must act before the end of March of 2003. In the past, the city council has always made the finding and renewed the law simultaneously. Occasionally, the council uses the renewal to weaken the laws as happened in 1994.

The state legislature has control over a number of laws that protect New York City tenants as well as those renting apartments in the counties of Rockland, Westchester and Nassau. Most important to New York City tenants is the Emergency



Tenant Protection Act (ETPA), which was passed in 1974 in order to end the vacancy decontrol enacted by Governor Rockefeller and his housing commissioner Charles Urstadt in 1971, when they also imposed "the Urstadt law,"

which deprives the city of the right to independently strengthen the rent laws. The ETPA basically re-regulated most of the apartments that had been under rent control but

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Liberty Bonds Present Unique Opportunity for Affordable Housing Development Post-9/11

By Melissa Aase

The Rebuild with a Spotlight on the Poor Coalition ("Rebuild Coalition") was vocally and visually present at a December 9 city council hearing regarding the use of federal Liberty Bonds for housing construction and preservation. By packing the audience and sharing a presentation highlighting the deepening housing crisis in the city, the Rebuild Coalition emphasized that any contemplation of housing development with disaster assistance *must* include housing for people at all income levels, including the poorest New Yorkers.

Coalition representatives testified about the experience of its member organizations, many of which provide eviction prevention and other emergency services. The need for these services has risen

astronomically in the year following 9/11 and has shown no signs of ebbing at many of our organizations. Economic losses among tenants, combined with the temptations of vacancy decontrol or ending subsidy programs among landlords, place thousands of people at risk of eviction at this time.

Testimony was planned in collaboration with the Liberty Bonds Housing Coalition, which formed during the summer when Governor Pataki announced the use of his portion of Liberty Bonds for three luxury buildings downtown. Backing away from the state's usual formula of supporting 80/20 buildings, these luxury buildings were approved with a 95/5 split between market-rate and "affordable." And minimum in-

come levels for the "affordable" units must be in the \$90,000 per year range—hardly the incomes of the low-income working folks who desperately need housing. We know the governor could have done better, and are working to ensure that the mayor, with the portion of Liberty Bonds in his control, will do better.

The Liberty Bond Housing Coalition has presented an alternative plan for the use of this precious resource to build mixed-income housing, and is calling for federal amendments that would allow 25% of the bonds to be used for housing construction outside of the small and expensive "Liberty Zone." For a full explanation of Liberty Bonds and the statement and press related to the Liberty Bond Housing Coalition,

check out www.goodjobs-ny.org.

The hearing, co-sponsored by the Housing & Buildings Committee and the Select Committee on Lower Manhattan, featured testimony from city and state officials (NYC Housing, Preservation and Development, Housing Development Corporation and the state's Housing Finance Agency) who argued that housing for low-

income people would be almost impossible to develop in any great quantity (if at all) in the Liberty Zone. The city officials did concede that the 80/20 model may be used. None seemed interested, however, in approaching the federal government to request amendments that would allow Liberty Bonds to be used outside of the zone

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EDITORIAL

Bloomberg Fiddling While NY Burns?

On December 9, NYC's Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced an "aggressive" and "ambitious" plan to provide 65,000 units of housing over four years by relabeling 38,000 units of affordable housing already being warehoused by the city, and using public funds and lands to develop an additional 27,000 mostly market-rate apartments on the waterfront and in other desirable locations, using the \$800 million controlled by the city in "Liberty Bonds" designed to help restore New York after the September 11,

2001 destruction of the World Trade Center.

Despite the laudable goals extolled by the mayor, the details of the plan that have emerged so far carry the fingerprints of Bloomberg's deputy mayor for economic development, Daniel Doctoroff, and do not offer any basis to believe that the initiative will have a substantial impact on the affordable-housing shortage. While most of what affordable housing the plan will produce is targeted for "special needs populations," such as persons with AIDS, who certainly need it, there appears to be little in store for the millions of New Yorkers with "ordinary needs" such as an affordable place to live. It appears that there will be little housing affordable to households earning less than \$40,000 per year, and almost none for the 2 million New Yorkers living at or near the poverty level.

Moreover, the 40,000 units of existing city stock to be "rehabilitated" is only a modest increase in the existing pace: 30,000 units of rehabbed or new housing have been turned out by the city's Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) in the last four years.

A key question will be how much new money is directed toward affordable housing. According to *Crain's NY*, the voice of the business community, Bloomberg

intends to use a certain amount of discretionary capital funds which he promises to free up using "financial magic"—up to \$1 billion—which would certainly be a step in the right direction. Patrick Markee, senior policy analyst for the Coalition for the Homeless, stated that he was pleased that the mayor intends to create 820 permanent units for homeless families, but that it was also clear that more could be done.

An untapped source of additional revenue is the billions of dollars that have gone uncollected by Mayor Bloomberg and by Giuliani before him in fines against landlords who failed to correct more than three million violations of the city's housing maintenance code, including failure to provide adequate heat and hot water as well as other required services and repairs. By allowing these fines to go uncollected, thereby removing the incentive for owners to make repairs, the mayor also allows uninhabitable, further diminishing the supply of affordable housing. Even more alarming, according to the *New York Times* Bloomberg proposes "diverting" \$555 million that HPD uses to maintain city-owned buildings (some of the most poorly maintained buildings in the city) for the development of new units.

The mayor's announcement was

accompanied by the explanation, on NY1 and elsewhere, that the need for new housing is owing to the fact that the city's population grew by 450,000 in the 1990s while only 83,000 new units of housing were created, and this is certainly part of the explanation. Missing from the mayor's focus, however, is any reference to the fact that hundreds of thousands of existing affordable units were lost during that same period as a result of a combination of steep vacancy increases, \$2000 vacancy decontrol, the Rent Guidelines Board's "poor tax" and other unwarranted renewal increases, and the continuing epidemic of evictions—over 200,000 in the 1990s.

Unless the mayor speaks up forcefully and effectively to persuade his fellow Republicans in Albany to strengthen the expiring rent and eviction laws (see page 1), his claim to a concern with the housing crisis that goes beyond an opportunity for Daniel Doctoroff and his development crowd rings hollow.

