Churches, civic group joining in Hoboken to form tenants union

By Randolph Diamond

1/26/81
H O

Saying that Hoboken is in a "serious crisis" because of rising rents that are driving low and middle-class persons out of the city, representatives of churches throughout the city are joining together with a civic group to form a tenants union.

The first meeting of the Hoboken Tenants Union will be tonight at 7:30 at St. Joseph's Hall at 67 Monroe St. Members of the city council as well as the mayor are expected to attend.

Sister Noberta of St. Francis Church in Hoboken, a spokeswoman for the new group, said Por La Gente, a civic group concerned with bettering housing conditions in Hoboken, and the Social Concerns Committee, which is made up of representatives from just about every church in Hoboken, are joining to form the tenants union.

"One of our main goals will be to stop the soaring rents that are happening all over the city," said Sister Noberta. "We are presently in a crisis that is driving numerous poor and middle-class families from the city."

Tenants union organizing tonight

Continued from Page 1

Sister Noberta said the crisis is due to the Hoboken renaissance that is bringing many New York City residents to the city.

"Every month the rent leveling board approves another few rent increases that are in some cases doubling tenants' rent," she said.

Sister Noberta echoed thoughts expressed by numerous residents, including City Council President Walter Cramer, who said there must be a ban on hardship rent increases for new landlords and landlords should not be allowed to use a second mortgage to justify a hardship rent increase.

Sister Noberta said the landlords are creating the hardships so they can get trememdous rent increases from the rent leveling board.

Cramer has said in many cases he believes that it is true and said he wants the city council to revise Hoboken's rent control ordinance. Cramer said he will use tonight's meeting as a guide to see what the tenants want before actually going ahead with the revision.

Sister Noberta said she hopes the tenants union will be affiliated with the New Jersey Tenants Association to give it more power.

She said organizers also hope it will look into other issues besides the rising rents such as sub-standard conditions in various tenement houses in the city and what tenants can do about them.

Tenants, city to meet to settle differences

A special city council committee looking into a revision of Hoboken's rent leveling law will meet representatives of Hoboken's Tenant's Union within the next few days to try and work out their differences.

Sister Noberta of St. Francis Church, spokesman for the tenants union, had attacked the proposed revision by city council members saying it didn't go far enough to help the tenant.

Specifically, Sister Noberta says she wants investigators hired to investigate hardship applications filed by landlords and that at least half of the composition of the rent leveling board be made up of tenants.

The main revision of the ordinance proposed by council members includes a ban on all hardship rent increases for 13 months and the firing of a referee to make recommendations to the rent leveling board on whether a rent increase should be granted.

Hoboken Councilman Robert Ranieri, a member of the special committee along with City Council President Walter Cramer, said the committee wants to fully explore, with Sister Noberta, why she feels the current planned revision doesn't go far enough and what her provisions would do. Ranieri said he expects the meeting to be held in the next few days.

Woodcliff Gardens denied hardship rent increase

Jersey Journal 2/81

By John Watson

The North Bergen Rent Leveling Board met in special session last night to deny the hardship rent increase sought by the owners of the Woodcliff Gardens apartment complex.

Some 250 residents of the complex on Boulevard East jammed the hearing room and cheered when the board unanimously rejected the owners' hardship application. Attorney Harvey Douglan said he would prepare an appeal on behalf of his clients.

Two board members, Chairman Leonard Stevens and Francis Scapellite, did not participate in the hearing or vote because they are tenants at Woodcliff Gardens.

The four voting board members said they were not convinced of the building owners' claims that the complex was not providing a fair return on their investment.

The three-hour hearing consisted almost entirely of testimony by witneses buttressing the claims of the Resnick, Fuchs and Fuchs, Woodcliff Management Co. Board attorney Donald A. Caminiti cross-examined the landlords' witnesses but did not offer any conflicting testimony.

Judith Occhilupo, who chaired the meeting after Stevens disqualified himself, said the landlord's witnesses convinced her the buildings were producing the proper monetary return.

The management company produced three shopping bags of records and financial accountings to buttress its application. Real estate appraiser Robert A. Goldberg said the building owners needed a 10.8 percent increase to keep the complex "economically viable."

A report submitted to the board by its accountant, Joseph Greenfield, said the apartment complex "shows a steady growth in return investment."

Douglan complained several times about noisy outbursts from the assembled tenants. He said the interruptions were acts of "intimidation" and made sure they were made part of the official record of the proceedings.

In other business, the board denied a capital improvement increase to the owners of 120-unit River House complex at 8900 Boulevard East.

The owners sought the increase to cover the cost of special burners that can use either oil or gas fuel. The board ruled that the $30,000 conversion did not constitute a capital improvement.

Jersey Journal 2/4

No referee, says law department

A rent referee who would her hardship rent increase applications should not be hired because the Hoboken Rent Leveling Board does not need such help, the city law department has concluded.

Thomas Calligy, the assistant city law director, said in a letter to the city council, now deliberating changes in the rent law, that the rent board itself is more than capable of handling most hardship applications.

He said the council would be better off by hiring a consultant who could give the rent board advice on the occasional difficult case.

The hiring of a referee was advocated by Hoboken Councilman Robert Ranieri while City Council President Walter Cramer had recommended the consultant.

The council is considering revisions to the city's rent leveling ordinance and is expected to decide within a few days which amendments they wish to make into the law.

Cappiello for tighter rent increase rules

1/81

Mayor Steve Cappiello said today he wants the City Council to rewrite Hoboken's rent leveling ordinance to allow for a complete inspection of any building in the city where the landlord is asking for a hardship rent increase.

In addition, Cappiello says he wants it written into the ordinance that any landlord who owes the city back taxes cannot b granted a hardship increase, or even the normal 7½ percent rent increase landlords are automatically allocated under the rent leveling law.

But, the mayor said he would be opposed to a proposal that has been advocated by Council President Walter Cramer that would ban hardship rent increases for a set period of time.

Cramer had first proposed a three-year ban but now says he's flexible on the subject and would like to talk to banking officials to get their opinion on what effects, if any, a ban would have on real estate investments in the city.

Cappiello said h feels a time ban on hardship increases would have a detrimental effect on real estate investment in the city and would be something that could stop Hoboken's renaissance.

The mayor said he expects to talk to Cramer in the next few days to convey his views.

Cramer had said on Monday that the council will be ready shortly to begin discussing the exact revisions it would like in the rent control ordinance.

Hoboken gives

JJ 1/81

A $165.18 increase granted to Hoobken landlord Leo Serrano for each of four apartments in his building at 218 Hudson St. topped the hardship rent increases awarded by Hoboken's Rent Leveling Board Thursday night.

Bernie Van Carpels, administrator, said rents in the building had ranged from $165.18 to $300 before the increase.

Records submitted to the board by Serrano show that he purchased the building in January, putting $15,000 down and assumed a $60,000 mortgage at 16 percent. Serrano claimed his expenses were $19,000 a year and at the prior rents he was only collecting $11,000 a year.

Hoboken's rent ordinance allows landoords to apply for a hardship increase if they can prove they are not making a reasonable return on their investment—defined as 11.5 percent.

The second highest hardship increase was granted to Edward Goulian for his building at 535

rent boosts

Jersey Journal 1/81

Washington St. The three tenants each received $132,78 rent increases.

Other increases awarded by the board included $59.86 increases awarded to C. Pini for his building at 908 Washington St. and a $46.80 increase awarded to Joseph Versaci for his building at 919 Castle Point Terrace.

An increase requested by Hoboken Fireman James Monaco for his building at 1145 Garden St. was delayed until the next board meeting in April pending further study by the board. Monaco had requested $100 rent increase.

Jail term and one last chance for landlord

1/24/81

By Randolph Diamond

Hoboken landlord Michael Spano was fined $500, ordered not to collect December and January rent from his tenants and given a 30-day jail sentence after he pleaded guilty in municipal court to eight counts concerning lack of heat in two of his tenement houses.

It was the strongest penalty ever imposed in Hoboken Municipal Court against a landlord.

In imposing the sentence, acting Hoboken Municipal Court Judge Chris Pappas said he would suspend Spano's jail sentence if there was heat in Spano's tenement house at 214 Park Avenue by this Tuesday.

But, if there isn't, Pappas said Spano would not only have to serve the jail sentence but pay an additional $400 a day until heat is provided.

Heat has been restored already to Spano's other tenement at 153 First Street where Hoboken health inspectors had issued Spano four summonses for not providing heat. Spano claimed the pipes had frozen. Twenty-five tenants from both 153 First Street and 214 Park Avenue were in the courtroom as Judge Pappas announced Spano's penalty and many of them applauded.

Spano's lawyer, Herb Klitzner, asked Pappas to hold off sentencing for a week and give Spano until next Friday to provide heat.

Klitzner said that the boiler had been malfunctioning in 214 Park Avenue and that it might not be possible to fix it by Tuesday.

But Pappas, who heard testimony by residents at 214 Park Avenue that they had been without heat almost the whole winter and had been sick countless times due to the cold, said he would not put off sentencing.

"How would your client feel if he had to live in the building?" Pappas asked Klitzner. "I don't care what he has to do even if that means buying a new boiler. But I want heat in there by Tuesday."

When asked by Klitzner how putting Spano in jail would alleviate the problem, Pappas replied, "Let his son the plumber run the building," a reference to Spano's son Louis who, it was brought out in testimony, is a licensed plumber.

See LANDLORD — Page 6.

Landlord faces 30 days

Continued from Page 1.

Klitzner claimed after he entered Spano's guilty pleas that the landlord kept on fixing the boiler at 214 Park Avenue but that it kept on breaking down.

Pappas, however, allowed city attorney Ross London to question a

jail if heat not supplied

representative from the Fastendola Fuel Company who Klitzner had actually brought along as a witness and the representative said the problems with the boiler at 214 Park Ave. were due to the fact "that it was a bum boiler that I would throw out if it were mine."

Pappas also overuled Klitzner's objections to allowing the tenants to complain about the lack of heat, saying that even though Spano had pleaded guilty he wanted to get the tenants' input in order to better make a decision on what sentence to impose on Spano.

Pappas seemed visibly moved as tenants at 214 Park Avenue told of going without heat all winter.

"We keep the stove and oven on in my apartment at night and I sleep with my coat on and blankets over that," said 17-year old Yranie Perez, a senior at Hoboken High School. "But I still can't sleep because it's too cold."

Meanwhile, a Union City landlord charged with failing to provide heat to 67 families living at 1405-15 Palisade Ave. has been granted a postponement of his hearing in that city's municipal court until Wednesday.

Emmanuel Benedetto of Fort Lee appeared in court yesterday with his attorney and asked for a two-week delay of his hearing on eight complaints issued by city inspectors. However, Judge Joseph N. Falbo set the hearing for Wednesday.

Meanwhile, city inspectors returned to the building yesterday to investigate new complaints from approximately half of the tenants that they were again without heat. But a decision on whether or not more summonses will be issued will not be made until Monday.

A spokesman for the city said Benedetto is converting the building from oil heat to gas. He said approximately half of the tenants did not have heat because the boiler on their side of the apartment building was being worked on for the conversion.

Jersey Journal

Hoboken wants to hire rent raise referee

Members of Hoboken's City Council have reached agreement on a number of revisions in the city's rent-leveling ordinance.

The agreement came at a closed meeting of the city council on Friday night and the revisions sought were announced publicly today by Councilman-at-large Robert Ranieri.

The revisions council members want, according to Ranieri, are as follows:

- Putting a ban on hardship rent increases for new property owners for 13 months.
- Hiring a trained referee who will recommend to the rent-leveling board whether a hardship rent-increase application should be approved.
- Barring a landlord from remortgaging his building unless he can show it is being done to provide funds for renovation.
- Allowing landlords to pass along any increase in fuel bills to tenants.

Ranieri said he feels the hiring of the referee is the key to the whole revision since such a person would be trained in and have extensive knowledge of rent-leveling laws.

"The rent-leveling board is now making decisions that are frankly going over the heads of its members," he said. "They are a volunteer board and they do not have the expertise to fully understand the financial information a landlord provides to them when he asks for a hardship increase."

Ranieri said the rent-leveling board would still make final decisions after hearing the referee's opinion.

In some cases, the councilman said, rent increases have been granted by the rent-leveling board when capital improvements were made which did not directly benefit the tenants. But, Ranieri notes, a close reading of the ordinance indicates that in considering a rent increase, the board should determine whether the capital improvements have benefited the tenant.

Ironically, the revision barring remortgaging except when the money goes to improve a property would have invalidated a decision last month in which Ranieri's brother, Rudolph, was allowed to almost double the rents at a building he owns.

Ranieri had remortgaged his property after he had paid up his initial mortgage, saying he needed more money to pay for his two daughter's college education.

The councilman said the ban on hardship rent increases for 13 months would prevent landlords from intentionally putting low down payments on buildings so they could get a large mortgage and a hardship rent increase. He said council members felt the fuel pass-along was only fair since landlords are being hit with higher and higher fuel bills.

Ranieri said he will ask the law department to determine this week whether the council's planned revisions are legal and then he said the council will have one more closed building meeting to go over the revisions once more.

See HOBOKEN — Page 22.

Hoboken wants referee for rents

Continued from Page 1.

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The councilman said the soonest he sees the ordinance being introduced would be the beginning of March.

Hoboken City Council President Walter Cramer had said he wanted the council to act on a revision of the ordinance by the end of this month. But Ranieri says that would be impossible, given the fact that there are a number of steps that must take place before the new ordinance becomes law, including holding a public hearing after the ordinance is introduced.

Grassroots lobbying campaign

Fight for these tenant laws

These are not laws yet, they are presently in the Assembly and need your support.

Assembly Bill A944 Stop landlord discrimination against tenants with children. No landlord shall refuse to rent to tenants because they have children.

Assembly Bill A947 Stop landlord discrimination against tenants based on income. No landlord shall refuse to rent to tenants because of objection to the tenants income, such as social security, alimony or welfare.

Assembly Bill A936 Protect tenant privacy and safety. No tenant shall be required to give their apartment keys to the landlord or any agent.

Assembly Bill A1032 Landlords are turning rental apartments into condominiums at ripoff prices. Many people cannot afford to buy; the poor and elderly will be pushed out of their rental housing.

These bills need your immediate support. They are presently being considered by the New Jersey State Assembly and will come up for vote this spring. Write to your Assembly representatives and your Senator; call and ask for a meeting with them; indicate your strong support for these tenant protections. You can join the NJTO grass roots lobby which is comprised of legislative committees in each legislative district of the state. As a member of your local legislative committee you can meet with your state representatives, urge them to vote for these tenant protections and let them know that if they are behind the tenant movement than the tenant won't be behind them whten it comes time to be re-elected.

To join the lobbying committee in your legislative district call the NJTO at 201-947-9226.

Meanwhile

Jersey Journal 5/7/81

Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello wants the City Council to change the rent leveling law so that any landlord asking for a hardship rent increase must show that his building has passed a complete inspection.

In addition, the mayor wants the law to provide that any landlord who owes the city taxes cannot be given a rent increase, not even the 7½ percent boost now automatically permitted.

The mayor is opposed to banning hardship rent increases for a set period of time. Unfortunately, that means that while the mayor's proposals are debated, amended and otherwise delayed, there will be a flood of rent increase petitions to beat the new tough requirements.

Tenants ask freeze on rent hikes

By CHUCK SUTTON
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—Tenant groups urged the City Council last night to impose a 13-month moratorium on applications for hardship rent increases.

Meanwhile, city officials denied reports that the law department had ruled the proposed ordinance unconstitutional.

Sister Noberta, spokeswoman for the Hoboken Tenants Union, charged that landlords have been buying multiple-dwelling houses with low down payments and incurring high mortgages in order to double and triple their rents under hardship applications.

The result, she charged, is the closing out of the elderly, poor and minorities from the city's housing market.

The tenants group, a subdivision of an organization known as "Por La Gente" marched to the council chambers where they chanted, "City Hall, lower our rents."

One elderly man said that when he looked for a three-room apartment, most of the ones real estate brokers showed him ranged from $425 to $540 a month.

"Those are prices that are attracting people from New York but running out the people who built Hoboken," said the resident, who declined to divulge his name.

The council voted to hire an attorney, Barry Serkisian of West New York, to advise the rent leveling board on granting hardship increases.

Councilman Nunzio Malfetti said he had been working for the last four months to convince his fellow council members that they also need investigators to determine whether hardship applications are justified.

Council President Walter Cramer assured residents that the council was still drawing up a rent leveling ordinance and had received no ruling on it from the law department yet.

Hudson Dispatch

Tenants union asks changes in rent law

2/81 H.D.

The newly-formed Hoboken tenants union today released its own proposals to revise Hoboken's rent leveling law, proposals which a spokeswoman says would make it harder for a landlord to obtain rent increases.

The spokeswoman, Sister Noberta of St. Francis Church in Hoboken, said the association wants new landlords to wait three years before they can apply for a hardship rent increase.

"This would prevent landlords from purchasing buildings and putting a low payment down on purpose just to present a hardship," she said.

The association is also requesting that in any hardship rent application where the landlord had done relocations, only 50 percent of the total amount of the hardship should be passed on to tenants.

"The building belongs to the landlord, not to the tenants, she said. "The landlord should pay his share in the improvements, as in the long run he benefits from a fully rented building and gets a tax shelter besides."

In the cases of second mortgages being used by landlords to justify a hardship, the association is requesting that the landlord give reason and some proof that the building requires a second mortgage.

Currently, the city's rent leveling ordinance doesn't require a landlord to show any reason why he is taking out a second mortgage.

The association wants half the members of the city's rent leveling board to be tenants and that the city implement an education program to tell tenants about their rights. In addition, the tenants association wants landlords to tell new tenants that they can 'ascertain whether they are being charged the right rent by going to the rent leveling office in City Hall.

As far as the normal 7½ percent rent increase now given to tenants, the association is asking that the increase be reduced to the two and a half to five percent range. Sister Noberta noted that in neighboring towns in Hudson County the increase allowed under the rent leveling ordinance does not exceed five percent.

Tenants union says Hoboken rent board should be pro-tenant

SS 2/81

Saying the proposed revision of Hoboken's rent leveling ordinance by the City Council isn't as pro-tenant as it should be, one of the organizers of Hoboken's Tenants Union says it's time for the council to choose sides.

"We want to know where they are at," said Sister Noberta of St. Francis Church in Hoboken. "Right now they are trying to play both sides of the fence and it wouldn't work."

The main revisions of the rent leveling ordinance being proposed by the City Council include a 13-month ban on hardship rent increases and the hiring of a part-time referee to act as a hearing officer on rent leveling applications and make recommendations.

Sister Noberta said while the tenants union is in favor of the 13-month ban on hardship rent increases, what is really needed is additional staff to do a complete investigation of every hardship application.

She said the referee would only be part-time and a number of full-time people may be needed to thoroughly investigate a hardship application.

"It may cost the city some money to do it our way but it has to be done," she said.

Sister Noberta says the tenants union wants at least half the city's rent leveling board members to be tenants.

"We need a balance on the board," she said. "We need some representation."

The tenants union will be holding a meeting tonight at 7:30 at the Demarest School at Fourth and Garden streets to further discuss the rent leveling ord

The Dispatch, Hudson/Bergen Counties, N

Rent law ruling to split council runni

By CHUCK SUTTON
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—Two running mates in the upcoming council election are expected to divide sharply over the final version of the city's controversial rent leveling ordinance in a closed session today.

The meeting is expected to pit Councilman Robert Ranieri against Councilman Thomas Kennedy, who are divided over whether the council should adopt a 13-month moratorium on hardship rent increase applications from landlords.

Robert Ranieri stated yesterday that he believes such an ordinance would be unconstitutional. Thomas Kennedy contends that the city should adopt the ordinance, and place the burden of proving that such an ordinance is unconstitutional on the landlords. Both are running for re-election on Mayor Steve Cappiello's ticket.

The proposed moratorium would prevent a landlord from raising the rent above the allowable 7-percent increase.

The group said in the council meeting last week that some rents have risen from $200 a month to $600 a month.

"I feel real strong about it (the 13- month moratorium)," Councilman Kennedy said. "Part of my argument is these landlords know if they can afford to pay the mortgages before they bought the property. With the moratorium, we won't have so many people, poor people forced out of Hoboken by high rents."

However, he admits that this may not be the opinion of the council.

The Hoboken Tenants' Union, part of an organization known as "Por La Gente," has asked for the passage of the moratorium to protect tenants.

The tenants' union charged that landlords are buying buildings with a low down payment and high mortgage the mortgages as an excuse to double and triple rents.

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Hoboken City Council President Walter Cramer said he would take the tenants' views into consideration during a closed meeting of the council scheduled for this Friday night to deal with the rent leveling ordinance.

Tenants union says Hoboken rent board should be pro-tenant

JJ 2/81

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The Dispatch, Hudson/Bergen Counties, N.J., Wednesday, March 25, 1981

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Ranieri agrees there is a problem with the hardship applications, but wants a more conservative approach to the problem.

Meet sought with Reagan

The 70,000 member New Jersey Tenants Organization has sent a letter to President Ronald Reagan requesting a meeting with the President before he makes any further recommendations concerning the fate of rent control.

The letter was in response to recent threats by Reagan's urban affairs task force, which recommended that cities with rent control laws be denied federal funds.

The letter states that such a move would be "a heavy handed, big government maneuver. The NJTO points out that tenants are facing a severe housing crisis.

"While no American family can afford to spend more than 25 percent of its income on housing, the 1977 Annual Housing Survey by the Bureau of the Census (the latest figures available) discloses that 42 percent of the nation's households paid rent above the recommended limit. More than a quarter of that group paid over 35 percent of their incomes on rent alone.

"In 1980 the situation is much worse. For many low-income renters, it is impossible for them to pay out even 10 percent of the escalating housing costs without spending money they need for other necessities — such as food and heat.

"Tenants, on the average have an income which is a mere 60 percent of the averae for homeowners. More than one-half of the nation's tenants have household incomes of less than $8,000. Such statistics make it self-evident that any blow against tenants is a blow against the middle-income and the poor".

The letter goes on to explain the advantages of rent control, citing numerous studies that have been conducted.

The Gilderbloom report, which compared rent controlled and non-rent controlled cities in a scientific, analytic way (and was sponsored neither by landlord nor tenant interests) concluded that rent control stabilized rents without adversely affecting new construction, property maintenance, abandonment, or the community tax base.

In addition to the Gilderbloom study, other studies have shown that rent control does not lead to abandonment. A National Urban League study on abandonment ranked New York City fifth in number of abandonments, behind four non-rent controlled cities: St. Louis, Detroit, Cleveland and Hoboken.

A study by Columbia Professor Peter Marcuse (commissioned by the U.S. Bureau of the Census) entitled "Rental Housing in the City of New York" concluded that there is no relationship between rent control and building abandonment.

In fact, rent controlled apartments were less likely to be abandoned than other buildings of similiar age and construction. Moreover Marcuse found that one-third of all rent controlled tenants in New York City live at or slightly above the poverty level.

According to the NJTO, "Rent control has proved to be an effective mechanism to control inflation. It holds the line against rent gouging, prevents destructive speculation, and provides local incentives and community interest which help to prevent housing deterioration and abandonment."

Calligy weighs ban on rent increases

Hoboken's law department has been unable to determine whether it would be legal to place a 12-month ban on hardship rent increases for landlords — one of the main changes being considered by a committee looking into revising the city's rent leveling ordinance.

Thomas Calligy, assistant city law director, said previous court decisions concerning challenges of various city's rent leveling laws have not been clear enough.

Calligy said the courts ruled that rent control and rent leveling laws were legal if landlords were allowed to make a reasonable return on their investment. But he said a reasonable return has never been defined and it is not clear whether putting a temporary ban on hardship rent increases would be considered not entitling a landlord to his reasonable return.

Hoboken City Council President Walter Cramer said if the law department can't make a decision he would be in favor of putting the ban in effect.

2/27/79

Hoboken to start revising rent law soon

2/81 Jersey Journal

Hoboken City Council President Walter Cramer said today that the council should be ready to start proposing revisions of the city's rent-leveling law shortly.

Cramer said the only delay now is the scheduling of a meeting with representatives from banks in Hoboken to find out what their views would be on revising the rent-control ordinance. Cramer said he expects that meeting could be held "very shortly."

The council has already meet with representatives from the real estate interests and tenants. Once the meeting with the banking officials is held, Cramer said, the council will be ready to start firming up the exact revisions they want in the rent-leveling law.

Cramer had already proposed a ban on hardship rent increases for new owners of buildings for a period of three years and banning the use of second mortgages as a base for hardship increase.

Today, however, he softened his ban on the three-year ban for hardship increases, saying a time period less than that might better serve the needs of the Hoboken community.

Cramer said he was concerned the three-year ban could have a detrimental effort on investment in real estate in Hoboken.

The council president did, however, present a new proposal calling for a 25-percent ceiling on any hardship rent increase.

This, Cramer said, would stop the current hardship rent increase being granted by the rent-leveling board which has in some cases doubled tenants' rents.

Rent strikers win $137,000 in court fight

NEW YORK POST SAT. 2/28/81

TENANTS of a rat-infested Manhattan tenement yesterday won a $137,000 judgment against their landlord.

But although Civil Court Judge Elliot Wilk ruled the landlord, Harvey Equities Corp., has to pay damages to the 15 tenants at 631 Academy St., the residents say victory still eludes them.

"We still have to track down the landlord's assets," said Lori Brooks, the tenants' lawyer.

Wilk decided in favor of the tenants — who were sued by their landlord after they staged a rent strike last October.

The rent strike began when the building's boiler exploded for the sixth time in 12 months.

Brooks said the residents have been paying rent to a tenants' association.

Council can't rush change in rent rules

Jersey Journal 2-19-81

Although Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello still wants the city's rent leveling ordinance revised immediately, the City Council is sticking to its guns and maintains that such action can't be taken until March.

About 60 people from tenant and homeowner organizations attended last night's council meeting. Council President Walter Cramer invited discussion on the revisions after the regular meeting ended.

After listening to the input, Cramer told the audience that he couldn't give a timetable because the council is still meeting with consultants from various groups.

Cappiello said he wanted special council meetings to rush the revision but Councilman Robert Ranieri said it wouldn't help.

"With all due respect to the mayor," said Ranieri, "the special meetings would be to no avail if there aren't actual amendments prepared by the council, approved in form by the Law Department and actually voted on by the council.

"His intentions are good but the practicalities of legislation require more time."

Earlier this week, the council revealed a number of revisions that they had agreed upon.

These included banning hardship increases for new property owners for 13 months; hiring a trained referee to recommend to the rent levelling board whether a hardship rent application should be approved; barring landlords from remortgaging their buildings unless they show it was done to provide funds for renovation; and allowing landlords to pass fuel bill increases to tenants.

In other business, the council unanimously passed ordinances for new salaries for the police chief, fire chief and policemen in general. The ordinances now go to Cappiello for his signature.

Also, the council passed, on first reading, an ordinance that would allow the water department to make repairs on service lines when the owner fails to do so and to charge the landlord for the repairs on his monthly bill. Ranieri termed the legislation a "conservation measure."

Landlords ignore Hoboken law

By Randolph Diamond Jersey Journal 2/8/

Only about 25 percent of Hoboken's landlords are informing the city's rent leveling administrator when they raise their rents, making it difficult in some cases to determine what the legal rent for an apartment should be.

Bernie Van Carpels, Hoboken's rent leveling administrator, said today that only some landlords are complying with city law which stipulates that any time they raise the rent they must let her know about it.

But Mrs. Van Carpels said she's so busy she cannot try to find the landlords who do not notify her.

There are 2,000 multiple dwellings in Hoboken but Mrs. Van Carpels says she has rents in only 500 buildings recorded.

Hoboken Sixth Ward Councilman Nunzio Malfetti said the lack of records in Mrs. Van Carpels' office is making it possible for landlords to raise rents to whatever level they want when new tenants come in.

"The fact that the rents aren't being recorded in Mrs. Van Carpels' office is why I and my fellow councilmen kept on hearing of numerous cases where rent doubled and tripled," he said. "This is an outrage that has to be stopped."

Malfetti said the fact that the legal rent levels for most apartments aren't on file is especially ironic when the council is considering revising the whole rent leveling ordinance.

"It doesn't matter how many times we revise it," he said, "if we're not going to enforce it."

Under the current ordinance, landlords can raise their rent only seven and a half percent in a given year unless they show they are not making a reasonable return on their investment — defined as eleven and a quarter percent — in which case they can apply for a hardship rent increase.

See LANDLORDS — Page 25.

Landlords ignore Hoboken law

Continued from Page 1.

Mrs. Van Carpels said the only way she could possibly track down landlords who do not notify her of rent increases would be to get two or three employees to help her.

Currently, Mrs. Van Carpels is running a one-person office. While a reporter was talking to her she got four phone calls from landlords and tenants and two tenants were waiting outside to talk to her.

"I have no free time," she said.

Mrs. Van Carpels, said, however, it was not true that it was impossible to determine the legal rent if a specific rent were unrecorded.

She said in three cases last year, where tenants thought their landlords were charging higher than the legal rent and the prior rents were not recorded in her office, the new tenants contacted the old tenant and obtained copies of the rent receipts.

In all three cases, Mrs. Van Carpels said, the receipts showed the landlords had raised the rent beyond the seven and a half percent limit. The landlords were ordered to roll the rents back.

One of those landlords who has not recorded his rent increases in Mrs. Van Carpels office is Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello.

The mayor admitted today that he had negotiated rent increases with his tenants himself and had never recorded the increases in Mrs. Van Carpels office.

Cappiello said he was unaware he had to do that in view of the fact that the tenants had voluntarily agreed to the rent increases.

The mayor said he would strongly consider hiring additional staff for Mrs. Van Carpels.

Meanwhile, the City Council has split over the hiring of a referee who would make recommendations to the rent leveling board on whether it should approve a hardship rent increase application.

The council was considering hiring the referee as part of the planned revision of the rent leveling ordinance.

Hoboken City Council President Walter Cramer who orginally supported the idea of a referee now says he favors hiring a part-time consultant who would advise the rent leveling board on complicated hardship applications.

But Hoboken Councilman Robert Ranieri says he feels a referee empowered to make a decision on each hardship application, with the rent leveling board holding veto power, would be a better approach.

Hoboken Councilman Thomas Kennedy said he agrees with Cramer while Councilman Malfetti and he favors Ranieri's referee proposal.

Other councilman say they are undecided on the matter.

No rent law change until April

Jersey Journal 3/8/

Those tenants in Hoboken who want an immediate revision of the city's rent leveling ordinance won't be getting their way.

A revision of the ordinance won't be voted on by the City Council until its April 15 meeting, according to Councilman Robert Ranieri, a member of the council committee studying the change.

While the full city council has scheduled a special work session Thursday night to finalize the revisions each member wants in the rent leveling ordinance, Ranieri said he doesn't think it will be feasible for the law department to prepare a full revision by the Monday caucus meeting. The next caucus after that, Ranieri said, wouldn't be until March 30.

And since an ordinance must be introduced three times before passing, he said, the second and third actions wouldn't come until April 13 at which time a public hearing will also be held. The final vote on the revision, he said, then would be at the April 15 meeting.

Among the revisions the council is considering in the ordinance is barring hardship rent increases to new landlords for 13 months and hiring either a referee or consultant to help the rent leveling board make judgments on hardship increases.

A number of recent hardship increases granted by the rent leveling board have doubled and tripled tenants' rents and have drawn criticism from members of the public as well as from city councilmen.

Tenants' group plans protest over Hoboken rent revision

Star

By Randolph Diamond

The Hoboken Tenants Union will form a candlelight procession tomorrow night at 5:45 at Wallace School and march downtown to the City Hall to let the City Council know its members want their voices heard on the revision of Hoboken's rent leveling ordinance.

A representative of the tenants' union, Sister Noberta of St. Joseph's Church, said the association wants to make sure council members are aware of the tenants' views.

The association is calling for a 13-month ban on all new hardship rent applications, the hiring of an attorney to advise the rent leveling board on hardship applications and strict enforcement of a current provision which calls for landlords to register any increases with the rent leveling board.

Council members met in closed session last week and plan another meeting this week to firm up revisions they want in the ordinance.

Council members would not officially comment on the meetings.

But informed sources say the council is supporting the 13-month ban on hardship applications and is leaning toward the hiring of a lawyer consultant.

Sister Noberta said the tenants' union is also upset over the long time it has taken council members to revise the ordinance. Members of the City Council first started work on it four months ago.

Members of the City Council are expected to formally introduced the revised ordinance at their March 30 meeting.

Council members became interested in revising the ordinance after numerous reports of rents being doubled and tripled — caused in many cases by landlords filing hardship applications.

Members of the tenants' union as well as some council members have charged that new landlords have been buying buildings and making low downpayments in order to qualify for a hardship rent increase.

'Give tenants heat, then bill landlords'

J 2/15/82

By Thomas Rojas

The Hoboken City Council is being urged to pass an ordinance that would allow the city to supply heating oil to freezing tenants at the expense of landlords.

"The law would save us a lot of time," said Health and Welfare Director James Farina. "If a building has no heat because there's no fuel in the tank, we could go right in and fill up the tank and bill the landlord. If he didn't pay us, we could collect the rents directly, or add the costs to the landlord's tax bill."

Farina said that, the way things now stand, the city has to take a negligent landlord to court if he has not supplied his tenants with heat.

"The process takes about two weeks," he explained. "In the meantime, the tenants are without heat."

Farina said that the proposed ordinance would be a municipal version of the state Fuel Heating Act.

"I have talked to Councilman Thomas Kennedy about sponsoring the bill," he added.

Dn THE JERSEY JOURNAL, TUESDAY, APRIL 6, 1982

Hoboken civic group accuses Cappiello of 'misleading public'

By Thomas Rojas

A Hoboken civic organization accuses Mayor Steve Cappiello of "playing politics" with residents by releasing misleading information about the city's financial problems.

In a letter to Cappiello, the Anthony Russo Civic Association charges that the mayor is misleading the public by warning that his proposed 1982 municipal budget projects an increase in the tax rate of $28 per $1,000 assessed valuation.

The group also charges that Cappiello's statement that as many as 100 city employees will be laid off in order to trim the budget is "an inflated figure."

Russo, who is coordinator of special education for the city's school system, claims that Cappiello has purposely overestimated the projected tax increase in 1982 so that homeowners will feel relieved when the tax rate is "cut down" to about $6.

Russo explained that his group has studied the proposed budget and found a "hidden surplus" which will cause a tax rate increase of about $6 to $8.

In addition, Russo's group says that Cappiello has overestimated the amount of anticipated layoffs so that employees receiving layoff notices will have to ask the mayor to intercede for them, and will feel indebted to Cappiello when the layoffs don't go through.

On another matter, the group opposes the proposed appointment of Hudson County Freeholder John Spinello to the $15,000-a-year post of "liaison officer" with the North Hudson Council of Mayors.

The organization claims that Cappiello — who is chairman of the freeholders — may have created the post so that Spinello will side with hi
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Hoboken Gentrification And the City's Poor

The Nov. 8 article on Hoboken minimized the reality of gentrification's wholesale displacement of the poor, the elderly and the minorities. The recent acceleration of the "Hoboken renaissance" has resulted in a wave of the ultimate tactic of tenant harassment: Acquiring vacant buildings through arson.

Until several years ago, Hoboken was a stable, ethnically diverse working-class city. The original influx of more-affluent people from outside Hoboken led to the renovation of many small buildings in certain areas of the city, usually for the purchaser's own residence.

More recently, however, large real-estate interests and developers seem to have taken over gentrification; wholesale renovations and condominium conversions are occurring. Apparently not satisfied with the pace of evicting the poor, there has been a recent major increase in tenant harassment and arson.

Hoboken's arson rate over the last few years has been staggering for a small city. In the last month and a half alone, there have been 13 deaths in two arson fires. One building, in which 11 people, mostly Hispanic, died as a result of arson, is next to a group of buildings soon to be offered for sale as condominiums. This burned-out building was bought by the same developer who owns the adjacent condominiums.

The arson on Nov. 21 killed two people and displaced more than 60 others, who were then moved out of Hoboken. Among those 60 were some victims of the previous recent arsons who were being "temporarily" housed there. That building was bought in October by a real-estate developer.

The coincidence between these buildings being targeted for renovation or condominium conversion and the arsons is suspicious. Arson appears to be a convenient way to acquire a building with no tenants to force out by less-drastic, and therefore slower, methods.

Arson is only the most tragic and dramatic method of displacement. Tenant harassment has been occurring for some time: Phony eviction notices, applications for enormous hardship and capital-improvement rent increases, illegal raising of rents, delaying needed repairs, etc.

This was exacerbated by the enactment of vacancy decontrol last July.

Diana Cambieri
518 Hudson St

N.Y. Times

LETTER TO THE NEW J

N.Y. Times Su

By offering landlords rewards for empty apartments and empty buildings, by creating an atmosphere of "anything goes," the Mayor and City Council bear a moral responsibility for the deaths, fear and displacement of tenants by neglecting their duty to enforce the existing laws or to pass stronger ones against harassment.

The Mayor and City Council have refused to pass a municipal smoke-detector requirement, even though, *by their own admission*, significantly more than 50 percent of the city's multiple-dwelling buildings are not in compliance with the state smoke-detector law.

The Mayor and City Council have not forced landlords to comply with the rent registration law. The owners of at least 40 percent of Hoboken's multiple-dwelling housing have failed to register current rents with the city. This makes it difficult for a tenant to prove what his or her legal rent should be, as the burden of proof is on the renter to discover what former tenants paid.