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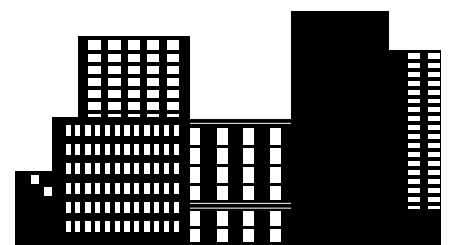
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EL INQUILINO HISPANO

Melba Garcia y su familia luchan por su hogar

Por Jeanie Dubnau
Traducido por Lightning Translations

Melba Garcia y sus seis hijos han vivido en su apartamento en 600 West 157th St. durante 12 años; los tres hijos más jóvenes nacieron ahí. Desde que ella llegó a Nueva York de la República Dominicana, Melba ha vivido junto con los inquilinos originales en el apartamento, una pareja mayor de apellido Jimenez, ayudándoles en la cocina, la limpieza y las compras. Luego de que el señor Jimenez muriera repentinamente, su esposa se mudó del apartamento. Melba y su familia se quedaron, porque

creyeron que tenían el derecho de heredar el apartamento como miembros "no tradicionales" de la familia Jimenez. Desde 1997, Melba ha pagado directamente al casero, Tony Huang—y su renta ha sido aceptada. Ahora, sin embargo, con los precios de bienes raíces en Washington Heights por las nubes y los apartamentos vacíos fuera del alcance para la comunidad de inmigrantes trabajadores en su mayoría pobres, Huang ha decidido que sería más lucrativo desalojar a Melba

y su familia y elevar la renta de su amplio apartamento. Como es bien sabido, los nuevos inquilinos que están llegando a Washington Heights son de clases a c o m o d a s —especialmente en edificios de Broadway, Fort Washington Ave. y Riverside Drive, cerca del Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center de 168th St. y Broadway.

Melba fue a la asociación de vecinos de Riverside-Edgecombe (RENA) para pedir ayuda después de recibir un aviso de desalojo

de su casero por haberse quedado en el apartamento después de haber vencido los derechos de inquilino (en inglés, una "holdover petition"). Con la ayuda de RENA, se envió una carta a Tony Huang por correo regular, por fax y por correo electrónico, solicitando una reunión para tratar el asunto de Melba, y se realizaron varias llamadas a la oficina del casero—pero nunca contestó a los mensajes que se dejaron. Ya que los fondos para ayuda legal al público han sufrido severos recortes en los

últimos años, Melba no pudo conseguir un abogado de Servicios Legales. Afortunadamente, sin embargo, por medio de la oficina del Asambleísta Herman D. Farrell, RENA pudo conseguir un abogado para Melba quien se encuentra representándola ahora. Se buscó apoyo de los inquilinos de otros tres edificios propiedad de la familia de Huang, los miembros de RENA fueron movilizados y se celebró una reunión en el edificio

pasa a la página 4

Los Ajustes de la "Junta de Regulación de Renta" de la Ciudad de Nueva York (Orden No. 34)

Para los contratos de apartamentos de Renta Estabilizada que comienzan el 1ro. de octubre de 2002 hasta el 30 de septiembre de 2003, incluyendo las concesiones de Pataki adoptadas por la Legislatura Estatal el 19 de junio de 1997

Los topes de renta que aparecen en el cuadro son los incrementos máximos que los dueños de edificios pueden cobrar legalmente por los apartamentos de renta estabilizada en la ciudad de Nueva York. Son válidos para todos los contratos que comienzan dentro del período de doce meses a partir del 1ro. de octubre de 2002. Los incrementos de alquiler basados en las pautas para la renovación del contrato de 1 o 2 años pueden cobrarse solamente una vez durante el período cubierto por dichas pautas, y deben ser aplicados a la renta legal estabilizada para el 30 de septiembre de 2002. Las cantidades que aparecen en el cuadro y los incrementos para los apartamentos vacíos no se aplican a los apartamentos que estaban sujetos a renta controlada en aquella fecha. No se permite la sobrecarga también conocido como el «impuesto de pobres.»

Los Contratos para Apartamentos Vacíos o Nuevos En junio de 1997, el gobernador George Pataki, al intentar destruir la regulación de rentas, forzó cambios que les dieron a los caseros una sobrecarga muy grande por los apartamentos vacíos. Una cláusula de la "Reforma al Acta de Regulación de Renta" de 1997 permite que los nuevos alquileres sean incrementados en un porcentaje obligatorio: 20% para un contrato de dos años, y por un contrato de 1 año, 20% de incremento menos la diferencia en el tope de renovación para los contratos de 1 y 2 años. La nueva ley permite también incrementos adicionales para los apartamentos vacíos donde no se habían cobrado incrementos por desocupación por ocho años o más.

Exceso de Cobro Los inquilinos deben estar al tanto de que muchos caseros van a aprovecharse de la complejidad de estas regulaciones y subvenciones, así como del poco conocimiento de los inquilinos del historial de renta de sus apar-

tamentos, para cobrar un alquiler ilegal. Una vez que el inquilino haya tomado posesión del apartamento, puede escoger entre llenar un formulario de queja de exceso de cobro de renta con la oficina de la División de Vivienda y Renovación Comunal (DHCR), o disputar la cantidad de la renta en la corte de vivienda de la ciudad para que se determine cuál es el alquiler legal.

Si un posible inquilino da muestras de conocer sus derechos, lo más probable es que el casero no firmará ningún contrato con tal inquilino. Los caseros evitan contratar con inquilinos que les pueden dar problemas. El exceso de cobro de alquiler es muy común. Todos los inquilinos deben luchar contra posibles excesos de cobro. Obtenga y llene un formulario *Form RA-89* con la oficina de DHCR para determinar el alquiler correcto en los archivos oficiales. Llame a la DHCR a (718) 739-6400 para obtener un formulario, o búsquelo en el sitio www.dhcr.state.ny.us.

La Apelación de la Renta de Mercado Justa Otro tipo de exceso de cobro sucede fre-

cuentemente cuando se vacía un apartamento que previamente estaba sujeto a renta controlada y se alquila con renta estabilizada. La Junta de Regulación de Renta (RGB) establece anualmente lo que ellos llaman el "Tope Especial de la Renta de Mercado Justa," el cual es empleado por la DHCR para bajar las rentas de mercado injustas de los inquilinos que llenan el formulario llamado "Apelación a la Renta Justa de Mercado" (FMRA). Según la Orden 34, es la Renta de Mercado Justa de HUD o un 50% sobre la renta base máxima. Ningún inquilino de un apartamento de renta estabilizada que fue descontrolado el 1ro de abril de 1984 o después debe dejar de poner a prueba la llamada "Renta Legal Inicial Regulada" (renta de mercado) que los caseros cobran cuando hay descontrol del apartamento. Use el formulario de DHCR *Form RA-89*. Indique claramente que su queja es tanto una queja de "Apelación a la Renta Justa de Mercado" como de "exceso de cobro." La corte de vivienda no puede tomar decisión sobre una Apelación de Renta de Mercado. Apartamentos vacíos que antes

estaban controlados en edificios que se han convertido en cooperativas o condominios no se vuelven estabilizados y no satisfacen los requisitos para la Apelación de la Renta Justa de Mercado.

Exención de Incrementos para las Personas de Mayor Edad: Las personas de 62 años o más que viven en apartamentos estabilizados y cuyos ingresos familiares anuales son de \$20,000 o menos, y que pagan (o enfrentan un incremento de alquiler que los forzaría a pagar) una renta de un tercio o más de sus ingresos, pueden tener derecho al programa de Exención de Incrementos para las Personas de Mayor Edad (SCRIE, por sus siglas en inglés), si aplican al Departamento de la Ciudad de Nueva York Sobre las Personas de Mayor Edad, cuya dirección es: SCRIE Unit, 2 Lafayette Street, NY, NY 10007. Si el alquiler actual de un inquilino que tiene derecho a este programa sobrepasa un tercio del ingreso, no se lo puede reducir, pero es posible evitar incrementos de alquiler en el futuro. Obtenga el formulario de SCRIE por llamar al (212) 442-1000.

Unidades de Desván (Lofts) Los incrementos legales sobre la renta base para las unidades de desván son de un 1 por ciento por un contrato de un año y un 2 por ciento por un contrato de dos años. No se permiten incrementos para las unidades de desván vacías.

Hoteles y Apartamentos de una Sola Habitación No habrá ningún aumento de la renta este año para los apartamentos de hotel de Clase A, casas de habitaciones, hoteles de clase B (de 30 habitaciones o más), hoteles de una sola habitación, y las casas de habitaciones (Clase B, 6-29 cuartos). No se permiten incrementos para apartamentos vacíos.

La Desregulación de Rentas Altas y Altos Ingresos (1) Los apartamentos que legalmente se alquilan por \$2,000 o más por mes y que se desocuparon entre el 7 de julio de 1993 y el 1ro. de octubre de 1993, o en o desde del 1ro de abril de 1994 son sujetos a la desregulación. (2) La misma desregulación se les aplica, para el mismo período establecido en (1), a los apartamentos que legalmente pagan \$2,000 o más mensualmente aunque no se desocupen, si el ingreso total de la familia es más de \$175,000 en los dos años consecutivos previos. Para cumplir los requisitos de esta segunda forma de desregulación, el casero tiene que enviarle un formulario de certificación de ingreso al inquilino entre el 1ro de enero y el 1ro de mayo, así como someter dicho formulario al DHCR y conseguir su aprobación.

Para pautas previas, llame a la RGB al 212-385-2934 o busque el sitio www.housingnyc.com.

Tipo de Contrato	Renta Legal Actual	Contrato de 1 Año	Contrato de 2 Años	
Renovación del Contrato	Todas	2%	4%	
Contratos para Apartamentos Vacíos	Más de \$500	Incrementos por desocupación cobrados en los últimos 8 años	18%	20%
		Incrementos por desocupación no cobrados en los últimos 8 años	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, más el 18%	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, más el 20%
	Menos de \$300	Incrementos por desocupación cobrados en los últimos 8 años	18% + \$100	20% + \$100
		Incrementos por desocupación no cobrados en los últimos 8 años	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, + 18% + \$100	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, + 20% + \$100
	Renta de \$300 a \$500	Incrementos por desocupación cobrados en los últimos 8 años	18% o \$100, lo que sea mayor	20% o \$100, lo que sea mayor
		Incrementos por desocupación no cobrados en los últimos 8 años	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, mas 18%, o \$100, lo que sea mayor	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, mas 20%, o \$100, lo que sea mayor

Proyecto de ley del congreso pretende recortar 125,000 vales de vivienda para familias de escasos recursos

Traducido por Lightning Translations

Un proyecto de ley aprobado recientemente por el Comité de Asignación de Fondos del congreso de los Estados Unidos pretende dañar seriamente el principal programa federal que ayuda a las familias de escasos recursos a rentar viviendas en el mercado abierto, de acuerdo al Centro de Políticas de Presupuesto y Prioridades (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities).

Las comunidades en todo el país podrían tener la expectativa de perder la ayuda para vivienda si se adoptan los cambios aprobados por el Comité el mes pasado.

El proyecto del Congreso de asignación de fondos por el Año Fiscal 2003 para Vivienda y Desarrollo Urbano (Housing and Urban Development) y otras agencias recortaría \$938 millones del presupuesto presidencial para el programa de vales para vivienda. Normalmente llamado "Sección

8" o, más recientemente, el Programa de Vales para la Elección de Vivienda, el programa proporciona vales a las familias para sufragar parte del costo de la renta de vivienda en el mercado abierto. Esta reducción daría como resultado la pérdida de más de 125,000 vales debajo del nivel de 2002 y rompería el antiguo compromiso del gobierno federal para renovar todos los vales existentes.

La mayoría de los recortes a los fondos en el proyecto de ley se producirían por proporciona a las agencias de vivienda locales suficiente dinero sólo para el número de vales que usaron en el pasado. Esto no alcanzaría, ya que las agencias están usando una mayor parte de sus vales ahora que en los años anteriores. Recientes investigaciones muestran que el porcentaje de vales para vivienda que se están usando aumentó del

91 por ciento en el año anterior al 97 por ciento actualmente. (Los vales no se usan si las familias a quienes se les otorgan no pueden usarlos para la renta de vivienda debido a la falta de vivienda disponible o por cualquier otra razón.)

En Nueva York, el estado en su totalidad perdería entre 7,580 y 8,810 vales, o cerca del 4 por ciento del total de sus vales; la Autoridad de Vivienda de la ciudad de Nueva York perdería 3,035 vales. Actualmente, el 96 por ciento de los vales en las comunidades de Nueva York de los que se tiene información se encuentran en uso, incrementándose del 93 por ciento al finalizar el año fiscal anterior.

Como concluyó en un informe reciente la bipartidaria Comisión de Vivienda del Milenio, fundada por el Congreso, el programa de vales es "flexible, rentable y exitoso en alcanzar su objetivo," y debería ser "el eje" de la política nacional de vivienda.

El programa federal de vales es especialmente importante por la extrema escasez de vivienda para las familias de bajos ingresos. La información del censo muestra que en 1999 más de 5 millones de familias de bajos ingresos que alquilan su vivienda y que no recibieron ayuda para vivienda gastaron más de la mitad de sus ingresos en renta y servicios o se encontraban en viviendas de muy baja calidad. La mayoría de las familias de bajos ingresos (a diferencia de los individuos de mayor edad o discapacitados) que enfrentan estas graves necesidades de vivienda son

familias trabajadoras.