The vacancy decontrol law was passed despite hundreds of residents

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THE JERSEY JOURNAL, TUESDAY, APRIL 6, 1982

Hoboken civic group accuses Cappiello of 'misleading public'

By Thomas Rojas

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Diana Camilleri
518 Hudson St

NY Times

LETTER TO THE NEW JERSEY EDITOR

NY Times Sunday 12/13/81

By offering landlords rewards for empty apartments and empty buildings, by creating an atmosphere of "anything goes," the Mayor and City Council bear a moral responsibility for the deaths, fear and displacement of tenants by neglecting their duty to enforce the existing laws or to pass stronger ones against harassment.

The Mayor and City Council have refused to pass a municipal smoke-detector requirement, even though, *by their own admission*, significantly more than 50 percent of the city's multiple-dwelling buildings are not in compliance with the state smoke-detector law.

The Mayor and City Council have not forced landlords to comply with the rent registration law. The owners of at least 40 percent of Hoboken's multiple-dwelling housing have failed to register current rents with the city. This makes it difficult for a tenant to prove what his or her legal rent should be, as the burden of proof is on the renter to discover what former tenants paid.

The vacancy decontrol law was passed despite hundreds of residents opposing the weakening of the rent-control law at the City Council meeting, and despite 9,000 signatures on petitions to reconsider the measure.

The Mayor and Council have refused to initiate a referendum on vacancy decontrol, forcing community groups to spend a great deal of time, money and energy in a tedious legal process to force a referendum.

Many people in Hoboken — social workers trying to help the elderly who are being displaced, tenant groups, a sympathetic member of the Rent Leveling Board and other concerned people — can cite specific horror stories of the elderly and poor being harassed to get out of the apartments they have lived in for years to make room for the real-estate speculators.

One tactic that the city and local press have used is to talk about the poor small homeowner who lives in his or her house and rents one or two apartments to help pay the mortgage, the rapidly rising property taxes and energy bills. They would like us to believe that all these changes are being done for the small homeowner.

Small homeowners have a stake in the community. They benefit from a stable tenant population, they try to maintain their property well, since they live in their buildings, and they certainly do not burn their own homes to drive out unwanted tenants.

In fact, small homeowners will suffer from gentrification in many ways, not the least of which is a continuous rise in property taxes to provide for the necessarily increased demand for municipal services caused by an expanding population of expensive apartment and condominium dwellers.

Real-estate speculation by large developers and landlords encourages rapid tenant turnover to increase rental rates and often the shoddiest renovation and maintenance to hold down costs and maximize profits.

The small homeowner lives in Hoboken and is concerned with the quality of life here. Most of the large landlords and developers live elsewhere and regard Hoboken as just another source for quick profits.

But so far, the city has seemed successful in convincing many small homeowners that gentrification is good for them. The city has persuaded many of them that the tenant activists are blaming them for the arsons, which is certainly not true.

I, and many people like me, have a great deal of sympathy for small homeowners. But there are active landlord groups — one member of which was quoted in the article regarding his acquisition of several tenements as part of his "retirement portfolio" — who are trying to divide one group of people struggling to make ends meet from other groups with similar problems.

Local authorities have not even attempted to try to protect the homes and lives of Hoboken's tenants. Some may even be benefiting from gentrification. For example, the Mayor is, by his own admission, one of the larger landlords in town.

Walking through Hoboken is revealing. Vacant or burned-out buildings, real-estate developers' "For Sale" and "Sold" signs and condominium conversions are widespread. That all these tenants moved voluntarily stretches the limits of credibility.

The emotional and physical distress of the displaced tenants and the present and future arson victims need to be connected in the minds of everyone with the phony Hoboken renaissance. In this town, gentrification is for profit, not for people.

DIANE M. CAMILLERI
Doctor of Veterinary Medicine
Hoboken

Special Issue on Rent Control

NEW JERSEY TENANTS ORGANIZATION

NJTOnews

March, 1981

No relation found between rent control and tax shift

by Joan Pransky

"Examination of the facts reveals no clear pattern of tax base erosion or apartment property value reduction, nor any clear pattern of shifts in the property tax burden."

Rent Control and the Tax Structure: A Study in Bergen County
August, 1980

New Jersey landlords have launched another false, but well-financed anti-rent control campaign. Their strategy is directed at dividing homeowners and tenants by insisting that rent control shifts the tax burden away from tenants and drives up property taxes for homeowners. Landlords claim that rent control erodes city tax bases by reducing apartment property values thereby allowing landlords to obtain tax reductions for their apartments. Since municipal budgets rise, landlords insist that homeowners must pay the increased burden and are therefore subsidizing tenants under rent control.

NJTO strongly rejects this anti-rent control claim. Landlords are opposing rent control for the same reason that they have opposed it for years. LANDLORDS WANT EXORBITANT PROFITS, NOT FAIR AND REASONABLE PROFITS. Despite their claims of suffering, the law requires that rent control ordinances guarantee landlords "fair and reasonable returns."

Joan Pransky is Vice-President and Legal Counsel of the New Jersey Tenants Organization

The reason that they have chosen this strategy is simple. The economic crisis has intensified. Homeowners are suffering more than ever before. Landlords are gambling that homeowners are ready to grasp at any straw that might appear to relieve them from the ravages of inflation. To get big money for themselves, landlords are telling homeowners that there will be more money for them if they, too, fight against rent control.

No matter how much landlord propaganda to the contrary, two facts remain the same. First, rent control does not erode a city's tax base nor does it reduce property values. Instead, rent control has a positive and stabilizing effect upon communities and the housing stock. Rent control laws are anti-inflationary. Without regulations, rents will soar just as interest rates skyrocketed when mortgage ceilings were lifted. Higher prices for the same goods is inflationary and pushes up taxes for us all. Clearly, the end of rent control will only benefit landlords and will hurt tenants and homeowners.

Second, the divisive strategy of telling homeowners that they subsidize tenants is false, it diverts their attention from the real causes of their economic problems and keeps them from joining together to demand solutions that require their unity.

RENT CONTROL DOES NOT ERODE A CITY'S TAX BASE

In May, 1980, the Conference on Alternative State and Local Policies published a rent control study by John Gilderbloom entitled "The Experiences of U.S. Cities: Moderate Rent Control."[1] This study, funded by neither real estate nor tenant interests, is the most up to date, extensive analysis of modern rent control. The study examines fifteen reports for and against rent control, analyzes existing data, and offers new data from the records of building inspectors, tax assessors, and planning commissioners.

Gilderbloom's report, which focuses on New Jersey, concludes that there is no evidence that rent control has a negative impact on new construction, housing maintenance, or city tax bases and property values.

In reviewing the relationship of rent control to taxes, the study compared the tax base of 26 rent controlled to 37 non-rent controlled cities. These cities included many of the cities in which landlords are waging their campaign: Fairlawn, Wayne, Elizabeth, Montclair, West Orange, Cliffsille Park, and more. The results of the study showed that "the data offered no evidence to suggest that rent control caused a decline in a city's tax base."

Of the 63 cities studied, only three rent controlled and three non-rent controlled cities were shown to have suffered a tax base decline. In the three rent controlled cities, tax assessors offered explanations that were unrelated to rent control.

continued on page 4

Vacancy Decontrol: Landlords use it to beat rent control

Vacancy decontrol simply means no rent control when an apartment becomes vacant. Under vacancy decontrol the landlord is free to charge whatever rent he or she can get from a new tenant seeking to move into the apartment. The new tenant's rent is subject to rent control only after the initial rent is set. In other words, any tenant that dares to move loses the protection of rent control.

Vacancy decontrol is another way for landlords to circumvent and weaken rent control. Just like cost surcharge provisions, it is an attempt by landlords to obtain additional money from tenants without regard to whether they are already obtaining fair profits. But worse than fuel and other surcharges, the formula for the vacancy decontrol surcharge is *however much* a landlord can extract from a tenant seeking an apartment in today's housing crisis.

Furthermore, a vacancy decontrol provision intensifies the very evils that rent control legislation seeks to address. The housing shortage becomes even worse with vacancy decontrol since more and more apartments are made unaffordable to more and more tenants. Landlords are discouraged from investing in maintenance of old apartments and in the construction of new ones since they can demand higher rents for existing apartments. Already exhorbitant rents are made more excessive, since apartment rents are not based upon their real worth, but are based upon how many times they become vacant.

Vacancy decontrol is another way for landlords to obtain additional money from tenants without a review of their books and without regard to whether they are already obtaining fair profits.

Finally and most importantly, vacancy decontrol is against public policy. Under New Jersey state law, no tenant may be evicted from a multi-family dwelling unless the landlord can establish a "good cause" for eviction. Flying in the face of this Just Cause Eviction Law, vacancy decontrol offers real economic incentives for landlords to harass their tenants into moving!

Unfortunately, landlords claim, and sometimes local officials believe, that vacancy decontrol is acceptable because it only affects tenants outside the city attempting to move in and not the local citizenry. Without commenting on the acceptability and legality of so treating out of town tenants, such an assertion is absolutely false. The

continued on page 4

Editorial

With rent control under attack, tenants must tighten ranks

If you are a tenant and you voted for Reagan, you may pay for it until the last day of your lease. Landlords throughout the country have found a friend in the White House. Reagan advisers have called for cutting federal aid to cities with rent control. The proposal for federal preemption of rent control is just the latest in a series of attacks on rent control. From the President and certain members of Congress on down to the New Jersey Apartment House Owners Asociation, there is a new-found boldness among anti-rent control forces.

Yet the tenants movement is stronger than ever. Rent control has become an effective remedy to housing inflation. Taking the lead from New Jersey (where over 100 towns have rent leveling ordinances), cities throughout the U.S. have begun to consider rent control as a legitimate means of protecting housing consumers from skyrocketing costs.

It's crucial for the tenants of New Jersey to tighten our ranks, to organize and bring in new members, to mobilize people, to register voters, and elect pro-tenant candidates to public office. In the face of the well-financed campaign by real estate interests to stop the growing rent control movement, tenants msut mobilize in the fight for tenants' rights.

LANDLORD CAMPAIGNS PUSH TAX SHIFT MYTH

Landlord organizations have spent lots of money using slick public relations techniques to spread the myth of a tax shift. Gerald Freeman, the New Jersey PR expert hired by a coalition of the state's landlords, says the prime contribution by his firm in the fight against rent control has been "the creation of a totally new strategy." Freeman said the strategy is to bring homeowners into the anti-rent control battle on the side of the landlords.

This is being done by organizing landlords to file massive tax appeals. Freeman is hoping that this will scare homeowners, already caught in the midst of inflationary tax and mortgage interest rates, into believing that rent control causes a shift in the tax burden.

This issue of NJTOnews proves the inaccuracy of that myth. The tenants in towns like West Orange and New Milford have been able to convince their fellow citizens that such a shift is not caused by rent control. Evidence from numerous studies support these facts: there is no evidence that any relation exists between rent control and the tax shift. Tenants are encouraged to use this information to challenge the self-serving myths being spread by the real estate industry. With knowledge of the facts and strong organization, the tenants of New Jersey can hold the line on rent control and fight for even better laws to protect us from the ravages of inflation and the housing crisis.

Patrick Morrissy, Editor
Steve Krinsky, Managing Editor

NJTOnews

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Patrick Morrissy, Editor

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NEW JERSEY TENANTS ORGANIZATION

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Study finds tenants pay larger share of taxes

by Bruce A. Pietrykowski

It is often argued by landlords that rent control causes a rise in property taxes, thereby causing a shift in the tax burden to homeowners. Therefore, landlords claim, in towns with rent control homeowners subsidize tenants.

A recent study looked at New Jersey's tax structure and found that these allegations were not true. If anything, the study notes, the existing tax structure means that tenants pay more, not less of their fair share of taxes. The authors of the study, Ana N. Eapen from the School of Management at William Paterson College and A. Thomas Eapen, Department of Economics at State University of New York, conclude that homeowners and tenants alike would benefit from an overhaul of the tax system.

Given the economic crunch facing most people today, it is no surprise that homeowners are susceptible to landlord propaganda. Although there is ample evidence to show that rent control does not significantly affect the tax base of a town, landlords continue to use such arguments to pit homeowners against tenants and to discredit rent control. Particularly when the property tax is analyzed in conjunction with income taxes, as Eapen and Eapen do, it becomes clear that tenants do not benefit from the tax structure.

Tenants, of course, pay taxes in New Jersey. They pay federal and state income taxes, sales taxes, and—through their rents—the landlord's property taxes. Yet, as Eapen and Eapen's study shows, they often do not get the same benefits as homeowners.

Tenants are subject to local property taxes, yet municipal services to apartments are less costly than the same services provided to homeowners. For example, police protection is less time consuming when patrolling an apartment complex than patrolling a neighborhood of homes, and garbage pick-ups are characterized by the same ease of service for apartments.

Furthermore, many tenant taxpayers are senior citizens. In Essex County alone, almost half of the tenants are senior citizens. This gives support to the claim that tenants, as a group, have fewer children than homeowners, yet tenants pay property taxes to support public schools. Thus, as far as local property taxes and the provisioning of municipal services are concerned, tenants must pay more in taxes than they receive in services.

Homeowners enjoy the benefits of homestead exemptions, senior citizens' and veterans' deductions in determining their tax rate. None of these reductions are available to tenants.

In addition, while there is a redistribution of tax benefits away from tenants with a gross income of $5,000 or more, such a redistribution away from homeowners takes place only at the level of $20,000 or more. A comparison of tenant and homeowner tax burden rates shows that in every income group, tenants carry a larger burden than homeowners in the same income range. The incentive for homeownership in the tax system is apparent and is at the expense of tenants.

The federal tax laws are plagued by a huge subsidy to wealthy homeowners at the expense of middle and low-income homeowners and tenants. This subsidy takes the form of income tax deductions for mortgage interest and property taxes.

"Homeowners," Eapen and Eapen state, "are able to deduct fom their incomes the money they pay for interest on their mortgage. These deductions can save them a considerable amount of income taxes." The federal tax deductions amount to a $12 billion tax subsidy. Of this $12 billion, 90% (or $10.8 billion) is made available to taxpayers in the upper third of the income bracket.

What benefits, if any, do tenants in New Jersey receive? Tenants may receive a non-refundable credit of $65.00 against their state income tax. This tax credit does not benefit tenants if thier income tax liability is less than $65,00.

Eapen and Eapen, in the conclusion of their study, recommend that a refundable tenant tax credit be instituted, to help distribute the tax burden in a more equitable fashion. Although this is not the only tax reform measure that should be implemented, it would be a good start towards ending the subsidy of homeowners by tenants. Both homeowners and tenants suffer as a result of our tax system, which benefits corporations and the rich, and tax reform (like rent control) would go a long way towards stabilizing communities and benefitting both homeowners and tenants. The implicit subsidy of homeowners by tenants exists at all levels of the tax system. The tax system, as it now exists, inhibits the egalitarian effects it is supposed to produce. ■

Bruce A. Pietrykowski is a Research Assistant at the Ronald B. Atlas Tenant Resource Center

Elizabeth tenants uncover landlord fraud, petitions thrown out

ELIZABETH: In Elizabeth, a coalition of community groups successfully blocked a move by the local landlord organization to place a referendum to repeal the town's eight year old rent control ordinance on the November ballot.

The landlord campaign came to a dead halt when the Coalition to Save Rent Control (CSRC) discovered thousands of forgeries on the petitions and subsequently filed suit to have the petitions invalidated on the basis of wholesale fraud. The Coalition is made up of several community groups including the Tenants Association of Elizabeth, the Coalition for a United Elizabeth and the Elizabeth Senior Citizens Council.

An investigation was launched in mid-August, when the CSRC began questioning how so many signatures could have been collected in so short a time. Representatives of the CSRC discovered that representatives of the ETC had hired and instructed circulators to, among other things, forge names from voter registration printouts, misrepresent the contents of the petitions, sign their name as the circulator of petitions they hadn't actually taken around, and tell family members to sign for one another. More than 150 affidavits from city residents claiming their names were forged on the petitions were collected. A door to door investigation revealed that out of 123 randomly selected people whose signatures appeared on the petitions, not one said that the signature on the petition was their own. Names of persons who had moved or been dead for several years were also fraudulently signed.

The CSRC, together with NJTO and several people whose names had been forged, filed a suit to have the petitions invalidated and four days later, on September 9, it was announced that the ETC would withdraw its petitions. Although the ETC was not named in the suit, the CSRC has requested State Attorney General John Degnan and the Union County Prosecutor's Office to investigate the matter as an obvious case of election fraud. Representatives of the CSRC believe that at least 70-90% of the last 4,291 signatures submitted are invalid.

The irony of the Elizabeth situation is that although the tenants won a tremendous victory, city officials have chosen to overlook the violation of civil liberties that occurred. Upon withdrawal of the fraudulent petitions, Mayor Dunn responded by praising the landlords' withdrawal of the petitions as a demonstration of cooperation and public service. Not a word was said about the forgeries. Dunn, a long time friend of ETC spokesman Leo Chernus, said that he would "give serious official consideration to redressing aspects" of the rent ordinance. ■

New Milford tenants dig up truth about taxes

NEW MILFORD: One of the New Milford landlords recently requested that the Mayor and Council double the yearly rent increases and grant full vacancy decontrol. This landlord claimed that his taxes had decreased due to rent control

But the tenants were skeptical of these claims. Tenant leader and NJTO Board member Bill Daly made a week-long survey of tax records in the municipal building and discussed the matter of taxes with the town tax assessor. The figures clearly showed not tax shift due to rent control. The New Milford Tenants Organization then submitted a report to the Mayor and Council fully documenting these findings with figures from the town's tax records. Result: The Mayor and Council refused to amend the Ordinance.

Hint to all tenants: When making any survey of tax records look for a "reevaluation tax shift." If your town has not had a reevaluation for many years, a tax shift will probably be shown when the evaluation is done. The reason for this is that in the past 10 or 15 years, residential (private home) values have increased at a far faster rate than any commercial values (stores, apartments). This will be reflected in the form of a tax shift when the reevaluation is made. However, you must be certain to explain that this is not due to rent control. To avoid showing this tax shift, we took the difference between the year prior to the imposition of rent control and the year after. The result showed that apartment taxes stayed at the same percentage of total taxes paid, as did residential units. ■

West Orange tenants win despite being outspent and outnumbered

WEST ORANGE: The West Orange Homeowner's Association, a group of realtors, landlords and homeowners, were able to get a rent control referendum on the November 4 ballot. And for the first time in New Jersey's history, when the question of rent control was put on the ballot, rent control won! By a plurality of 1746 (8214 to 6468) the anti-rent control referendum was defeated.