De acuerdo a la Coalición Nacional de Vivienda para Familias de Bajos Ingresos (National Low Income Housing Coalition; NLIHC, por sus siglas en inglés), en todo el país en promedio una persona que trabaja tiempo completo debe ganar \$14.66 por hora para poder pagar la renta de un modesto hogar de dos recámaras. Con la excepción de Puerto Rico, no hay ningún lugar en los Estados Unidos donde una persona que gana el salario mínimo pueda pagar ni siquiera la renta de un apartamento con una recámara.

"Esta amenaza al programa de vales no tiene precedentes y es inconsciente en momentos en que la necesidad de ayuda federal para la vivienda es mayor que nunca," opinó la presidenta de la NLIHC Sheila Crowley.

El Congreso podría proteger a las familias de bajos ingresos que reciben vales para vivienda, además de las decenas de miles de familias en listas de espera para vales, al proveer los fondos del programa al mismo nivel que propone el presupuesto presidencial.

¡Comuníquese con sus representantes en el Congreso para decirles que si no proporcionan una vivienda asequible, deben hacer todo lo posible para que las familias trabajadoras reciben la ayuda necesaria para seguir viviendo bajo un techo!

Adaptado de un boletín de prensa de la Center on Budget and Policy Priorities y la National Low Income Housing Coalition.

No se quede helado: ¡ORGANÍZASE!



La ley requiere que su casero proporcione calefacción y agua caliente a las temperaturas siguientes, desde el 1ro de octubre hasta el 31 de mayo:

Desde las 6 a.m. hasta las 10 p.m.: Si la temperatura afuera es de menos de 55 grados, la temperatura dentro debe ser al menos de 68 grados en todo el apartamento.

Desde las 10 p.m. hasta las 6 a.m.: Si la temperatura afuera es de menos de 40 grados, la temperatura dentro debe ser al menos de 55 grados en todo el apartamento.

Se tiene que proporcionar agua caliente a un mínimo de 120 grados en el grifo las 24 horas del día, todo el año.

Si su casero no mantiene estas temperaturas mínimas, usted debe:

- * Comenzar una "Acción HP" (HP Action) en la Corte de Vivienda. Pida una inspección por orden de la corte y una Orden de Corrección (Order to Correct)
- * Llamar al Buro Central de Quejas (Central Control Bureau) de la ciudad de Nueva York al (212) 824-4328 inmediatamente, para documentar la violación del casero. Llame repetidamente. Se supone que un inspector vendrá eventualmente, aunque a veces no lo haga.
- * Exhortar a los otros inquilinos en el edificio a llamar al Central Complaint. Todos deben llamar repetidamente, al menos una vez al día, todos los días en que tenga problemas con la calefacción.
- * Comprar un buen termómetro para afuera y adentro, para documentar las fechas exactas, las horas, y las temperaturas, tanto afuera como adentro, mientras tenga problemas con la calefacción. Esta documentación es su evidencia
- * Llamar a la División de Vivienda y Renovación Comunal del Estado de Nueva York (DHCR, por sus siglas en inglés) al (718) 739-6400, y pedir que le envíen el formulario de Queja de Calefacción y Agua Caliente. Llene el formulario y consigne la

participación de todos los inquilinos en su edificio que pueden firmarlo. Reclame una orden para restaurar la calefacción y el agua caliente, y que se reduzcan y congelen (¡disculpe lo de "congelen"!) todas las rentas.

- * Necesitarán una fuerte asociación de inquilinos para obligar al casero a proporcionar la calefacción y el agua caliente. Escriban y llamen al casero para demandar las reparaciones y aceite. Prepárense para una huelga de renta (sobre todo con asesoría legal)—de relámpago si es necesario.

Las leyes sobre la calefacción establecen también:

- * Que el Departamento de Reparaciones de Emergencia de la ciudad le proporcione la calefacción si el casero no lo hace. (No se siente en un bloque de hielo—otra vez, ¡disculpe!—mientras espere que lo haga.)
- * Una multa de \$250 al casero por cada día que se produzca la violación. (Pero la verdad es que la Corte de Vivienda raras veces impone las multas, y mucho menos las cobra).
- * Una multa de \$1,000 al casero si algún aparato de control automático se instala en la caldera para mantener la temperatura por debajo del mínimo legal.
- * Si el tanque de combustible de la caldera está vacío, los inquilinos tienen el derecho de comprar su propio combustible después de haber pasado 24 horas sin calefacción y también sin obtener ninguna respuesta del casero. Esto no se aplica si la caldera está rota y necesita tanto reparación como combustible.

¡Cuidado! ¡proteja su dinero! Si los inquilinos deciden comprar el combustible, hay que seguir los procedimientos legales cuidadosamente. Consiga la ayuda y el consejo de un organizador de inquilinos. La existencia de leyes de calefacción y agua caliente vigentes no garantiza que el gobierno las implemente. No se quede helado por esperar que la ciudad o el estado actúe. ¡Organízese!

García

viene de la página 3

de Melba, donde existía un Comité de Inquilinos en activo.

El Viernes 8 de noviembre, Melba fue junto con los miembros de RENA a las oficinas de la familia Huang en 369 East 62nd St., para solicitar un contrato de arrendamiento de manera formal. El grupo encontró la oficina del casero cerrada y bajo llave. El día siguiente, cerca de 30 personas se manifestaron frente a las oficinas cerradas. La manifestación fue apoyada por Melba y su familia, los miembros de RENA, la coalición de inquilinos de toda la ciudad y el Consejo Metropolitano de Vivienda (Met Council on Housing).

Al tiempo que las voces en la manifestación coreaban en el Upper East Side, mucha gente del vecindario se detuvo para hablar. Se conmocionaron al escuchar la historia del intento de Tony Huang

de desalojar a la familia García. Rosanny Genao, miembro de RENA e inquilino de 600 West 157th St., y quien ha apoyado intensamente a la familia García, llamó a la prensa con la esperanza de que una amplia cobertura ayudaría a Melba a ganar su caso. Su labor rindió resultados alentadores: la manifestación recibió la cobertura de *El Diario* y los canales de TV 5, 7, 11 y 41.

Menos alentadora fue la falta de participación de los funcionarios electos. Todos los funcionarios electos de Washington Heights fueron invitados a la manifestación, pero ninguno se presentó.

Jeanie Dubnau es miembro de RENA y de la Coalición de Inquilinos de Toda la Ciudad (City-Wide Tenant Coalition).