All along, the landlords seemed to be waging a winning campaign. They succeeded in collecting the 1,100 signatures necessary to put the anti-rent control measure on the ballot, telling potential petition signers that no controls would benefit tenants and would stop condo conversions. They took a nationwide landlord anti-rent control organization which is funneling thousands of dollars into local communities to stop the growing rent control movement. The West Orange landlords spent thousands of dollars churning out literature aimed primarily at homeowners, claiming that rent control was most beneficial to upper-income tenants and that it lowered rental values, causing homeowners to carry a large tax burden and thereby subsidize tenants.

The West Orange Tenant/Taxpayers Organization fought back with their own promotional literature, including a brochure which printed the voting record of every elected official in West Orange, showing that each one had voted for rent control in the past. The tenants group presented evidence to show that there is no relationship between rent control and the tax base. ■

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Tax Shift

Rent control is not eroding tax bases because apartment property values are going up under rent control. Fort Lee is illustrative. In a 1974 study of 11 Fort Lee apartments, George Sternlieb[2] predicted that because of rent control the assessed value of the 11 apartments would fall 49.2% between 1974 and 1980. The 11 apartments actually rose in value ranging from 37% to 222% with a mean increase of 81% from 1972 to 1977.

In a 1980 study of Bergen County,[3] Amy Klein analyzed 5 rent controlled and 5 non-rent controlled cities and found that the property in all ten towns rose in value ranging from 2.7% in non-rent controlled Ridgewood to a high of 179% in rent controlled Fairlawn from 1974 to 1979.

Some landlords admit that apartments have gone up in value but they insist that apartment values have gone up at a slower pace in rent controlled communities. In a Fort Lee court case 4 landlords argued that because of rent control, their apartments did not increase in value at the same rate as the rest of the general taxable property in the town. The Superior Court held that the landlords' claim was an "indulgence in sheer speculation." In fact, rent controlled cities experienced a parallel increase in total assessed value compared to non-rent controlled cities.

Apartments are really worth even more than their assessed values. The Bergen County study revealed that actual resale prices far surpassed assessed values. In a review of 1979 values of apartments in rent controlled cities, 11 out of 12 buildings in Cliffside Park, 7 out of 10 in Hackensack, and 4 outof 5 in Teaneck sold for more than their assessed value.

Landlords urge that apartments should be assessed on the basis of income alone. However, landlords can too easily manipulate their income and expense figures. In Fort Lee, landlords understated the amount of rent collected by 38% according to the Gilderbloom study. One landlord reduced his income by paying his brother a half million dollars in management fees.

The ownership of apartment property provides many sources of profit besides rental income that may be reflected in the value of a building. For example, a Union County landlord remortgaged his apartment building and obtained $2½ million which he used to buy a shopping center. This is called refinancing. A Fort Lee landlord sold an 88 million assessed building for $15 million to a buyer who needed a $2 million tax shelter.

There are three methods to be used in assessing property values. One, based on income, is called capitalization of income; the second approach is based upon reproduction cost; and the third approach is based upon comparable sales value. If all three methods are considered together, as required by law, we would get a more accurate picture of a property's value and many apartments would be assessed even higher than their present assessed values.

DEFICIENCIES IN THE COUNTY TAX APPEAL PROCEDURE

Despite the falsity in the landlords' latest campaign, tenants and homeowners must be prepared for a bombardment of the county tax boards by landlords seeking reductions. If there are landlords who obtain tax reductions, then the reason is not due to rent control but because of deficiencies in the county tax board procedures.

According to several tax assessors, landlords understate their income and overstate their expenses before tax boards that do not carefully scrutinize the cases before them. Before some boards, landlords do not have to open their books; before others, landlords do not have to submit certified documents; before still others, landlords do not even appear for examination and cross-examination. Instead, landlords send the same few lawyers to appear before the same few tax board members in an all too familiar scene. Another problem is that many city attorneys fail to vigorously defend the sound assessments that are made by city tax assessors.

To believe that landlords will give up this avenue for making money, whether or not there is rent control, is foolish. Tenants and homeowners must begin to monitor county tax boards to make sure that certified income and expense statements are required and to make sure that well prepared cases are presented by city attorneys.

HOW RENT CONTROL LAWS HELP

A rent control ordinance can provide that if a landlord is successful in obtaining a tax reduction, then the entire reduction must be refunded to the tenants. Such a provision was upheld in Edison, a town that has had rent control for years and still proudly boasts of new construction.

The New Jersey Supreme Court has just affirmed the legality of rent control in regulating the quality as well as the price of housing. The Supreme Court upheld a provision in Orange's rent control law that precludes all increases in rent, including hardship increases, if a landlord's property is not in substantial compliance with local property maintenance codes.[5]

THE REAL TAX SHIFT

Rent control is not the cause of high taxes for homeowners. According to Gilderbloom, the increase in taxes paid by homeowners is about the same in rent controlled and non-rent controlled cities. In the 26 rent controlled cities in New Jersey, after 5 years of rent control, tenants and homeowners were paying the same proportion of the total tax dollar as before rent control. For the same period, in non-rent controlled cities, the proportion of the total tax dollar paid by homeowners remained the same.

New Jersey apartments make up only 6% of the total tax base[6] and rent controlled apartments make up only a fraction of that figure. Tenants with or without rent control can hardly be blamed for the tax burden suffered by homeowners.

In fact, apartment taxes are paid by tenants indirectly through their rents. According to a report by Thomas and Ana Eapon entitled "Treatment of Tenants and Homeowners in Property Tax Relief 1980," federal and state tax legislation has resulted in a subsidy of approximately $600 million to homeowners from New Jersey tenants in 1976-1977. According to a 1974 government study, the cost associated with apartments place far less of a financial burden on com-

THE NEED FOR UNITY

Homeowners and tenants appreciate now more than ever before that they share common interests and problems. The real reasons for our cities' eroding tax bases are found in chemical and toxic waste dumps that abound in such cities as Rutherford, Jersey City, East Rutherford, Carlstadt, Bayonne, New Brunswick, Perth Amboy and Newark; in industrial plants leaving our cities, in center city businesses closing down, in requests by industry for reductions coupled with threats to leave if reductions are not granted, in restrictive land use practices, in years of redlining by banks that refuse to lend money to preserve and upgrade inner city housing stock, in properties being snatched from the tax rolls by county and state government and tax exempt agencies, and in the myriad of tax loopholes that benefit the real estate industry and corporations at the expense of working people.

NJTO urges tenants and homeowners to reach out to one another for their common good. As the price of owning or used home skyrockets, the children of homeowners and tenants who have not yet acquired a home can expect to be shut out of the market. Decent, affordable housing must be preserved for us all.

Homeowners and tenants will be far better served by strengthened rent control laws, tax reforms, environmental protections in workplaces and communities, more new jobs and the protection of jobs through plant closing regulations, and controls on the high price of oil and interest rates.

While it is no surprise that after ten years, landlords continue their fight against rent control, it does shock the conscience to see how far they are willing to go in blaming the victims and pitting them against one another in the face of the real crises of our cities and the real economic hardships on poor, working and middle-income tenants and homeowners.

Special thanks to the River Edge Tenants Association and the West Mill Tenants Association for helping to make this issue possible.

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Vacancy Decontrol

ccruth is that whether or not a tenant is going to move in the future is not always known in the present. It may be planned or unplanned. It may be the result of fortunate or the most unfortunate circumstances. But whatever the reason, moving is often traumatic and always costly and inconvenient.

There are many situations that require tenants-in-residence to move. Large and growing families move to larger accommodations. Senior citizens move to smaller accommodations, sometimes after losing their spouses or upon retiring. The children of local homeowners grow up and look for apartments in their hometowns. Often they cannot afford their own homes and want to remain in their communities. Many tenants are forced to move from apartments that have been sorely neglected. Surely these tenants, who in fact are most in need of rent control, should not be forced out of their communities and away from their schools, churches, families and jobs.

In short, there is nothing good about vacancy decontrol. It is arbitrary, contrary to the very purposes of rent control, and affords big landlords another opportunity to extract money from tenants without regard to whether they are already obtaining significant profit, and without regard to the reasons that tenants may be forced to move or how badly these tenants may need the protection of rent control. ■

1. A copy of this report may be obtained by writing to the Conference on Alternative State and Local Policies, 2000 Florida Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20009.

2. Sternlieb, George, 1975 "Fort Lee Rent Control," New Brunswick, New Jersey; Center for Urban Policy Research.

3. Klein, Amy, 1980 "Rent Control and the Tax Structure: A Study in Bergen County."

4. *Borough of Fort Lee vs. Hudson Terrace Apartments*, A-2168-78.

5. *Orange Taxpayers Council v. City of Orange, Orange Tenants Association etal*, No. A-118 (N.J. Sup. Ct., June 17, 1980). In this case, the Court held:

> No one would applaud the wisdom of lawmakers who, by controlling the price of rental housing but not its quality, ensured that their constituents could live in affordable dwellings that are unsafe, unsanitary and harmful to health. A municipality's authority to act "for the preservation of the public permits it to go beyond mere regulation of price. There is no doubt that a municipality can employ its delegated police power to regulate the forces of the market place to help its residents obtain decent housing within their means. at p. 14.

6. Gruen and Gruen, 1977 "Rent Control in New Jersey, the Beginning," California Housing Council.

7. Kuttner, Robert and Kelston, David, 1979, "The Shifting Property Tax Burden: The Untold Cause of the Tax Revolt," Conference on Alternative State and Local Policies. ■

Landlords ignore Hoboken law

5/05/81

By Randolph Diamond JERSEY JOURNAL

Only about 25 percent of Hoboken's landlords are informing the city's rent leveling administrator when they raise their rents, making it difficult in some cases to determine what the legal rent for an apartment should be.

Bernie Van Carpels, Hoboken's rent leveling administrator, said today that only some landlords are complying with city law which stipulates that any time they raise the rent they must let her know about it.

But Mrs. Van Carpels said she's so busy she cannot try to find the landlords who do not notify her.

There are 2,000 multiple dwellings in Hoboken but Mrs. Van Carpels says she has rents in only 500 buildings recorded.

Hoboken Sixth Ward Councilman Nunzio Malfetti said the lack of records in Mrs. Van Carpels' office is making it possible for landlords to raise rents to whatever level they want when new tenants come in.

"The fact that the rents aren't being recorded in Mrs. Van Carpels' office is why I and my fellow councilmen kept on hearing of numerous cases where rent doubled and tripled," he said. "This is an outrage that has to be stopped."

Malfetti said the fact that the legal rent levels for most apartments aren't on file is especially ironic when the council is considering revising the whole rent leveling ordinance.

"It doesn't matter how many times we revise it," he said, "if we're not going to enforce it."

Under the current ordinance, landlords can raise their rent only seven and a half percent in a given year unless they show they are not making a reasonable return on their investment — defined as eleven and a quarter percent — in which case they can apply for a hardship rent increase.

See LANDLORDS — Page 25.

Daily News Thurs 6/4/81

OK bill to keep federal aid from rent-control cities

By HARRISON RAINIE

Washington (News Bureau)—The Senate last night passed a $17.8 billion housing bill that contains a proposal by Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R-N.Y.) to force communities, including New York City, to give up rent control or lose federal housing aid. The vote was 65 to 24.

Sen. Daniel P. Moynihan (D-N.Y.) denounced the provision but said he did not try to have it stricken from the bill because the Republicans had the strength to override it easily.

"This is a guillotine provision that does not even provide the communities that have (rent-control) measures the opportunity to remedy their situation," Moynihan said.

The D'Amato plan would deny federal housing construction and rent subsidy aid to communities that maintain rent control or rent stabilization. In order to receive federal aid, communities such as New York would have to adopt a vacancy decontrol law to allow rent-controlled or rent-stabilized apartments to go on the free market once a tenant moves out—a move that would allow landlords the right to charge any rent they choose.

NEW YORK HAS 300,000 rent-controlled units and 900,000 rent-stabilized units. The D'Amato plan was aimed at compelling the state to rewrite its rent-control law.

Mayor Koch has said that the city would rather lose the housing aid than change a statute that would dramatically change the cost of apartments in the city.

Moynihan noted that a House subcommittee has rejected the D'Amato plan and that it is likely that the housing authorization bill that emerges from the House will not contain it. He argued that the D'Amato plan might well be dropped during a House-Senate conference to iron out the differences in the bills.

"If it is not dropped in conference, expect me to be on this floor as long as my breath lasts to speak against it," Moynihan declared as he threatened to filibuster. He voted against the bill, and D'Amato voted for it. ■

Daily News, Thursday, June 4, 1981

THE JERSEY JOURNAL, FRIDAY, MAY 22, 1981

Tenants ask state support

The New Jersey Tenants Organization is asking the state legislature to pass a resolution opposing federally proposed legislation to cut off federal aid to cities which impose rent control on newly constructed housing or apartments after they become vacant.

Landlords ignore Hoboken law

3/5/81

Continued from Page 1.

Mrs. Van Carpels said the only way she could possibly track down landlords who do not notify her of rent increases would be to get two or three employees to help her.

Currently, Mrs. Van Carpels is running a one-person office. While a reporter was talking to her she got four phone calls from landlords and tenants and two tenants were waiting outside to talk to her.

"I have no free time," she said.

Mrs. Van Carpels, said, however, it was not true that it was impossible to determine the legal rent if a specific rent were unrecorded.

She said in three cases last year, where tenants thought their landlords were charging higher than the legal rent and the prior rents were not recorded in her office, the new tenants contacted the old tenant and obtained copies of the rent receipts.

In all three cases, Mrs. Van Carpels said, the receipts showed the landlords had raised the rent beyond the seven and a half percent limit. The landlords were ordered to roll the rents back.

One of those landlords who has not recorded his rent increases in Mrs. Van Carpels office is Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello.

The mayor admitted today that he had negotiated rent increases with his tenants himself and had never recorded the increases in Mrs. Van Carpels office.

Cappiello said he was unaware he had to do that in view of the fact that the tenants had voluntarily agreed to the rent increases.

The mayor said he would strongly consider hiring additional staff for Mrs. Van Carpels.

Meanwhile, the City Council has split over the hiring of a referee who would make recommendations to the rent leveling board on whether it should approve a hardship rent increase application.

The council was considering hiring the referee as part of the planned revision of the rent leveling ordinance.

Hoboken City Council President Walter Cramer who orginally supported the idea of a referee now says he favors hiring a part-time consultant who would advise the rent leveling board on complicated hardship applications.

But Hoboken Councilman Robert Ranieri says he feels a referee empowered to make a decision on each hardship application, with the rent leveling board holding veto power, would be a better approach.

Hoboken Councilman Thomas Kennedy said he agrees with Cramer while Councilman Malfetti and he favors Ranieri's referee proposal.

Other councilman say they are undecided on the matter.

Why bother?

Jersey Journal 3/7/81

In Hoboken, the City Council is agonizing over revising the rent leveling ordinance.

Landlords, tenants and the councilmen have been indulging in impassioned debate over when and how and if the present rent ordinance can or should be revised.

Why bother?

The present rent ordinance requires that landlords file their rents with the city's rent leveling administrator each time they raise the rents.

However, only about 25 percent of the landlords are obeying that portion of the law. Which means that there is no record of what the legal rent for an apartment is in 75 percent of the rented property in the city.

If the city doesn't enforce its rent law, why revise it?

Decontrol, 11.5% rent hike in new Hoboken ordinance

By Earl Morgan

Vacancy decontrol, 11.5 percent hardship rent increases and registration of apartments will become a fact of life for landlords and tenants in Hoboken if a new rent control ordinance is adopted.

The city council met last night in a "working session" to iron out details and agreed to remain the present 7.5 percent annual increase landlords receive.

The new ordinance will allow landlords who can show they are not making a profit on their investment to receive an increase of up to 11.5 percent of the current rent.

Under the new ordinance, landlords will be allowed to exempt apartment that are voluntarily vacated by a tenant from control in setting the new rents and will be able to charge whatever the market can bear "without regard to rentals paid by the previous tenant."

Once the new rent is set, though, the apartment is subject to the rent ordinance.

The council also stipulated that provisions to protect tenants from being harassed by a landlord into moving and would require all landlords to "register" their apartments with the city.

The new ordinance would fine landlords found in violationfrom $100 to $500.

The law includes stipulation that would allow the increase for dwellings of five unit or more, the property having been owned by a landlord for a minimum of one year.

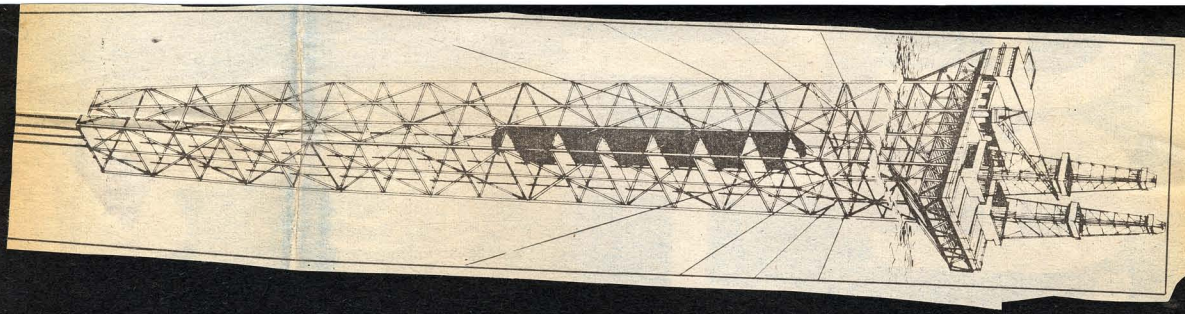
The stipulation does not apply to buildings with four units or less.

The council also moved to change the provisions of the old ordinance dealing with substantial rehabilitation. Formerly, a landlord only had to invest 50 percent of the assessed value of the property into rehabilitation to qualify for a rent increase. The new ordinance would require a 100 percent investment of assessed value before a rent increase could be granted.

"What the council is trying to do with the new ordinance is protect the tenants and also protect the real estate market," Councilman Robert Ranieri said.

"The council worked very hard to reach concensus on this matter. Ther are no heroes or villains involved here."

The ordinance is expected to be placed on the council agenda next week. If approved, public hearings on the ordinance would be held next month.



owners left out in the cold

Hudson Dispatch 3/9/81

Decontrol is pushing up petroleum prices, say the experts, and homeowners in the Northeast are going to be hurt the most. By the end of the year, home heating oil will have gone up another 10 cents, they predict, urging a rebate plan to ease the pain.

Council ignoring lawyers on hardship rent

JJ 3/25/81

The Hoboken City Council has put a provision in the city's rent leveling ordinance that will bar new landlords from obtaining hardship rent increases for 13 months, despite advice from the city law department that any such ban would be "illegal."

The temporary ban on hardship rent increases is being pushed by City Council President Walter Cramer and Councilman-at-large Thomas Kennedy and they apparently have the support of all other council members except Councilman-at large Robert Ranieri.

"The ban has to be enacted to stop landlords from just buying buildings and putting low down payments down on purpose in order to obtain hardship rent increases," said Kennedy. "If someone wants to challenge it in court, let them but I'm in favor of putting it in the ordinance."

The city law department concluded last week that a 13-month ban would not be legal because it would deprive a landlord of the right of making a reasonable return on his investment, according to Ranieri.

Courts have struck down similar ordinances throughout the country after determining that they didn't allow a landlord to make a reasonable return on his investment.

Ranieri has said he doesn't see why the council should even consider enacting a provision in the ordinance that is "clearly illegal."

But Kennedy says the law department hasn't told him anything about the provision being illegal.

Attorney Lawrence Florio refused comment. And all assistant attorney Thomas Calligy would say was that no determination had been made yet.

But a high informed city hall source said the law department has indeed determined the 13-month ban is illegal but has decided not to publicly disclosure that.

The council will meeting tonight in closed session to further discuss the ban as well as other revisions planned for the rent leveling ordinance, including a fuel-surcharge for tenants.

The temporary ban on hardship rent increases was first proposed by Cramer in the fall as a way tos top the sky-roketing rents in the city. The city's rent leveling board has been granting numerous hardship rent increase

Hoboken's rent leveling ordinance allowes a landlord to apply for a hrdship rent increase if he can show it is not making a reasonable return on his investment—which is defineas 11½ percent.

Hudson Officials Probed On Their Slumlord Status

By DANIEL HAYS

Two Hudson County officials who failed to disclose their interest in three rundown Jersey City tenements are being investigated for possible violation of the county ethics code, it was learned yesterday.

The probe by the Hudson County Law Department involves Planning Director Lawrence Campagna and John Jay Boylan, a county planning department architect. Their role in a real estate holding group was revealed by The News Nov. 4. 1980

Campagna, Boylan and John J. Powers, business manager for the county vocational schools, are part of a corporation that owns three adjoining building at 1, 5 and 7 Cuneo Place.

Tenants Evacuated

On Oct. 31 city officials declared 7 and 5 Cuneo Place "unfit for human habitation" and 40 tenants were evacuated because a gaping hole was found in the foundation.

City Superintendent of Building Edward Seata has called the vacated buildings "pigsties" with a record of housing violation charges that go back four years.

County Law Director Harold Ruvoldt Jr. said yesterday that County Executive Edward Clark ordered his department to investigate after The News' story appeared. He said Powers is not under scrutiny because he was a vocational board employe and not under control of the county executive.

Ruvoldt said that Campagna and Boylan are under examination for possible conflict because "Hudson County in the past has done housing studies." He would not elaborate.

Campagna, who has denied that his real estate involvement represents any conflict, told The News the buildings were purchased three years ago with the idea of securing a state govern

[redacted]

grant to completely renovate them.

Ruvoldt said that under the county ethics code disclosures must be made of any business ventures that involve the possibility or direct or indirect conflict with an employe's county job "so the county can insulate you from conflict."

Violations of the ethics code, which was adopted in May, call for firing or other disciplinary action.

Ruvoldt would not say just how far the investigation has gone in examining the real estate dealing of the two but he did report that a study of the law involved should be done by Wednesday and the rest of the report might be done shortly.

653-0835

Hardship rent increase ban ruins couple's dream

Carol Mack has been a secretary for bank in Hoboken for the last 10 years. Her husband George works as a salesman for an advertising firm in New York.

Both Hoboken natives have been saving for a house for the last 10 years. By the summer they had expected to buy one.

But they say a proposal by th Hoboken City Council to put a ban o hardship rent increases for 13 montl may put a clamp on their plans.

"It's been our dream for years t own a house," said Carol. "We'r middle-class people. "I make $10,0(a year and my husband makes $16,00(We've had to save for years to be abl to afford our dream."

Most of the houses in Hoboken ar multi-family dwellings containing anywhere from two to four units.

Carol and George say they have had their eye on a house with three apartments on Bloomfield Street, one in which they would live, that goes for $70,000.

The local bank with which Carol and George have been dealing has told them they must put $20,000 down.

Carol and George have $22,000 saved so they could put down the $20,000. But the $50,000 mortgage would be at 16 percent for 20 years since that is the current interest rate.

The two tenants in the house they want to buy now pay $150 each for their three-room apartments, a total income of $300 a month.

But the Macks figure with their mortgage payments, insurance, water bills and fuel, their expenses will total $600 a month.

In order to meet their bills, they say they will need some type of rent increase.

So they were planning to apply for a hardship rent increase.

In Hoboken, landlords are allowed to apply for a hardship rent increase if they can show they are not making an 11.5 percent rent increase profit on their investment.

The city's rent leveling law normally allows landlords a 7.5 percent yearly increase.

"We don't care about 11.5 percent profit," said George. "We just want to meet our expenses. We just can't wait 13 months until we can apply to raise our tenants rents and still afford to buy the house."

City Council President Walter Cramer said the city council wants to enact the 13-month ban to stop unscrupulous landlords from buying up buildings and putting down low down payments on purpose so that they have a large mortgage and then get a hardship rent increase.

But what about Carol and George who just want to own their own house?

"They shouldn't buy a house if they can't afford it," said Cramer. "Its like owning a Cadillac. You may want it, but you don't get it if you don't have the money."

Concerned

Jersey Journal 3/31/81

As Hoboken continues to struggle with revision of its rent leveling laws, it should pay attention to the public concern that was demonstrated the other night when tenants joined in a protest march to city hall.

The tenants are concerned that there are too many pro-landlord rent guidelines. They want some pro-tenant provisions as well.

Their contentions deserve careful consideration.

And, while someone is considering imbalances, take a look at the rules that limit rent increases to 7.5 percent when an apartment is vacated and rerented.

If that rule is violated, the only action is to roll back the rent increase to the legal limit. But the landlord or realty agent who illegally increased the rent is not punished, which means he or she will probably try the same sleazy deal again, knowing there will be no punishment even if the illegality is detected.

That's not right.

Hoboken Pictorial

THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 1981 PAGE 3

RENT LAW

A revision of the city's special rent leveling ordinance is finally expected to be introduce at Monday's City Council caucus. It's about time. The council first started working on the revision five months ago.

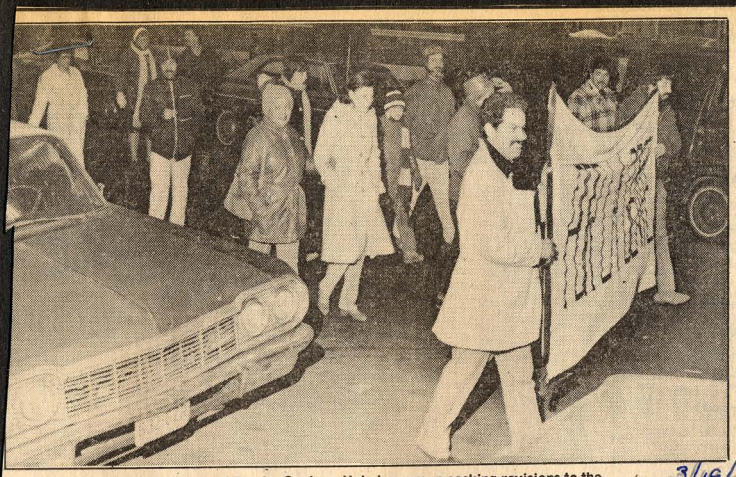
HUDSON DISPATCH 3/27/81

Board backs condominium

HOBOKEN—A proposal to open the city's first condominium was approved unanimously by the planning board Wednesday night.

The project involves renovation of four buildings at the southeast corner of First and Hudson streets to create 28 units, according to board consultant Ralph Seligman. Cost figures for the condominium were not available from th developer, Hudson Mews Inc. of Hoboken.

2290 or 2286



Members of Por La Gente, a Hoboken group seeking revisions to the city's rent leveling ordinance, march on city hall.

3/19/81
Jersey Journal

Hoboken group stages tenants' protest march

A number of Hoboken residents staged a demonstration before last night's Hoboken Council meeting to protest what they believe are unjust advantages landlords have over tenants.

Marching from Wallace School at 11th Street and Willow Avenue to the city hall, they carried the banner of Por La Gente, the community group seeking amendments favorable to tenants in the city's rent leveling ordinance.

Sister Noberto, one of the organizers of the group, said their appearance last night was to show the council that the group is still "very concerned about the ordinance."

The council will hold a caucus Wednesday at 7 p.m. in its attempt to finish the revision of the municipal rent leveling ordinance. According to Council President Walter Cramer, the amendments should be sent to the law department following the meeting and will be ready for a public hearing sometime in April.

Meanwhile, Hoboken's Rent Leveling administrator has told the president of the Hoboken Board of Realtors that he should inform his members that there is no vacancy decontrol rent law in Hoboken. Hoboken's rent leveling law only allows for a 7.5 percent increase.

Bernie Van Carpels, Hoboken's rent leveling administrator, said in the last few months she has had to order 10 landlords who rented their apartments through real estate brokers to roll their tenants' rents back because they were breaking the law.

Mrs. Van Carpels said she is sure there are dozens of other cases that she has not been informed of. And

See TENANTS — Page 12.

Tenants stage a protest march

Continued from Page 1

since only 15 percent of landlords in the city are complying with a law that requires them to register any rent increase with her she says in some cases it is impossible to determine what the legal rent for an apartment is — if the old tenant cannot be located.

Ray Fiore, who runs his own real estate agency as well as serving as president of the Hoboken Board of Realtors, said he will be holding a meeting in the next few days to reinform all of the board's 12 member agencies that there is no vacancy decontrol law in town.

Fiore admitted that some brokers in the past had not been checking with the landlord as to what the actual legal rent for an apartment was — but were instead listing the apartment at the rate the owner wanted.

Tenants ask freeze on rent hikes

Hudson Dispatch 3/19/81

By CHUCK SUTTON
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—Tenant groups urged the City Council last night to impose a 13-month moratorium on applications for hardship rent increases.

Meanwhile, city officials denied reports that the law department had ruled the proposed ordinance unconstitutional.

Sister Noberta, spokeswoman for the Hoboken Tenants Union, charged that landlords have been buying multiple-dwelling houses with low down payments and incurring high mortgages in order to double and triple their rents under hardship applications.

The result, she charged, is the closing out of the elderly, poor and minorities from the city's housing market.

The tenants group, a subdivision of an organization known as "Por La Gente" marched to the council chambers where they chanted, "City Hall, lower our rents."

One elderly man said that when he looked for a three-room apartment, most of the ones real estate brokers showed him ranged from $425 to $540 a month.

"Those are prices that are attracting people from New York but running out the people who built Hoboken," said the resident, who declined to divulge his name.

The council voted to hire an attorney, Barry Serkisian of West New York, to advise the rent leveling board on granting hardship increases.

Councilman Nunzio Malfetti said he had been working for the last four months to convince his fellow council members that they also need investigators to determine whether hardship applications are justified.

Council President Walter Cramer assured residents that the council was still drawing up a rent leveling ordinance and had received no ruling on it from the law department yet.

Scramble on for Hoboken rent panel seat

APLIL - 1981

Another member of Hoboken's Rent Leveling Board has resigned — the second to do so in three months — and the scramble is on among community groups to get one of their own members the seat on the board.

Mary Lemanowicz submitted her resignation from the board yesterday in a letter to Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello in which she said she no longer had time to serve on the board.

Mrs. Lemanowicz was recently hired at Steven Institute of Technology as a clerk. She had been on the rent leveling board for five years.

A spokesman for the Hoboken Tenants Union said today the group feels tenants don't have adequate representation on the board that one of their members should be picked to serve.

The spokesman said the group feels that way especially in view of the fact that Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello never consulted them in picking a replacement when the board's chairman, Juan Torres, resigned.

The mayor had claimed he thought the tenants union knew of Torres' resignation and he said they would have been free to hand in nominations as did other individuals and groups.

Cappiello subsequently named Michael Flanagan, a Hoboken computer salesman and a member of Hoboken's Environmental Committee as Torres replacement.

The mayor said today he would consult with the tenants union and other interested groups to accept nominations for the board.

Members of Hoboken's Board of Realtors as well as the Environmental Committee are also expected to submit nominations to the board.

N.J.T.O. Worshop activities

Hd. Reporter 4/9

N.J.T.O. Workshop, free of charge, sponsored by Por La Gente, will be held on the following Tuesdays, at 7:30 p.m. at St. Francis Center, 10 Jefferson st.:

June 9, Know Your Tights by Mitch Kahn.

June 16, How to Organize by Mark Sachs.

June 23, Rent Strikes by Phil Fenster.

June 30, Rent Control by Jean Pransky.

July 7, How to Win Tenants Victory by Political Action by John Atlas.

For further information on all of the above workshop discussions or for registration, please call Ramona Pignataro at 792-1571.

structors.

Rent board to meet

S.J. 5/11/81

The Hoboken Rent-Leveling and Stabilization Board will meet May 19 at 7:30 p.m. in the council chambers at city hall.

On the agenda are hardship rent-increase applications from 1107 Washington St., 719 Willow Ave., 733 Park Ave., and 532 Hudson St.

Also to be heard is a capital-improvement rent-increase application for 518-520 Hudson St.

Rent-board nomination surprises Hoboken

6/8

In a move that surprised the Hoboken City Council, Mayor Steve Cappiello has nominated the leader of the opposition to the city's new rent-control ordinance to the Rent Control Board.

Cappiello's letter to the council caucus last night named Sister Norberta of St. Francis Convent to the board. Sister Norberta is a leader of the anti-rent-decontrol group Por la gente.

The council will have to approve the appointment by resolution at tomorrow's regular meeting if Sister Norberta is to become a member of the board.

The council will also be considering whether to hire attorney Francis X. Hayes as special labor counsel to handle upcoming labor negotiations.

The Hoboken traffic control and parking ordinance introduced at the last council meeting will be the subject of a public hearing during tomorrow's 10 a.m. council session.

The council is expected to introduce an ordinance to fill the position of waterdepartment superintendent in an effort to prevent the annual loss of $1 million in the department.

The council is awaiting an explanation from municipal department heads for the large increase over the past three weeks in overtime payment claims. The council is threatening to withhold payroll approval if the explanation are not forthcoming and satisfactory.

Loophole in Hoboken rent rule gives landlord big boost despite violations

JJ 5/24/80

By Randolph Diamond

A legal loophole in Hoboken's rent control ordinance has allowed a Hoboken landlord to take his building off rent control for 13 months and hit his tenants with a $140 a month rent increase.

Ivan Silverman, who owns the five-story building at 819 Washington street, has done some renovation, but there are still numerous apparent housing violations.

Broken window frames, cracks in the wall and ceilings, baseboard heating pipes exposed in such sensitive places as bathrooms and broken stairs in the hallway are some of the conditions found during an inspection yesterday by The Jersey Journal.

Under the rent control ordinance, a building is exempted from rent control for 13 months if the owner does renovations which amount to more than half of the assessed valuation.

Silverman's building is assessed at $25,800. When the assessment was put at 100 percent, the value became $46,840. Silverman submitted bills in January to the Hoboken rent leveling and stabilization board showing he had spent $23,753.41 for renovation, making it eligible for decontrol.

"His case was proven," said Bernice Van Carpels, the rent leveling board's administrator who granted the exemption in late January.

Mrs. Van Carpels said the case did not to go the rent leveling board itself because the rent ordinance makes 13-month exemption automatic.

"Silverman has done renovations but the building was functional before he did them," said Stanley Baum, an occupant of a fourth floor apartment. And the renovations he did there was no point because he only did the job half way."

Baum showed a reporter new storm windows that had been installed in five of his seven rooms. And then he showed him the still-rotting window frames.

Tenants in the building say the other "improvements" were replacing adequate kitchen sinks with smaller ones, putting in new toilets, some of which are already malfunctioning, putting in a new hot air heating system which almost caused them to freeze to death this past winter, painting the hallways of the building, and increasing the electrical

See TENANTS — Page 29.



Agnes Garger shows a falling wooden window frame in her apartment at 819 Washington St., Hoboken, where the landlord has increased rents by $140 a month.

5/24/80

Tenants try to close Hoboken rent loophole

Continued from page 1

outage in the kitchen that they admit is an improvement.

"What Silverman did with the heating system is really a rip-off," said Thalia Doukas. "We had radiators and our heat was fine. Now we are cold since he changed the system to individual boilers in the basement. The tenants all believe eventually he plans to charge us for our own heat."

Fifth floor tenant Agnes Garger said she has asked Silverman numerous times to fix a hanging window pane and exposed wiring to no avail.

All the other four tenants said they have had the same problems with Silverman.

The tenants are now paying between $200 and $250 a month for their seven room apartments.

Silverman said the rent increase is justified because of the previous low rent and the money he put into renovation.

He said he is trying to correct all the problems as fast as possible.

"Just last week, I put in a $1,100 hot water heater," he said. Maintaining the building is going to be a continuous process."

Silverman said he hadn't gotten around to many of the problems and others he said he didn't even know about.

Silverman said tenants now have individual thermostats to control their own heat.

But tenants say Silverman had preset the individual thermostats through a master control so they didn't work this past winter.

"The thermostats will only work when we start paying for the heat," said Mrs. Doukas, "It's a neat trick."

Juan Torres, chairman of the Hoboken rent leveling board, said it doesn't matter what renovations a landlord makes as long as the amount meets the law.

"That's crazy," said Ms. Doukas," "A landlord can put in a $30,000 chandelier in his own apartment and then get an exemption from rent control," she said.

Tenants challenged the city exemption and took their case to Hudson County Superior Court last month.

An informal decision was reached between the lawyers that the rent board would consider the tenants' case.

That meeting is scheduled for Tuesday at 7:30. Lawyers have already submitted legal briefs.

Tenants say if the rent board rules against them, they will take the case to court again. Silverman said he did not know what he would do if he lost the decision.

Meanwhile, Ms. Van Carpels said the original decision to exempt Silverman from rent control was based on a document from Housing Inspector Michael Curcio that there were no violations, and also from statements from inspectors that the plumbing and electrical work were done properly.

Curcio said he hasn't inspected the entire building in over two years. He said his statement was based on records dating back to that inspection, which he said was done for the state as part of a regular five-year cycle.

Curcio said he can make complaint inspections, but there were none on Silverman's building. There is nothing in the law, he said, which requires him to make an inspection before a building is to be renovated.

And inspector Vincent Marzocca said he got into only two or three of the apartments even though he certified the electrical work was complete. He said he put his primarily emphasis on the basement in making sure Silverman installed a proper electrical circuit breaker system.

Cappiello won't block rent bill

Jersey Journal 2/9/81

By Randolph Diamond

Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello today called "unconstitutional" a clause in the proposed revision of Hoboken's rent leveling ordinance that limits hardship rent increases to 25 percent.

But the mayor said he still supports city council members in their move to enact the ordinance. He said, however, that he believes the clause would be knocked out by the courts if challenged by landlords.