**E-mail Met Council
active@metcouncil.net**

Rent Laws

continued from page 1

were suddenly decontrolled on vacancy after July 1, 1971, by Rockefeller's law. Today, most New York City rent-stabilized tenants are protected by the ETPA. ETPA and other related laws that protect rent-stabilized tenants expire on June 15, 2003, and must be renewed by the state legislature by then. Tenants can expect the state assembly to act early to strengthen the laws, and then to pass the fight on to the state senate. The final bill must be signed by the governor before it goes into effect.

Two Cheers for Democracy

While the renewal of the laws should be a straightforward task given the continuing need, tenants who lived through the 1997 renewal battle learned that nothing is simple when the real-estate industry is your opponent.

Despite record profits, the landlords of New York City see themselves deprived of billions of dollars of additional profit by the rent laws, and they don't hesitate to contribute a lot of money to any politicians — Democrat or Republican — who will listen to their sad and misleading tales [see "RSA Myths," *Tenant/Inquilino* Nov. 2002 for the similar misinformation campaign about childhood lead poisoning].

In December of 1996, the landlords and Joe Bruno, head of the state senate, started making loud noises about getting rid of the rent laws. This clear announcement aroused a huge, angry tenant response, and the debate stayed hot until the laws were finally weakened (but not to the extent that landlords wanted) when they were renewed on June 19, 1997, in the so-called Rent Regulation Reform Act of 1997. (RRRA of 1997, ironically called "Rah Rah '97").

By the time the battle was all over, the laws pro-

tecting 2.5 million tenants had been significantly weakened. Among other things, the landlords won: a minimum 20% vacancy allowance, with an extra bounty for eviction of long-term tenants; a constitutionally suspect provision increasing evictions by limiting Housing Court judges' discretion to stop eviction for good cause, particularly for low-income tenants who do not have the entire disputed amount on hand; vacancy decontrol of apartments that reach a \$2,000 rent—an open invitation to fraud; a lower threshold for high-income decontrol (reduced from \$250,000 income to \$175,000 with a rent of \$2,000); and a much weaker rent stabilization code.

In separate actions, the Pataki administration has continued work that it had started right after the election of 1994 to gut the enforcement of the rent laws, in fulfillment of a plan first announced by Pataki's transition spokesman — none other than Charles Urstadt.

The rent-renewal fight in 1997 started with the governor, the senate Republicans and landlords all claiming that victory was in sight in the form of either complete decontrol or vacancy decontrol, but the 2003 renewal battle has had a quiet start. This time, the landlords and the best politicians money can buy have not been talking about what they want. In 2003, tenants can expect a stealth campaign: nothing up their sleeves but the invisible hand of the "free" market. There have been no bold announcements about getting rid of the rent laws, and there have even been suggestions that no changes are in store.

In 1996 and 1997, landlords spent millions of dollars in lobbying and political contributions to Republican state senators and the governor to persuade them to weaken tenant protections. Landlords

also conducted a propaganda campaign attempting to convince the public and the city's editorial boards of the dire need to get rid of the rent laws as a way to solve the housing crisis, just as they had in 1971. They even claimed that doing away with rent regulations would actually cause rents to go down, making one wonder why they would spend millions of dollars to bring that about. The editorial boards, even the usually savvy *Newsday*, were uniformly more receptive than the public to the landlord's Orwellian policy arguments, no doubt owing to the newspapers' receipt of millions of dollars in advertising the real-estate industry provides.

Tenants were unable to match landlords dollar for dollar, but they were able to counter them by voicing their concerns with phone calls, letters, rallies, pickets and civil disobedience. Tenants will have to do the same things in 2003 — staff phone banks to other tenants, make calls and write letters to their own elected officials, engage unions, churches and other groups, and come out for public displays of tenant power.

Gearing Up

In 1997, the debate on the true merits of the rent regulation system *never happened*. The editorial boards and the governor never allowed it, accusing tenant activists of "scaring seniors." 2003 must be different—tenants must show what the benefits of the rent regulation system are, and that further weakening of the laws in anyway whatsoever, or even simply preserving them in their crippled state, is unacceptable, because the chronic acute housing crisis in New York City is already beyond breaking point.

Tenants will be demanding that the state legislature renew the laws without any new weakening amendments, and at a minimum repeal several of the damaging changes passed in 1994 and 1997: the vacancy and luxury decontrol measures and the eviction provisions. In addition, a key demand will be that the state repeal the 1971 Rockefeller-Urstadt law and return to the New York City Council (and other municipal legislatures) the human right of self-determination concerning housing

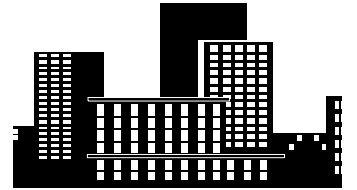
and tenant laws.

Locally, tenants are demanding that the city council and the mayor renew the rent stabilization law without weakening amendments, repeal the maximum base rent formula for rent control tenants, and pass a resolution calling on the state legislature to repeal the Urstadt law and the decontrol and eviction provisions.

Contact Met Council to

get involved in the campaign to defend our rent laws: 212-979-6238 ext. 6 or active@metcouncil.net.

In coming months: Who benefits from rent regulations, and how.



The law requires your landlord provide heat and hot water at the following levels from October 1 through May 31:

From 6 am to 10 pm: If the outside temperature falls below 55 degrees, the inside temperature must be at least 68 degrees everywhere in your apartment.

From 10 pm to 6 am: If the outside temperature falls below 40 degrees, the inside temperature must be at least 55 degrees everywhere in your apartment.

Hot water at a minimum 120 degrees at the tap must be provided 24 hours a day, year round.

If your landlord does not maintain those minimum temperatures, you should:

- * Start an "HP action" in Housing Court. Ask for a court-ordered inspection and an Order to Correct.
- * Call the New York City Central Complaints Bureau at (212) 824-4328 immediately to record the landlord's violation. Call repeatedly. An inspector should eventually come, although sometimes they don't.
- * Get other tenants in your building to call Central Complaint. Everybody should call repeatedly, at least once every day the condition is not corrected.
- * Buy a good indoor/outdoor thermometer and keep a chart of the exact dates, times, and temperature readings, inside and out, so long as the condition is not corrected. The chart is your evidence.
- * Call the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal at (718) 739-6400 and ask them to send you their Heat and Hot Water complaint form. Get as many other apartments as

possible in your building to sign on, demanding an order restoring heat and hot water, and a reduction and freeze (pardon the expression!) in all the rents.

You'll need a strong tenant association to force the landlord to provide heat and hot water. Write and call the landlord and demand repairs or fuel.