"It's probably a stop-gap measure," he said. "But we should try and do something to help the tenants."

Cappiello said he also believes another clause in the revision, which bars new landlords who buy buildings with five or more units from obtaining a hardship increase for 13 months, may also be unconstitutional.

The mayor said he believes the 25 percent limit is unconstitutional because a landlord may be hit with unexpected costs, such as emergency repairs or the price of oil going up, and will have no recourse.

He said in the past, rent leveling and rent control ordinances have been knocked down by courts in other communities where it was found the landlord had no way to get a fair return on his property.

The mayor said the 13-month ban on hardship increases also looked illegal but said he wasn't sure about it since it could be argued that a landlord could obtain a reasonable return on his property after the 13 months if there was no clause limiting the hardships to 25 percent.

City Council President Walter Cramer, who originally proposed both the 13-month ban on hardship rent increases for new owners and the 25 percent limit, was unavailable for comment yesterday.

Previously, Cramer, who is a lawyer, said he felt the 13-month ban and 25 percent limit on hardship increases were legal.

See CAPPIELLO — Page 4.

(ON THE SQUARE)

Hoboken Council lets tax rate rise $25

J.J 4/10/81

The Hoboken City Council won't be making any major cuts in the administration's $21-million budget for 1981, meaning that property owners will see an increase of approximately $25 in the tax rate from last year, which was $111.50 per $1,000 assessed valuation.

The council made the decision not to make any major cuts in the city budget or its share of the school board budget during a closed meeting Monday night.

"We just didn't see any place to make cuts," said one councilman who asked not to be identified. "If we made cuts we would have to lay off a major number of employees, and the city or the school system just can't afford to do that."

The councilman blamed the tax increase on inflation and increases that couldn't be controlled, such as an arbitrator's ruling giving pay-raises to policemen and firemen and mandated increases in the city's pension fund.

The councilman said the council might make a few minor cuts at Monday night's city council caucus, but he said they would have no real effect on lowering the tax rate.

"At most maybe we could shave a dollar or two from the $25 rate, but that's about it," he said.

See HOBOKEN TAXES — Page 18.

Mayor Steve Cappiello was unavailable for comment.

Hoboken's current tax rate is already one of the highest in the nation. However, most of the city's homes are assessed at only a fraction of their value.

Tenants petition against rent decontrol

Jersey Journal 2/13/81

By Randolph Diamond

The Hoboken Tenants Union has mounted a petition drive to persuade City Council members to eliminate a vacancy decontrol provision from the proposed revision of the city's rent leveling ordinance.

Eddie Marotta, one of the leaders of the drive, said at least 300 signatures have been gathered so far.

Marotta, who owns Marotta's Restaurant behind City Hall, has been passing around the petitions to all of his customers.

"The response has been very good," said Marotta. "A lot of people in the community are dead set against vacancy decontrol."

Sister Norberta of St. Francis Church, another of the leaders of the Tenants Union, said Hoboken City

See TENANTS — Page 9.

decontrolled," she said. "We are fighting for the rights of Hoboken residents who have lived in the city all their lives."

While Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello has maintained that apartments won't be decontrolled when tenants can show that the landlord evicted them, Tenants Union leaders say many tenants would be afraid to complain.

"There are a lot of elderly and poor people who are unaware of their rights and who could easily be intimidated by their landlord," said Terri Ratti, a member of the Tenants

councilmen E. Norman Wilson Jr., Nunzio Malfetti and Council President Walter Cramer against it.

However, Councilman Thomas Kennedy had said he would be willing to switch his vote if tenants could prove to him that the vacancy decontrol clause was harmful to them.

The revision to be introduced on Monday also contains a clause barring hardship rent increase for 13 months for new landlords who have five or more units in their building, and limits the amount of the increases to 25 percent for all landlords.

...ppiello won't block rent bill

Jersey Journal 6/9/81

Continued from Page 1.

Councilman-at-large Robert Ranieri, who originally challenged the clauses, said today he was happy that the mayor has come to his side, but said he will vote for them anyway.

"The council has been working on this ordinance for seven months and we have finally reached a concensus on the points we want," he said. "Not every councilman, including myself, likes all the changes but the whole thing is a trade-off. We're each getting some change we want put in the ordinance."

Hugh Hothem, a spokesman and one of the founders of the newly formed Hoboken Property Owners Association said the association will challenge the clauses in court if enacted.

"It is definitely unconstitutional," said Hothem. "It's a shame that the taxpayers' money of Hoboken will be wasted fighting other taxpayers in court when it's apparent the revisions are illegal."

Meanwhile, Ranieri said he believes the revised rent leveling ordinance will pass unanimously.

But Fifth Ward Councilman E. Norman Wilson Jr. said he has never agreed that he would vote to approve the revision of the rent leveling ordinance and said he was extremely troubled with the vacancy decontrol clause in the ordinance.

Wilson said he believes unscrupulous landlords may try and harass their tenants out of their apartments because of the decontrol provision and said many tenants who are elderly or poor might be afraid or not have the knowledge to complain to city authorities.

Sixth Ward Councilman Nunzio Malfetti voiced similar thoughts, saying "many long-time Hoboken residents would be driven out of the city by the decontrol clause."

Malfetti also said he has not decided whether to vote for or against the proposed revisions. Both Wilson and Malfetti are opponents of the Cappiello administration.

The decontrol clause was put into the revised rent leveling ordinance by Hoboken Councilwoman Helen Macri. Councilman Robert Ranieri, Thomas Kennedy, Sal Cemelli, Louis Francone and Anthony Romano are all supporting decontrol.

However, Kennedy told The Jersey Journal that he would be willing to change his mind on the issue if tenants could prove to him that the vacancy decontrol clause would cause them harm.

The rent leveling ordinance is now scheduled to be introduced at the city council's June 17th meeting with a public hearing scheduled at the July 1st meeting, at which time the council will vote on the ordinance.

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J.J. 4/10/81

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...BOKEN TAXES — Page 18.

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See TENANTS — Page 9.

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decontrolled," she said. "We are fighting for the rights of Hoboken residents who have lived in the city all their lives."

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councilmen E. Norman Wilson Jr., Nunzio Malfetti and Council President Walter Cramer against it.

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Cappiello won't block rent bill

Jersey Journal 2/1/82

By Randolph Diamond

Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello today called "unconstitutional" a clause in the proposed revision of Hoboken's rent leveling ordinance that limits hardship rent increases to 25 percent.

But the mayor said he still supports city council

He said in the past, rent leveling and rent control ordinances have been knocked down by courts in other communities where it was found the landlord had no way to get a fair return on his property.

The mayor said the 13-month ban on hardship increases also looked illegal but said he wasn't sure

Effective

Pathmark Health Aids Center

Items available at all Pathmark Supermarkets with Pharmacy Depts. and at Tree Standing Pathmark Drug Stores! Prices effective thrOug Sat. June 13, 1981.

Hoboken foxes

Continued from Page 1.

Another councilman, who also asked not to be identified, said there was a feeling among council members at Monday night's meeting that the administration was trying to let the council do the dirty work.

"They wanted us to make the cuts so we would look like the bad guys," said the councilman. "Well we're not falling for that. We're going to send the budget right back up to them. If they wanted cuts, then they should have made them already."

Mayor Steve Cappiello was unavailable for comment.

Hoboken's current tax rate is already one of the highest in the nation. However, most of the city's homes are assessed at only a fraction of their value.

Tenants push petition

Continued from Page 1.

Council must be convinced they should eliminate the vacancy decontrol clause from the ordinance.

"There's no doubt in my mind that landlords will use any tactic possible to get people out of their apartments so they will become decontrolled," she said. "We are fighting for the rights of Hoboken residents who have lived in the city all their lives."

While Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello has maintained that apartments won't be decontrolled when tenants can show that the landlord evicted them, Tenants Union leaders say many tenants would be afraid to complain.

"There are a lot of elderly and poor people who are unaware of their rights and who could easily be intimidated by their landlord," said Terri Ratti, a member of the Tenants Union and the city's senior citizen program social worker.

The revision of the rent leveling ordinance is scheduled to be introduced at Monday night's city council meeting.

The council is currently 6-to-3 in favor of the decontrol clause with councilmen E. Norman Wilson Jr., Nunzio Malfetti and Council President Walter Cramer against it.

However, Councilman Thomas Kennedy had said he would be willing to switch his vote if tenants could prove to him that the vacancy decontrol clause was harmful to them.

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N.Y. Daily News 6/4/81

OK bill to keep federal aid from rent-control cities

By HARRISON RAINIE

that have (rent-control) measures the opportunity to remedy their situation," Moynihan said.

The D'Amato plan would deny federal housing construction and rent subsidy aid to communities that maintain rent control or rent stabilization. In order to receive federal aid, communities such as New York would have to adopt a vacancy decontrol law to allow rent-controlled or rent-stabilized apartments to go on the free market once a tenant moves out—a move that would allow landlords the right to charge any [illegible] from the House will not contain it. He argued that the D'Amato plan might well be dropped during a House-Senate conference to iron out the differences in the bills.

"If it is not dropped in conference, expect me to be on this floor as long as my breath lasts to speak against it," Moynihan declared as he threatened to filibuster. He voted against the bill, and D'Amato voted for it. ■

Thurs

81 Hudson Dispatch 6/4/81

Hoboken weighs decontrol scheme

[illegible] Dr. Hugh H. Hothem, which has been lobbying against the ordinance. The vacancy decontrol proposal, according to one council member, may be a result of those lobbying efforts.

The new section calls for an apartment to come under decontrol once it has been voluntarily vacated. The landlord would then have the right to set the rent without regard to the rent paid by the previous tenant. The only stipulation is that the owner must register the apartment.

Council members said after the meeting they had not had a chance to study the decontrol proposal.

Councilman-at-large Robert Ranieri was skeptical about the usefulness of the decontrol addition.

"Can you imagine if a landlord gets $100 from some of his tenants, then one moves out and he can then get $300 for the same apartment?" Ranieri asked yesterday. "He could conceivably make things difficult so that the others would 'voluntarily leave' and he could get the higher rents," he added.

Allen, who is also a landlord. According to Allen, because of the age of the buildings, there are a lot of hidden costs to a new owner, who would need immediate relief, as opposed to waiting a year.

Council President Walter Cramer responded by saying that it is responsibility of the investor to be aware of the cost before he makes the investment.

Cramer defended the council's proposal by pointing out that the ordinance will only apply to new property owners.

"The Hoboken people are being frozen out of the housing market. You don't see Hoboken houses advertised in local papers, only in the New York papers. The Hoboken people put us here, and they're the ones we're going to protect," Cramer said.

The council scheduled an open meeting for tomorrow to work on the ordinance. Public comment will not be permitted at the meeting.

The council scheduled a closed meeting on the budget for Monday

N.Y. Daily News 6/4/81

OK bill to keep federal aid from rent-control cities

By HARRISON RAINIE

Washington (News Bureau)—The Senate last night passed a $17.8 billion housing bill that contains a proposal by Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R-N.Y.) to force communities, including New York City, to give up rent control or lose federal housing aid. The vote was 65 to 24.

Sen. Daniel P. Moynihan (D-N.Y.) denounced the provision but said he did not try to have it stricken from the bill because the Republicans had the strength to override it easily.

"This is a guillotine provision that does not even provide the communities that have (rent-control) measures the opportunity to remedy their situation," Moynihan said.

The D'Amato plan would deny federal housing construction and rent subsidy aid to communities that maintain rent control or rent stabilization. In order to receive federal aid, communities such as New York would have to adopt a vacancy decontrol law to allow rent-controlled or rent-stabilized apartments to go on the free market once a tenant moves out—a move that would allow landlords the right to charge any rent they choose.

NEW YORK HAS 300,000 rent-controlled units and 900,000 rent-stabilized units. The D'Amato plan was aimed at compelling the state to rewrite its rent-control law.

Mayor Koch has said that the city would rather lose the housing aid than change a statute that would dramatically change the cost of apartments in the city.

Moynihan noted that a House subcommittee has rejected the D'Amato plan and that it is likely that the housing authorization bill that emerges from the House will not contain it. He argued that the D'Amato plan might well be dropped during a House-Senate conference to iron out the differences in the bills.

"If it is not dropped in conference, expect me to be on this floor as long as my breath lasts to speak against it," Moynihan declared as he threatened to filibuster. He voted against the bill, and D'Amato voted for it. ■

decontrol scheme

dominated by a landlord, Dr. Hugh H. Hothem, which has been lobbying against the ordinance. The vacancy decontrol proposal, according to one council member, may be a result of those lobbying efforts.

The new section calls for an apartment to come under decontrol once it has been voluntarily vacated. The landlord would then have the right to set the rent without regard to the rent paid by the previous tenant. The only stipulation is that the owner must register the apartment.

Council members said after the meeting they had not had a chance to study the decontrol proposal.

Councilman-at-large Robert Ranieri was skeptical about the usefulness of the decontrol addition.

"Can you imagine if a landlord gets $100 from some of his tenants, then one moves out and he can then get $300 for the same apartment?" Ranieri asked yesterday. "He could conceivably make things difficult so that the others would 'voluntarily leave' and he could get the higher rents," he added.

Allen, who is also a landlord. According to Allen, because of the age of the buildings, there are a lot of hidden costs to a new owner, who would need immediate relief, as opposed to waiting a year.

Council President Walter Cramer responded by saying that it is responsibility of the investor to be aware of the cost before he makes the investment.

Cramer defended the council's proposal by pointing out that the ordinance will only apply to new property owners.

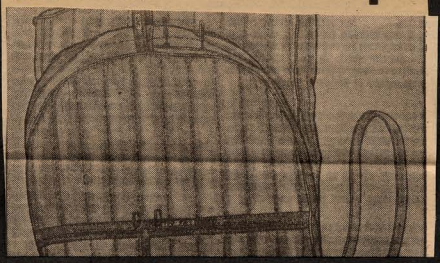
"The Hoboken people are being frozen out of the housing market. You don't see Hoboken houses advertised in local papers, only in the New York papers. The Hoboken people put us here, and they're the ones we're going to protect," Cramer said.

The council scheduled an open meeting for tomorrow to work on the ordinance. Public comment will not be permitted at the meeting.

The council scheduled a closed meeting on the budget for Monday

N.Y. Daily News 6/4/81

OK bill to keep



Thurs

Hudson Dispatch 6/4/81

Hoboken weighs decontrol scheme

By CHUCK SUTTON
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—City Council members revealed yesterday for the first time that they are considering vacancy decontrol as part of the controversial rent control ordinance that has reached the final drafting stage.

In yesterday's morning council session, even though the 1981 budget calling for a possible $25 tax increase per $1,000 of assessed valuation was given its first reading, only one resident cared enough to speak on the budget.

Other speakers were primarily concerned with the rent leveling ordinance, which has been the subject of the public portion of City Council meetings since March. The last few meetings have been dominated by a landlord group headed by Dr. Hugh H. Hothem, which has been lobbying against the ordinance. The vacancy decontrol proposal, according to one council member, may be a result of those lobbying efforts.

The new section calls for an apartment to come under decontrol once it has been voluntarily vacated. The landlord would then have the right to set the rent without regard to the rent paid by the previous tenant. The only stipulation is that the owner must register the apartment.

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Most of the speakers were unaware of the vacancy control, but many addressed other portions of the proposal that they say will place an undue hardship on the city's landlords.

The main opposition from the landlords centered on the 12-month moratorium before a new landlord can go to the rent leveling board for a rent increase. The proposal also limits the increase to 25 percent.

"Most of the buildings in Hoboken are 70 to 100 years old. They no longer will do with the smaller repairs. They need major repairs that will cost the landlord" according to Carlyle Morris, a professional restorer from Brooklyn who has bought several pieces of property in Hoboken.

His sentiment was echoed by Richard Allen, who is also a landlord. According to Allen, because of the age of the buildings, there are a lot of hidden costs to a new owner, who would need immediate relief, as opposed to waiting a year.

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New rent law allows landlords 25% boost on vacant apartments

J.J 6/26/81

By Randolph Diamond

The revision of Hoboken's rent leveling ordinance, which the city council has been working on since November, will allow landlords to raise rents on their apartments up to 25 percent when they become vacant instead of allowing vacancy decontrol as had originally been proposed.

Hoboken City Council President Walter Cramer said today that after numerous protests from tenants' groups the council had decided to delete the vacancy decontrol clause. In its place, a proposal by Councilman-at-large Robert Ranieri to limit rent increases to 25 percent when an apartment becomes vacant, was suggested.

"Not everyone on the city council is in favor of Ranieri's proposal but we seem to have a consensus of the council in favor," said Cramer.

Cramer said the entire city council agreed on the revised ordinance, which he said would be introduced to the public at Wednesday's city council meeting.

The other key revised clauses of the ordinance are:

- A 13-month ban on hardship increases for new landlords whose buildings have five or more units.

See 25% — Page 15.

Continued from Page 1.

- A 25 percent limit on the amount of any hardship rent increase for landlords.
- Changing the amount of capital improvements a landlord has to make from 50 percent of the assessed value to 100 percent in order for the landlord to qualify for a one-time 12-month rent control exemption.
- Requiring registration of all apartments, with fines set from $100 to $500 for violators.

Cramer said he felt the new ordinance would protect tenants from landlords who have been buying buildings which they can't afford to maintain and then applying for a hardship rent increase.

Hoboken's rent leveling ordinance allows a landlord to raise the rent 7½ percent when an apartment becomes vacant under the condition that the rent not be raised for another 12 months. Under the current ordinance, landlords are also allowed to impose a yearly seven-and-a-half percent rent increase, a figure that would stay in force under the proposed ordinance.

The clause stating that a landlord not making an 11½ percent profit on his investment could apply for a hardship increase would remain in effect.

Members of the Hoboken landlords group have expressed opposition to the 25 percent limit on hardship increases and the 13-month ban for new owners. They said they would challenge the proposed revisions in court.

Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello

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J-J 7/9/81

Rally aims at rent control revisions

Hoboken's Tenants Union and other tenant groups are organizing what they say will be the city s biggest rally in the last 30 years in support of the tenants based revisions in the city council's proposed new rent leveling ordinance.

The rally is scheduled for Wednesday at 6 p.m. in front of city hall, one hour before the city council is to meet and vote on the proposed rent leveling ordinance.

One of the rally organizers, Terri Ratti, said tenants were in favor of the 13-month ban on hardship rent increases for new property owners and the 25-percent limit on such increases the council has said it plans to enact.

She said tenants were against the proposal in the revision to allow a landlord to raise rents 25 percent when an apartment becomes vacant.

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Members of the Hoboken landlords group have expressed opposition to the 25 percent limit on hardship increases and the 13-month ban for new owners. They said they would challenge the proposed revisions in court.

Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello has said the 25 percent limit on hardship increases was illegal and would be knocked down in court.

The landlords group and Cappiello say the 25 percent limit could prevent a landlord from making a profit on his investment if he had to do emergency repairs, a reason the ordinance could be blocked in court.

Cramer, a lawyer, said, however, the revised ordinance permits ample opportunity for a landlord to make a reasonable profit.

With the ordinance being introduced Wednesday, Cramer said approval was possible at the scheduled July 15 council meeting.

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Hoboken: Wrinkles in the Facelift

By ROBERT DIAMOND

HOBOKEN

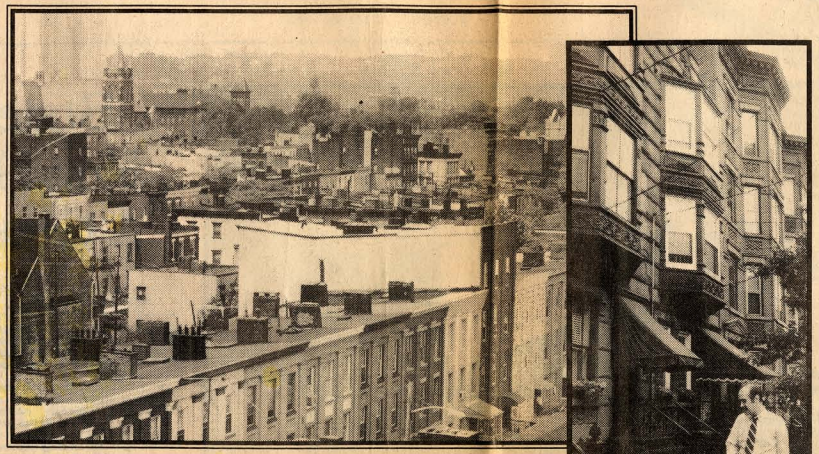
THE Hoboken renaissance is nowhere more apparent than on that section of Washington Street between Fifth and Sixth Streets.

On one side of Washington Street, Hoboken's main thoroughfare, Lesley's Delicacies, a new cafe, features quiches, espresso and chocolate mousse. A few doors down, on the other side of Washington Street, a combination book store, art gallery and cafe is expected to open shortly.

Just around the corner from the new bookstore, signs of the renaissance are also very apparent. At Fifth and Bloomfield Streets, a bar that used to cater to longshoremen and city Public Works employees is being renovated to attract many of Hoboken's newer residents, most of whom have moved here from New York City.

The signs of revival seem to be apparent everywhere in this mile-square Hudson River city of 42,000 residents.

Renaissance is in full swing, but it is taking its toll on the city's elderly



Hoboken from atop City Hall, and a view along Garden Street

Construction scaffolds adorn houses and apartment buildings on just about every block.

Many of the innovations are being applied to frame houses and deteriorated tenement buildings. The renaissance has spread far beyond the brownstones that brought Hoboken national attention in the early 1970's, when it sought Federal Model Cities funds to upgrade its housing stock.

But most of the change seems apparent from watching the people roaming the streets of what is known as the Mile-Square City.

"This city is becoming Greenwich Village West," Terri Ratti said angrily over a cup of coffee in a restaurant near City Hall. "The poor and the elderly are not welcomed anymore."

A middle-aged woman who serves as a social worker for the city's aged, Mrs. Ratti has been counseling those faced with eviction. Their landlords, it seems, want to raise rents to a level beyond their ability to pay and then make the housing available to newcomers at the higher price.

Many of the elderly who are faced with eviction have lived in Hoboken all their lives, Mrs. Ratti said, adding:

"It's bad for anyone being misplaced, but for a 70-year-old person who knows no other home but Hoboken, it's criminal. I had one person whose landlord said that he was going to raise his rent by $150 a month, and the man just couldn't afford it.

"He told me that he was going to kill himself because of it. I went back to his apartment the next week, and the man was no longer there. I don't know what happened to him."

Hoboken has a rent-leveling law that allows increases of 7.5 percent a year and an immediate 7.5 percent rise when an apartment becomes vacant, but Bernardine Van Carpels, the city's Rent Administrator, said that she was hard-pressed to enforce these regulations.

One reason for this, Mrs. Van Carpels said, is that only 25 percent of the city's landlords are complying with a stipulation that requires them to notify her office every time the rent of an apartment is raised. She has no power to impose penalties if she finds that the rent has been increased too much, but can order the landlord to roll back the rent to the legal limit.

Because she is the only staff member of the city's Rent-Leveling Board, Mrs. Van Carpels said, she does not have sufficient time in which to question all landlords accused of not complying with various facets of the law.

According to Walter Cramer, president of the Hoboken City Council, there are few complaints from newer tenants, especially those who have moved here from New York City.

"If someone is paying $800 for a two-bedroom apartment in New York and finds a two-bedroom apartment in Hoboken for $400, they think it's a steal," he said. "It doesn't matter to them if the apartment's legal rent is $200 a month."

Mr. Cramer said that rent ceilings here are higher as the result of a number of hardship increases awarded to landlords in the last 18 months.

Hoboken's rent-leveling ordinance allows a landlord to file for a hardship increase if he can show that he is not making a reasonable return on his investment. Rent-leveling officials here define this as 11.5 percent.

"Some landlords have received hardship increases that have doubled their tenants' rents," Mr. Cramer said, adding:

"We cannot allow these increases to be granted."

It appears that Mr. Cramer may be getting his way in part.

The City Council has approved a revised rent-leveling ordinance that would prevent new landlords with five or more units in their buildings from receiving a hardship increase for 13 months. In addition, hardship increases for any landlord could not exceed 25 percent of the current rent.

Mr. Cramer said that the ordinance also would allow the landlord to raise the rent 25 percent when an apartment became vacant. The city, he went on, plans to hire more staff members for the Rent-Leveling Board to enforce the ordinance.

The ordinance will carry fines of $100 to $500 for landlords who raise their rents beyond the legal limits.

Leaders of the newly formed Hoboken Property Owners Association say they will challenge the ordinance in court. They contend that the 13-month ban and the 25 percent increases are unconstitutional.

Hugh Hothem, a landlord and leader of the association, said he believed that the ordinance would discourage the upgrading of buildings and also add impetus to a fledgling trend toward converting rental housing to condominiums. Many landlords feel that this is the only way they can make money.

In the opinion of Mayor Steve Cappiello, the effects of the renaissance generally have been good.

"The city has turned the corner," he said. "Hoboken today has become a desirable place to live. In the '60's and early '70's, it was considered a place to leave."

Few would argue that point.

In 1960, only 51.4 percent of Hoboken's housing units were rated as sound. Much of the city's manufacturing industry had left for the suburbs because of lack of space to expand, and crime was on the rise.

Although there are still deteriorated apartment buildings in Hoboken — most are in the southwestern section — the number of substandard structures has declined significantly. Ralph Seligman, the city's Planning Board consultant, estimates the number of substandard buildings at slightly less than 20 percent, with the total decreasing rapidly.

Although new manufacturing industries have not moved in, the city is beginning to have some luck in attracting the software trade. Arbat Systems Limited, a computer software company with 100 employees, recently moved its corporate headquarters here from New York.

Ray Fiore, president of the Hoboken Board of Realtors, said of the renaissance:

"Without any doubt, it's the greatest thing that has ever happened to this city."

According to Mr. Fiore, the talk of displacing the elderly is exaggerated. He said that there were more than 500 units of housing for them in the city.

But Mr. Seligman, who wrote Hoboken's Model City's application in 1967 and helped to obtain the Federal funds to begin upgrading the city's housing, said he believed that Hoboken was in danger of losing its ethnic diversity.

Hoboken's population consists of about one-third Hispanic persons, one-third older-generation Italian and Irish residents and one-third newer residents, who are mostly from New York.

"But if this renaissance continues," Mr. Seligman said, "it looks like the balance could be tripped in favor of the New Yorkers. Hoboken will become a one-class city."

Victor Velazquez, who runs Hoboken's Neighborhood Preservation program, said he believed it was inevitable that the city would become an upper-class white, professional community.

"I don't believe the renaissance can be stopped," he said, as he surveyed the rehabilitation of what had been two decaying tenement buildings at Second and Bloomfield Streets. They are being converted into condominiums that will start at $70,000 for a two-bedroom unit.

"Once these are finished, do you think that the New Yorkers paying $70,000 are going to tolerate Puerto Ricans drinking beer outside the slums across the street?" he asked.

"No way. Those buildings will be rehabilitated, too, and the Puerto Ricans will be gone." ■

N.Y. Times 3/2/81

Mile-Square Hoboken, Still a Brownstoners' Haven

By ANNA QUINDLEN

THE funny thing about Hoboken is that it has been discovered — over and over and over again. It's been almost 10 years since New Yorkers began to appreciate the charms of the mile-square city on the other side of the Hudson, but waves of newcomers continue to arrive.

The town that has played host to immigrants from many countries is now being colonized by another kind of explorer, one in search of Victorian brownstones and brick row houses, cheaper rents and lower purchase prices than those to be found in Manhattan, and an atmosphere at once small town and big city.

But the Hoboken renovators' refrain has changed little with the passing years. They love the 20-minute commute to New York City jobs and hate the jokes about Hoboken. Patricia and Tim Tuohy say they think they arrived at an ideal time, in 1975; Jeanine Palmer and Todd Nemanic, who came two years later, and Exilda and Robert Groux, who recently purchased a house, say they arrived at just the right time, too.

In a way they are all right, for each wave of new immigrants to Hoboken has had distinct advantages — and problems. The early arrivals had price on their side, but the newer ones find themselves surrounded by old hands whowan advise and encourage them.

"It was just beginning when we bought this house," said Mrs. Tuohy, who renovates brownstones and other buildings professionally. "We had looked in Brooklyn for a couple of years, but when we came over here the prices were better and we liked it more."

In the years since, some friends — including Miss Palmer — have followed the Tuohys to Hoboken after seeing their house, an imposing brick-front row house in which they live on the lower two floors.

Once divided into smaller rooms, with a large built-in closet partioning the parlor floor, and Formica paneling and a dropped ceiling closing in the kitchen, the two floors have been turned into a home both intensely Victorian and eclectic. The parlor floor has been opened up into a single huge room, with furniture grouped around a slate fireplace at one end and a mantelpiece of richly carved cherry at the other.

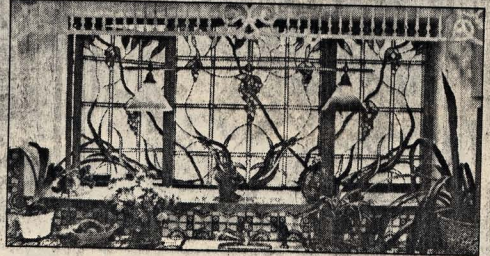
The walls and two velvet contemporary sofas are a deep plum color, a shade Mrs. Tuohy thinks better points up the ornamental ceiling plasterwork than paler colors. There is a distinctly Victorian clutter of un-Victorian objects: on an American Empire mahogany desk, for instance, may sit pieces of Oriental, Mexican and African pottery. But the focal point of the room is the floor-to-ceiling windows, stained glass in a purple and green wisteria pattern. "It's reminiscent of the Tiffany windows in the Metropolitan Museum," Mrs. Tuohy said.

One of the things that always intrigues visitors about the Tuohys' house is that much of what seems indigenous to it has in fact been purchased for it, often in Hoboken. The stained glass windows were made by Hudson River Stained Glass, which set up shop downtown when all the renovation began. The mantels that seem so right were purchased elsewhere, since all of those originally in the house had been removed by the previous owner. The ceiling beams in the kitchen are old floor joists from an apartment house nearby, saved and installed by Mr. Tuohy, who is a lawyer.

Much of the renovation work on the house has consisted of touches like that, although the plumbing was redone and an interior stairway constructed to provide privacy for the Tuohys and their tenants. It is difficult for them to estimate how much they have spent, although the stained glass alone, installed recently, cost about $2,000 a window, they said. They prefer not to say how much they originally paid for their house, but at that time houses as large as theirs were selling for less then $50,000. Today

Continued on Page C8







Patricia and Tim Tuohy added much of the interior detailing to their row house. The wisteria-pattern stained glass windows of their parlor, above, were made by a local craftsman. More stained glass was inserted in the kitchen area, far left. Since all the mantelpieces had been removed, the Tuohys found elaborate period replacements.

The New York Times / Robert Lewis

Hoboken Still Brownstone Haven





Continued From Page C1

many of the finer renovated houses are selling for substantially more than $100,000, although there are still bargains to be had.

Mr. and Mrs. Tuohy add that if they had the opportunity now, they would not move back to New York. "You don't go downtown in Hoboken that you haven't spoken to 10 people," Mrs. Tuohy said. "It's such a nice warm feeling."

Miss Palmer and Mr. Nemanic paid only $32,000 for their house at 613 Bloomfield Street because the building was in such poor condition. Their yellow brick-front Victorian, built in 1850, was a rooming house; the words they use to describe it include "disgusting" and "repulsive." But the marble fireplaces were intact, albeit painted over, and the delicate scrollwork detail around the parlor ceilings was missing in only a few spots. They decided to keep the top two floors for themselves and rent out two downstairs apartments. When their renovation was done, it had cost $20,000; a similar job today would be about $35,000.

"We were living in Washington Heights and we liked that neighborhood," said Mr. Nemanic, a sculptor, "but when we came over here and saw what you could get we decided to buy."

"During the first six months we kept saying, 'Why did we ever leave our apartment?'" added Miss Palmer, a supervisor with the New York State Department of Education. "We went that long without a kitchen, and you had to walk between the gaps in the floor to get through the bathroom."

They had all the plumbing and electrical wiring replaced. New bathrooms and kitchens needed to be installed. The basement had to be shoveled out; someone had been keeping chickens.

Miss Palmer removed the paint from the mantels and Mr. Nemanic stripped the curving mahogany banister. They scoured junk shops and came up with a huge bank of hardwood cabinets with glass doors that had been in the laundry of an old mansion. The cabinets, which sold for $250, are now used for kitchen storage, linens in the bathroom and in the kitchen of one of the downstairs apartments.

Hexagonal terra-cotta tiles were used both for the bathroom floor and the counter and backsplash in the kitchen. Miss Palmer also saved the cost of plastering and painting the parlor walls by covering them with flowered cotton fabric that she bought on Canal Street in Manhattan for 99 cents a yard. The antique settees and a number of other pieces throughout the house come under the category of found objects.

"I didn't especially like Victoriana," Miss Palmer said, "but when I was going to college I used to find pieces on the street all the time. I'd see it and grab it. Now I really like it."

That's what Mr. and Mrs. Groux say about their house, a brownstone on upper Bloomfield Street that they purchased several months ago. Over the 35 years of their marriage they had generally chosen modern furniture, more concerned with the serviceability needed in a home with nine children than in period detail. Their new house lacks the plasterwork and mantels featured in many other Hoboken renovations, but a lovely banister and a hallway pier mirror have stimulated their interest in restoration. They hope eventually to add stained-glass windows.

The Grouxs are part of a new breed

Continued From Page C1

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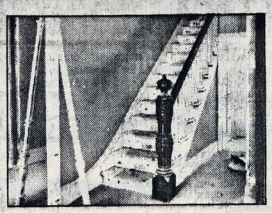
The Grouxs are part of a new breed of newcomers to Hoboken. While many of the renovators have come from New York to buy their first home, Robert Groux, a vice president with the RCA Corporation, says this may well be his last. Mrs. Groux came east from their six-bedroom suburban colonial in St. Louis to look for a house after her husband was transferred, armed with his dream of "a condominium with a commuter railroad on one side and a golf course on the other."

When his wife came home and announced that they were moving to Hoboken, Mr. Groux said, "You're out of your head." Then he saw the house. "It's got quite a lot of appeal," Mr. Groux said. "So does the area. And the commuter bus puts me about 15 minutes away from the office. It really turned out to be ideal."

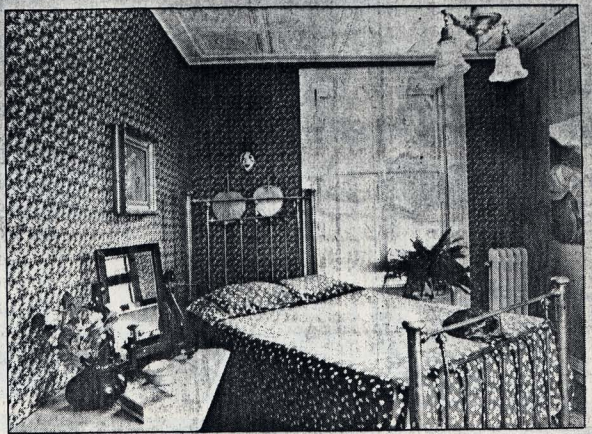
"So," he added, "I gave up the golf course."







Above, staircase in Miss Palmer and Mr. Nemanic's house. Right, work under way in the Grouxes' recently purchased brownstone.



The New York Times / Robert Levin

Jeanine Palmer and Todd Nemanic, above right, on their steps. Kitchen, above left, was built into a niche. Bedroom, left, is decorated in a flowery print.

FEATURING
MISTER SNITCH
HE'S HERE
HE'S THERE
HE'S EVERY-WHERE

Established 1957

HOBOKEN PICTORIAL

9,200 CONTROLLED CIRCULATION IN THE CITY OF HOBOKEN

VOLUME 24 - No. 27 THURSDAY, JULY 9, 1981 TEN CENTS

Waterfront key to future Cappiello tells citizens

Mayor Steve Cappiello, recently in being sworn into office for his fourth term, looked to the years ahead as his most challenging years in government. Developing interest in the waterfront is the key to the city's progress, he added.

Calling for the people of the city to close ranks and join him for the city's

continued march forward,

the mayor, an active member of the North Hudson Council of Mayors, said further that a regional planning process must be a part of the area's struggle for survival.

Cappiello said, "I have found in my years as a councilman and as a mayor that government lacks a planning process. This constitutes running government by crisis." Cappiello said, and began to elaborate on how the federal budget cuts inflation and the rising cost of municipal government will force more planning.

He warned that with economic problems forcing a reduction in service, that the people of North Hudson communities must be "compassionate" about their mutual problems.

Cappiello called on the city's unions to aid in the current crisis facing Hoboken--the garbage strike. However, he did not specify exactly what help he was looking for.

Sworn in besides Cappiello were Councilman-at-large Helen Macri, Thomas Kennedy and Robert A. Ranieri, with the oath of office administered by City Clerk Anthony J. Amorus.

In the meeting that followed the ceremony, Water Cramer was sworn in for another term as City Council president.

Among those in a chamber filled with local residents and political figures including acting Gov. Christopher Jackman, Rep. Frank Guarini, Union City Mayor William V. Musto and Union City Board of Education President John J. Powers.



SWORN IN - City Clerk Anthony Amaruso swears in Mayor Steve Cappiello for another term as the mayor's wife, Dorothy holds the Bible. Photo by Bernie Feddersen.