Prepare to go on rent strike — but get legal advice first.

The heat laws also provide for:

- * The city's Emergency Repair Department to supply your heat if the landlord does not. (Try waiting for this one!)
- * A \$250 a day fine to the landlord for every day of violation. (But the Housing Court rarely imposes these fines, let alone collect them.)
- * A \$1,000 fine to the landlord if an automatic control device is put on the boiler to keep the temperature below the lawful minimum.

If your boiler's fuel tank is empty, tenants have the right to buy their own fuel after 24 hours of no heat and no response from the landlord. But this provision does not apply if the boiler is broken and needs both repairs and fuel.

Caution! Protect your money! If you decide to buy fuel, you must follow special lawful procedures very carefully. You should get help and advice from a tenant organizer.

Because the heat and hot water laws are in the law books does not mean they are enforced by government. Don't freeze to death waiting for the city or state to act. Organize!

Complaint Numbers

The Department of Housing, Preservation and Development (HPD) 24-hour Central Complaints number is:

(212) 824-4328

The Department of Buildings complaint line,

(212) 227-7000

House Bill Would Cut 125,000 Vouchers for Low-Income Families

A bill recently approved by the House Appropriations Committee would seriously damage the main federal program that helps low-income families rent housing on the open market, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

Communities in all parts of the country could expect to lose housing assistance if the changes approved by the committee last month are adopted.

The House FY2003 appropriations bill for HUD and other agencies would cut \$938 million from the President's budget for the housing voucher program. Generally called "Section 8" or, more recently, the Housing Choice Voucher Program, the program provides families with vouchers to defray part of the cost of renting housing on the

open market. This reduction would result in the loss of more than 125,000 vouchers below the 2002 level and would break the federal government's longstanding commitment to renew all existing vouchers.

The bulk of the funding cut in the House bill would come from providing local housing agencies with funds only for the number of vouchers they used in the past. This is inadequate, because agencies are using a greater share of their vouchers now than in previous years. New findings show that the percentage of housing vouchers in use grew from 91% in the previous year to 97% currently. (Vouchers go unused if the families that are awarded them are unable to use them to rent housing due to lack of available housing or for some other reason.)

In New York, the state as a whole would lose between 7,580 and 8,810 vouchers, or about 4 percent of its total vouchers; the New York City Housing Authority would lose 3,035 vouchers. Currently, 96% of vouchers in New York communities for which data are available are in use, up from 93% in the last completed fiscal year.

As the bipartisan, Congressionally-chartered Millennial Housing Commission concluded in a recent report, the voucher program is "flexible, cost-effective, and successful in its mission," and should be a "linchpin" of national housing policy.

The federal voucher program is especially important given the tightening housing squeeze on low-income families. Census data show that in 1999 more than five million low-income renter households

who did not receive housing assistance either paid more than half of their income for rent and utilities or lived in severely substandard housing. Most of the low-income families (as distinguished from elderly and disabled individuals) that face these severe housing needs are working families.

According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), across the country on average, a person working full-time must earn \$14.66 per hour to be able to afford a modest two-bedroom rental home. With the exception of Puerto Rico, there is nowhere in the United States where a person earning the minimum wage could afford to rent even a one-bedroom apartment.

"This threat to the voucher program is without precedent and is un-

conscionable at a time when the need for federal housing assistance is at a record high," said NLIHC President Sheila Crowley.

Congress could protect the low-income families assisted by housing vouchers—and the tens of thousands of additional households on waiting lists for vouchers—by funding the program at the level provided in the President's budget.

Be sure to contact your representatives in Congress to let them know that if they won't provide affordable housing, they'd better make sure that working families get help to keep a roof over their heads!

Adapted from a press release issued by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and the National Low Income Housing Coalition.

NYC Rent Guidelines Board Adjustments (Order No. 34)

for Rent Stabilized Leases commencing Oct. 1, 2002 through Sept. 30, 2003, including the Pataki vacancy bonuses adopted by the State Legislature on June 19, 1997

This rent guidelines table shows the maximum increases landlords in New York City can legally charge for rent stabilized apartments on all leases commencing in the twelve-month period beginning October 1, 2002. Increases in rent based on the 1- or 2-year renewal guidelines can be charged only once during the period covered by the guidelines, and must be applied to the legal stabilized rent on September 30, 2002. The above guidelines and vacancy bonuses do not apply to an apartment which was rent controlled on that date. There is no low rent supplement, a.k.a. poor tax, allowed.

Sublease Allowance

Landlords can charge a 10 percent increase during the term of a sublease that commences during this guideline period.

Vacancy Leases

In June 1997, Governor George Pataki, as a part of his efforts to destroy rent regulation, forced changes that gave landlords large vacancy bonuses. Provisions of his Rent Regulation Reform Act of 1997 allow the rents of apartments to rise by a statutory percentage: 20 percent for a 2-year lease, and 20 percent minus the difference between the 1- and 2-year renewal guidelines for 1-year leases. The new law also allows additional vacancy increases for apartments which have had no vacancy allowance in eight or more years.

Rent Overcharges

Tenants should be aware that many landlords will exploit the complexities of these guidelines and bonuses, and the tenant's unfamiliarity with the apartment's rent history, to charge an illegal rent. The tenant can choose between filing an overcharge

Lease Type	Current Legal Rent		One-year Lease	Two-year Lease
Renewal Leases	All		2%	4%
Vacancy leases	More than \$500	Vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	18%	20%
		No vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 18%	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 20%
	Less than \$300	Vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	18% plus \$100	20% plus \$100
		No vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 18% plus \$100	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 20% plus \$100
	Rent \$300 to \$500	Vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	18% or \$100, whichever is greater	20% or \$100, whichever is greater
		No vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 18%, or \$100, whichever is greater	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 20%, or \$100, whichever is greater

complaint with the Division of Housing and Community Renewal or challenging the rent in Housing Court to get a determination of the legal rent.

A prospective tenant who expresses knowledge of their rights will probably not be given a lease to sign. Landlords avoid renting to tenants who may be troublesome. Overcharging is very common. Every tenant should challenge possible overcharge. With DHCR, obtain and fill out *Form RA-89* to determine the correct rent from official records. Call DHCR at (718) 739-6400 to obtain the form or go to: www.dhcr.state.ny.us

Fair Market Rent Appeal

Another type of overcharge frequently occurs at the time that a previously rent controlled apartment becomes vacant and is re-rented as a stabilized unit. The Rent Guidelines Board an-

nually sets what they call the "Special Fair Market Rent Guideline" that is used by DHCR to lower unfair market rents for tenants who file the Fair Market Rent Appeal (FMRA). Under Order 34, it is HUD Fair Market Rent or 50% above the maximum base rent. No stabilized tenant of an apartment that was decontrolled on or after April 1, 1984 should fail to challenge the so-called Initial Legal Regulated Rent (market rent) that landlords charge upon decontrol. Use DHCR *Form RA-89*. Indicate clearly that your complaint is both a complaint of "overcharge" and "Fair Market Rent Appeal." The Housing Court cannot determine a Fair Market Rent Appeal. Formerly controlled vacant apartments in buildings converted to co-ops or condos do not become stabilized and are not eligible for a Fair Market Rent Appeal.

Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption

Rent stabilized seniors, 62 years or older, whose disposable annual household income is \$20,000 or less and who pay (or face a rent increase that would cause them to pay) one-third or more of that income in rent may be eligible for a Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) if they apply to the NYC Dept of the Aging, SCRIE Unit at 2 Lafayette Street, NY, NY 10007. If an otherwise eligible tenant's current rent level is already above one-third of income, it cannot be rolled back, but future rent increases may be avoided. Obtain the SCRIE application form by calling (212) 442-1000.

Loft Units

Legalized loft unit increases above the base rent are 1 percent for a one-year lease and 2

percent for two years. No vacancy allowance is permitted on vacant lofts.

Hotels and SROs

There will be no rent increases this year for Class A apartment hotels, lodging houses, Class B hotels (30 rooms or more), single room occupancy (SROs) hotels, and rooming houses (Class B, 6-29 rooms). No vacancy allowance is permitted.

High-rent, High-income Deregulation

(1) Apartments legally renting for \$2,000 or more a month that became vacant from July 7, 1993 through October 1, 1993, or on April 1, 1994 and thereafter are subject to deregulation. (2) The same deregulation applies in the time periods set forth in (1) above to apartments legally renting for \$2,000 or more a month without their becoming vacant if the total household income exceeds \$175,000 in each of the prior two consecutive years. To be eligible for this second form of deregulation, the landlord must send an income certification form to the tenant between January 1 and May 1 and file it with and get the approval of DHCR.

For previous guidelines call the RGB at 212-385-2934 or go to www.housingnyc.com.



Melba Garcia and Family Fight For Their Home

By Jeanie Dubnau

Melba Garcia and her six children have lived in their apartment at 600 West 157th St. for 12 years; the three youngest children were born there. From the time she arrived in New York from the Dominican Republic, Melba lived with the original tenants of the apartment, an older couple named Jimenez, helping them with cooking, cleaning and shopping. Then Mr. Jimenez died suddenly and his wife moved out of the apartment. Melba and her family stayed, believing that they qualified for succession rights as non-traditional members of the Jimenez family. Since 1997, Melba has been paying the landlord, Tony Huang—and her rent has been accepted. Now, however, with Washington Heights real-estate prices skyrocketing and rents in empty apartments out of reach for the largely poor and working-class immigrant community, Huang has decided it will be more profitable to evict Melba and her family and raise the rent on her large apartment. As is well known, Washington Heights is being gentrified—especially buildings on Broadway, Fort Washington Ave. and Riverside Drive, near the Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center at 168th St. and Broadway.

Melba came to the Riverside-Edgemcombe Neighborhood Asso-

ciation (RENA) for help after she received a holdover eviction notice from her landlord. With RENA's assistance, a letter was sent to Tony Huang by regular mail, by fax and by e-mail, asking for a meeting to discuss Melba's case, and several phone calls were made to the landlord's office—but the messages left there were never answered. Because funds for public legal assistance have been drastically cut in recent years, Melba couldn't get a Legal Services lawyer. Luckily, however, through the office of Assemblyman Herman D. Farrell, RENA was able to obtain a lawyer for Melba who is representing her now. The tenants from three other buildings owned by the Huang family were contacted for support, RENA members were mobilized, and a meeting was held in Melba's building, where there had been an active Tenants' Committee.

On Friday, November 8, Melba went together with RENA members to the offices of the Huang family at 369 East 62nd St., to ask formally for a lease. The group found the landlord's office closed and padlocked. On the following day, about 30 people picketed the locked offices. In addition to Melba and her family, the picket line was supported by RENA members, the City-Wide Tenant Coali-

tion and the Metropolitan Council on Housing.

As the voices on the picket line rang out on the Upper East Side, many people from the neighborhood stopped to talk. They were shocked to hear about Tony Huang's attempt to evict the Garcia family. Rosanny Genao, a RENA member and a tenant at 600 West 157th St. who has strongly supported the Garcia family, had mobilized the press in the hope that widespread coverage would help Melba win her case. Her work yielded encouraging results: the demonstration was covered by *El Diario* and by TV channels 5, 7, 11 and 41.

Less encouraging was the lack of participation by elected officials.



All of the elected officials from Washington Heights were invited to participate in the demonstration, but not one of them showed up.

Jeanie Dubnau is a member of RENA and the City-Wide Tenant Coalition.

Total Collapse

After reading about a partial building collapse at an address with numerous violations, don't you wonder 'how does the city let this happen?' Well, this question is answered, in part, by a recent report from Assemblyman Scott Stringer (Democratic, Upper West Side of Manhattan), "Total Collapse; How NYC Department of Buildings' Failed Policies Contribute to Crumbling Buildings." He and his staff tracked NYC Building Department records over two years for six categories of hazardous violations to see how they were handled after being placed. The violations were among some of the most serious that the department registers, and were for things like unsafe façade or building walls, lack of necessary exits and working without a permit.

The report criticizes the department for not following up with reinspections after violations are placed. According to Stringer, the buildings department does not have close to the number of inspectors needed to cover the 900,000 buildings citywide that it is responsible for. While there were 260 inspectors in 2000, that number was down to 196 in 2002. The department requires that hazardous violations be corrected within 24 hours, but with the low number of inspectors, this is impossible. The report also criticizes the department for not referring many serious violations to HPD's Emergency Repair Unit and for giving inspectors too much leeway without giving them clear enough guidelines or training.

Another criticism familiar to those of us who have been following the city's buildings department for years is the reliance on

landlords voluntarily complying with code requirements and paying fines. Like HPD, the buildings department has no way of forcing landlords to pay fines.


Since it can't enforce the payment of fines, landlords only have to correct violations when they need something else from the department. When an owner needs to refinance, sell or get a new permit for renovation or construction, he or she might then act to clear violations.

Stringer also criticizes the department for not notifying tenants of existing violations and letting them know what's expected of the landlord. With all the talk about how to fund affordable housing and preservation efforts (i.e. more inspections and enforcement), the evidence that the buildings department is allowing fines to go uncollected is shocking. The report exposes the fact that for the six categories of violations examined, the buildings department fined landlords \$20 million and only collected \$6 million. And readers of *Tenant/Inquilino* won't be shocked to read that the department's policy allowing landlords to self-certify (installed in the mid-80s to "save money") is partially to blame for some of the collapses and accidents. The Stringer report provides a glimpse of how the Department of Buildings fails to reinspect or correct serious violations, putting tenants and passersby at great risk.

For copies of the report: <http://www.assembly.state.ny.us/mem/?ad=067> or contact Stringer's office: 212-873-6368.

—Jennie Laurie

N.Y. Premier



Friday, December 13 - Thursday, December 19

7:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.
additional screenings 5 p.m. on Sat. & Sun.

Anthology Film Archives
32 Second Avenue at Second Street
(F train to 2nd Ave or 6 train to Bleeker or 2nd Ave.-M15 bus to 3rd St.)

Ticket info: 212-505-5181

Filmmakers and activists will be present at each screening to discuss the film and housing issues effecting the New York City area. Community groups participating include: Chinatown Justice Project, 5th Ave Committee, Fort Greene Together, Met Council, Chelsea Housing Group & Good Old Lower East Side.

**** Special Reduced Ticket Price for Met Council Members & Volunteers ****

The filmmakers are offering \$5 tickets for Met Council members and volunteers, for the **Wednesday, December 18** screenings only. Tickets other nights will cost \$8, \$5 for seniors and students. Dave Powell of Met Council will speak between screenings.

To take advantage of this offer, you must call (212) 979-6238, ext. 6. Leave a message, including your name, time of screening (7:30 or 9:30 pm) and the number of reduced priced tickets you want. On the night of the screening starting at 7 pm, a Met Council person will be at the literature table with your ticket(s) and you will be charged the \$5 rate. We thank the filmmakers for making cheap tickets available to our members!

Organize to Renew and Strengthen the Rent Laws

Yes, I want to help Met Council fight back the real estate lobby and get the rent laws renewed and strengthened in 2003.

Name: _____

Address _____

Email _____

Day Phone _____

Evening Phone _____

Call me about:

- Organizing a meeting in my building or community group.
- Participating in a lobbying meeting with my elected officials.
- Attending rallies and demonstrations
- Volunteering in Met Council's office
- Table or hand out flyers in my neighborhood

Return to: Dave Powell, Met Council, 339 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10012 (212-979-6238).

Oppose the NYC2012 Plan for a West Side Stadium

Tuesday, December 17, Noon City Hall Steps

The New York City Council will convene the first of several hearings on the proposed 2012 Olympics starting at 1:00 P.M. on December 17th. The entire NYC Olympic Bid is driven by developers and will destroy neighborhoods and greatly increase Manhattan's traffic while much of the cost will be borne by New York City taxpayers. Mayor Michael Bloomberg and NYC2012 Founder Dan Doctoroff are falsely claiming the Olympic plan will be privately financed. With up to \$3.5 billion of taxes being diverted to pay for the West Side stadium and subway, the rest of the city will have to make up the difference.

NOTE: If there is a transit strike, we may postpone the December 17 news conference. Check www.tenant.net for info.

Contact: 212-581-9022; email: tenant@tenant.net

Liberty Bonds

continued from page 1

that bisects Chinatown and leaves out almost all of the Lower East Side, as well as many other low-income affected neighborhoods throughout New York City. HDC officials based their opinions on an estimated per-unit construction cost that was twice as high as the per-unit cost quoted by the only nonprofit developer to testify, Asian Americans for Equality (\$375,000 compared to \$175,000).

The Rebuild Coalition has been asking the question, "Rebuilding for whom?" since it was formed one year ago. The coalition of residents, advocates and service providers—many from the Lower East Side and Chinatown—asserts that stakeholders from the fi-

nance and real estate sectors have dominated New York's rebuilding agenda. The group seeks to refocus the debate to include the voices and needs of downtown's poor neighborhoods that were so deeply affected by the World Trade Center attacks. In addition to housing, the coalition has focused on job creation, health needs, environmental clean-up issues, civil liberties, and equity in disaster and other benefits programs. *For more information about the Rebuild Coalition, contact Helen Lee at University Settlement /Project Home, 212/505-1995 or helen@university-settlement.org.*

Melissa Aase works with the University Settlement Society.

WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

LOWER EAST SIDE BRANCH at

Cooper Square Committee
61 E. 4th St. (btwn. 2nd Ave. & Bowery)
Tuesdays 6:30 pm

CHELSEA COALITION ON HOUSING

Covers 14th St. to 30th St., 5th Ave. to the Hudson River.
322 W. 17th St. (basement), CH3-0544
Thursdays 7:30 pm

GOLES (Good Old Lower East Side)

525 E. 6th St. (btwn. Aves. A & B) Lower East Side tenants only, 212-533-2541.

HOUSING COMMITTEE OF RENA

Covers 135th St. to 165th St. from Riverside Dr. to St. Nicholas Ave., 544 W. 157th St. (basement entrance).
Thursdays 8 pm

LOWER MANHATTAN LOFT TENANTS

St. Margaret's House, Pearl & Fulton Sts., 212-539-3538
Wednesdays 6 pm-7 pm

VILLAGE INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS

26 Perry St. (basement), 212-741-2994
Wednesdays 6 pm

WEST SIDE TENANTS UNION

200 W. 72nd St. Room 63; 212-595-1274
Tuesday & Thursday 2-5 pm
Tuesday and Wednesday ... 6-7:45 pm



METROPOLITAN COUNCIL ON HOUSING

Met Council is a citywide tenant union.

Our phones are open to the public
Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays from 1:30 to 5 p.m.

We can briefly answer your questions, help you with organizing or refer you to other help.

212-979-0611

Join Met Council

Membership: Individual, \$25 per year; Low-income, \$15 per year; family (voluntary: 2 sharing an apartment), \$30 per year. Supporting, \$40 per year. Sustaining, min. of \$100 per year (indicate amount of pledge). For affiliation of community or tenant organizations, large buildings, trade unions, etc. call 212-979-6238.

My apartment is controlled stabilized unregulated other _____

I am interested in volunteering my time to Met Council. Please call me to schedule times and duties. I can counsel tenants, do office work, lobby public officials, attend rallies/protests.

Name _____

Address _____ Apt. No. _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone Number _____ Email _____

Send your check or money order with this form to:
Metropolitan Council on Housing, 339 Lafayette St., NY, NY 10012