SWEARING IN CEREMONIES took place at City Hall last Wednesday. City Clerk Anthony Amaruso, second from right, swears in council members Thomas Kennedy, Helen Macri, at left, and Robert Ranieri at right. Photo by Bernie Feddersen.

Grand Opening Of Pharmacy



GRAND OPENING of K-C-L Pharmacy, 601 Washington st., took place last week. Mayor Steve Cappiello congratulates and extends best wishes for success to owner Kim S. Leong, center, as Charles DeFazio Jr. of the Hoboken Lions Club, extends his best wishes also. Photo by Bernie Feddersen.

"It'll be the Village West," says Hoboken woman

By Randolph Diamond

Marisella cook thinks the renaissance is the greatest thing that has ever happened to Hoboken. And the worst thing, too.

On one hand, the 39-year-old native of the Dominican Republican admits she wouldn't be in business running a successful antique-clothing store if it wasn't for the renaissance and the New Yorkers who have moved to Hoboken.

But on other hand, Ms. Cook says, countless natives of Hoboken are being driven out of the city by the skyrocketing rents caused by the New Yorkers moving in.

"Hoboken is losing the ethnic flavor that makes it such an attractive place for the New Yorkers to come to," she says. 'In five to 10 years, this is going to be Greenwich Village West. Without any doubt."

It was a year ago that Ms. Cook, who has been a resident of Hoboken since age five, decided to go into business for herself after countless years of working in a number of woman's clothing specialty stores.

With just enough money to pay the first month's rent and utility bills and her own collection of antique dresses that she had been collecting since she was little, Ms. Cook decided to take the gamble.

"On my first day, I got my rent money and utility money back," she said. "The business has been very successful since then. I figured I had to take the gamble because if I didn't, one of the residents moving to Hoboken from New York would instead. I felt there was a market out there."

Ms. cook says 90 percent of her business at her Second Performance Store on Washington Street comes from the New Yorkers.

"If it wasn't for them, I wouldn't be in business," she says.

Ms. cook said the New Yorkers, have been attracted to Hoboken because it's only 10 minutes away from Manhattan and the rents are lower.

"The New Yorkers can find a two-bedroom apartment in a brownstone here for $800 a month, which they think is great when they figure they are paying $1000 in Manhattan for a small apartment," Ms. Cook says.

But unfortunately for the average native Hobokenite, Ms. Cook says, that $800 apartment is beyond their budget.

"That apartment could have been renting for $200 the month before," says Ms. Cook. "Apartments in Hoboken have been traditionally underpriced. But now homeowners are realizing that they can get more money."

Causing the increase in rents, Ms. Cook says, is the fantastic increase in the price of houses.

"Brownstones that sold for $20,000 seven years ago are now going for $180,000," she says. "The older ethnic families who have lived in Hoboken all their lifes are selling off their homes because they felt it's too good a deal to pass up."

But while the older ethnic families had often "paid their mortgage 10 times over," Ms. Cook said the New Yorkers who buy the houses at $180,000 have to raise their rents drastically to meet their expenses.

"It's just a real shame that the people who stuck by Hoboken in the 60s and 70s when a lot of people were moving out are being hurt by this renaissance," she said. "It makes me very sad."

Ms. Cook said she is not always pleased by the attitude of some of the New Yorkers.

"On the day I opened, a woman who moved from New York to Hoboken came in here and said to me, 'This is such a nice store. I can tell you're not from Hoboken.' "

Ms. Cook said she is insulted by the assumption of some transplanted New Yorkers that native Hobokenites are just uneducated longshoremen, as was suggested by the film "On The Waterfront."

As the Hoboken renaissance continues, Ms. Cook says more and more specialty stores like hers will open. But unfortunately, she says, the ma-and-pa type of store will also start being displaced like the residents.

And as the trend continues, she says, even the politicians will be replaced.

"If the politicians don't wake up and realize what's going on, then one day they're going to wake up get up and find out that there's someone from New York running City Hall," she says.

Realtors threaten lawsuit on Hoboken rent rules

J.S 7/15/81

Members of the Hoboken Board of Realtors will join with the Hoboken Property Owners Association to challenge the city's revised rent leveling ordinance if it is enacted by the city council as expected tonight.

Ray Fiore, president of the Hoboken Board of Realtors, a sales group that shares listings on property, said today that legal redress in the courts seems to be the only action that the realtors can take to stop "the disastrous effects" of the revised ordinance.

"The council seems bent on enacting the revised ordinance," said Fiore "There doesn't seem to be anything we can do to change their mind." A representative of the Property Owners Association said last month that the group would challenge the constitutionality of the ordinance in court.

Fiore, using essentially the same arguments as the Property Owners Association, said the two

See REALTORS—Page 20.

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A number of increases ... granted by the board last year doubled tenants' rents, prompting a revision of the rent control ordinance.

make a reasonable return on property while giving the tenants greater protection.



Protest in vain

JS 7/15/81

David Axlerod, at the microphone, and Nellie Negron, leaders in HOT, — Hoboken Organized Tenants — address the crowd outside city hall to protest a proposed rent decontrol ordinance. The ordinance, however, was adopted by the City Council six to one. (Story on Page 7.)

A young man brought up the point that the 25% raise in rent could double in one year if a te-

by police and was escorted out of the council chambers. In the background all that could be

Realtors rap rent leveling law

Continued from Page One.

key provisions of the revised ordinance — a 25 percent limit on hardship rent increases and a 13-month ban on such increases for new landlords with five or more units — would have the effect of seriously curtailing the rehabilitation going on in Hoboken.

Fiore said not only would the two hardship clauses stop landlords from upgrading their properties but would also lead to the abandonment of buildings because landlords wouldn't be able to make an adequate return on their investment.

The current rent leveling ordinance allows a landlord to file for a hardship rent increase with no limit on the amount of the increase if the landlord can show he is not making an 11½% return on the investment.

The city's rent leveling board approves or disapproves a hardship increase.

A number of increases granted by the board last year doubled tenants' rents, prompting a revision of the rent control ordinance.

As a giveback to the landlords, the revised ordinance also contains a clause which will allow a landlord to raise the rent on a vacant apartment 25 percent. The current rent leveling ordinance permits a 7½ percent increase when an apartment becomes vacant. The clause in the rent leveling ordinance that allows landlords to raise rents 7½ percent a year will stay in force.

The giveback has irked tenants' groups who will hold a rally at 6 tonight before the 7 p.m. city council meeting in hopes of influencing the city council to cut the 25 percent decontrol clause.

City Council President Walter Cramer has maintained that the council would enact the three proposed changes despite what the landlords or tenants say at tonight's meeting.

Cramer has defined the revised ordinance numerous times in the last month saying that it still allows a landlord to make a reasonable return on property while giving the tenants greater protection.



Protest in vain

JJ 7/15/81

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5.5
11/5/81

to the ordinance

town's Crime Prevention Bureau, course offered by the University

Picture on Page 3.

aide to the mayor and head of the

was my life's goal," Caliguiro, who has served as confidential

"Becoming a police officer

Anthony M. DeFino.

held in the office of Mayor

the town appointed at ceremonies

police officers and three firemen

Caliguiro was one of four new

he finally realized that goal.

Yesterday, some 18 years later,

he wanted to be a policeman.

New York wrote a report on why

old Michael Caliguiro of West

In the seventh grade, 12-year-

what he wanted to be.

He knew a long time ago

New cop waited 18 years for job

the Civil Service examination, his name was preceded on the list by a number of veterans and he did not get appointed before that list expired.

On the next examination, he and Oscar Fernandez, also appointed to the force yesterday, scored highest before veterans status points were added. But this time the list didn't expire before their names came up.

Fernandez, Thomas Quintera and Caliguiro have all served as town auxiliary policemen.

Caliguiro is a graduate of St. Peter's College where he earned a degree in sociology. He also attended the crime prevention course offered by the University

Members of

Although hoping their first album of mostly original songs by Marty takes off, both, are realistic enough to know the odds are against them. However, they

Rotella Sr. Angie and Marty play the flute, piano, saxaphone and percussion because their father insisted they learn to play instruments.

"old-timers," whose music business goes

training started almost at birth because of their father, Julius

New York-

THE JERSEY JOURNAL, THURSDAY, JULY 16, 1981 7n

Decontrol passes as tempers rise

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At one point during the rally, David Axlerod, a leader in the group, commented, "There is a conspiracy in Hoboken to displace the minorities and the poor. This may be exemplified tonight, if the council votes for the decontrol ordinance."

With the sun fading and the cool breeze blowing, the rally remained orderly, until the participants attended the meeting.

Individuals from the public were given five minutes each to present their cases to the council. Council president Walter Cramer had his hands full trying to keep the speakers within the time limit and the crowd quiet.

The general outcry of the tenant protesters was that the new ordinance would not be effective because Hoboken already doesn't enforce the rental laws and landlords don't inform the tenants of their rights.

The main complaint was that the 25% increase in rent for vacant apartments would skyrocket housing costs in Hoboken.

A young man brought up the point that the 25% raise in rent could double in one year if a tenant moves out and another tenant moves in.

The idea that the landlords were bringing out, despite hissing from the audience, was that of free enterprise.

In defense of the landlords, Cramer said, "the increase would help landlords, with a vacancy who have had one tenant for many years at a very low rent."

After several hours a man approached the council and stated "if the council votes to pass the ordinance, it will choke the poor and fill the pockets of the rich."

He then accused the council members of getting part of the money that will be involved in the rent increases.

At that time the council members became enraged and the tenant protesters went wild. The man had the microphone physically taken out of his hand by police and was escorted out of the council chambers. In the background all that could be heard were shouts of "Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Speech."

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approved

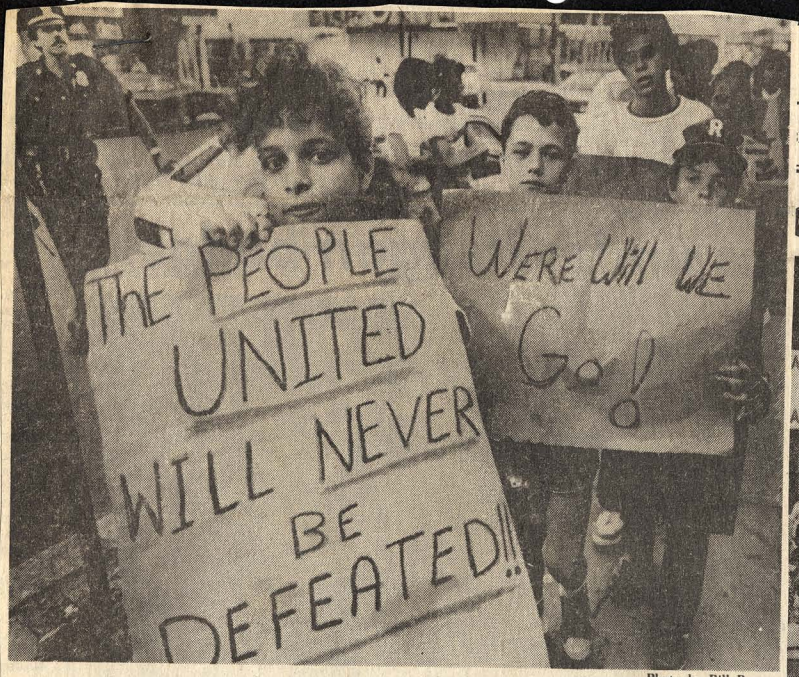


Photo by Bill Bayer

NEARLY 350 RESIDENTS paraded outside the Hoboken City Council chambers last night to protest the vacancy decontrol rent ordinance which was ultimately approved last night. Story on Page 3.

in property which is considered to be at 6 percent above the maximum passbook deposit savings account interest rate available in the City of Hoboken.

• Provides for pass-alongs for tax increases and capital improvements.

See RENT, Page 9

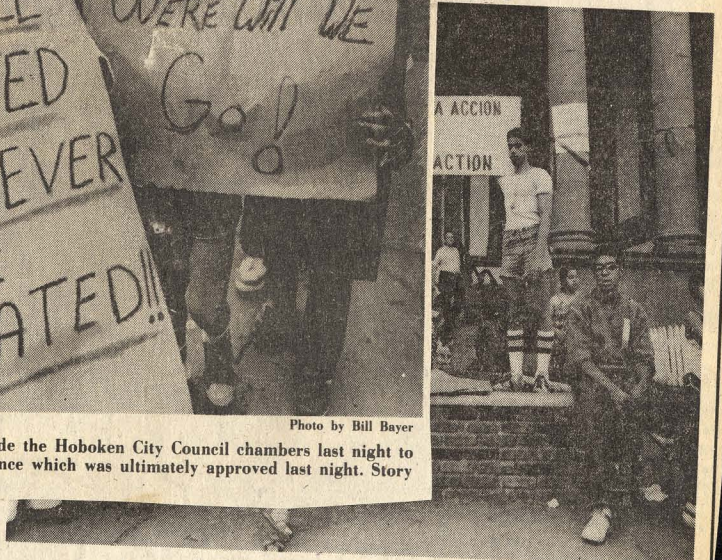


Photo by Bill Bayer

INDIVIDUALS AND REPRESENTATIVES of civic groups gather outside Hoboken City Hall last night to protest the passage of a much-criticized rent ordinance.

Hoboken vacancy decontrol- approved

350 angry opponents jeer City Council's 6 to 1 vote

By WILFREDO FERNANDEZ
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—Amid jeers from an irate group of about 350 city residents, the City Council voted last night in favor of the controversial vacancy decontrol rent ordinance.

The council voted 6-1 with the lone dissenting vote cast by Councilman Nunzio Malfetti. Councilman E. Norman Wilson was absent from the session.

The three-hour council meeting was disrupted frequently by shouts from the audience. One man, Thomas Soper of 422 Adams St., was hustled by policemen from the meeting place, the Municipal Court chambers, after he accused the council of voting for the ordinance "because you (the council) are part of its profits."

Representatives from the Hoboken Organized Tenants Association, Por La Gente, CUNA and the League of Hoboken Homeowners picketed the meeting as promised.

While the council caucused, residents gathered in front of the building chanting against the ordinance. More than 9,000 signatures were presented on petitions protesting the ordinance to the City Council.

The ordinance affects the 7,000 of the city's 15,000 housing units which are not state or federally regulated.

The ordinance:

• Calls for a "fair" return on the equity investment in property which is considered to be at 6 percent above the maximum passbook deposit savings account interest rate available in the City of Hoboken.

• Provides for pass-alongs for tax increases and capital improvements.

See RENT, Page 9



Photo by Bill Bayer

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THE JERSEY JOURNAL, FRIDAY, JULY 24 ,1981

Cappiello to sign rent law, name monitor task force

Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello today said he will sign the revised rent leveling ordinance even though he has reservations on how it will work for the betterment of the community.

Cappiello said he will appoint a task force to monitor the rent leveling ordinance over the next year to make sure landlords don't abuse the measure and make Hoboken a ghost town.

"There are certain changes in the rent leveling ordinance that I like and some I don't like," Cappiello said. "But on the whole, and since the City Council voted in favor of the ordinance, I think we can live with it for a year. I'm certainly going to watch it operate very closely."

The revised ordinance allows landlords to raise rents on vacant apartments by 25 percent, authorizes landlords to apply for a hardship increase if their ownership is longer than 13 months, and requires registration of all apartments with the city clerk, excluding owner-occupied one-family units.

The mayor said he likes the registration revision because the city will be in a position to monitor rent increases in the future and protect tenants from abuse by landlords.

Under the new arrangement, landlords will be required to supply the city with the name or names of tenants, the amount of rent being paid, the last time the rent was increased and the amount assessed.

Failure to register with the city clerk brings a fine of $100 but not more than $500, the mayor said.

On the decontrol amendment, Cappiello said he's afraid landlords might try to force tenants out so they can be allowed to raise the rent.

He said he expects a legal fight from local realtors — who fought to have unlimited raises — but that the city is prepared to battle in the courts.

"There are some unscrupulous landlords in town who would stoop so low as to evict tenants just to raise the rents," Cappiello said. "But we won't let that happen. We are also aware that the city should offer investors an incentive for their money. So, we'll be monitoring the situation very carefully."

There had been public objection to the decontrol section of the ordinance. Community groups argued the measure would give landlords a financial incentive to evict tenants.

Locally — THE JERSEY JOURNAL, MONDAY, JULY 20, 1981

Mayor may hire image maker

Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello said today he is seriously considering hiring the city's laid-off recreation coordinator Maurice Fitzgibbons as a special aide in charge of public relations for the city.

Cappiello said he feels the city needs someone to promote it in a positive light as well as to deal with reporters when city officials are busy. Cappiello said Fitzgibbons could also act as a trouble-shooter looking at how to improve management in the various departments in Hoboken.

The mayor said he would make a formal decision later this week on whether to hire Fitzgibbons or not. He said he had not yet determined what Fitzgibbons salary level would be if he was hired.

Fitzgibbons has worked for a number of New York public relations firms and has been very active in beauty pageant promotion.

When he left his job with the city last August after his funding ran out he was quoted as saying that he "wouldn't work for the city again if he was offered a million dollars."

Fitzgibbons also had strong words of attack for the mayor at the time. But in the last few months Fitzgibbons and the mayor have been seen together socially on a number of occasions and last month Fitzgibbons won election as a committeeman in the Third Ward, the mayor's home ward. Fitzgibbons was also recently appointed to the city recreation commission.

Fitzgibbons confirmed he had talked to the mayor about the job but said he was told by Cappiello that it would just entail public relations.

Asked to explain his change of heart about working for the city, Fitzgibbons said "it was another job that was being offered to me, not one in recreation."

Cappiello's considered hiring of Fitzgibbons comes at the time when Hoboken's tax rate is going up 20 percent and Business Administrator Edwin Chius says a number of employees may have to be laid off in the fall because of the city's financial problems.

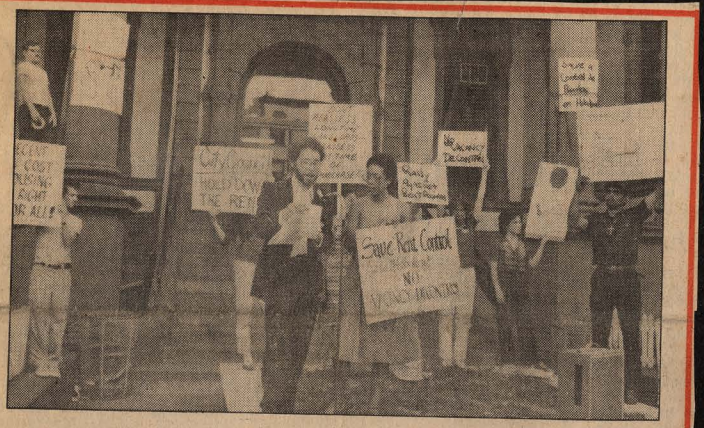
Cappiello, however, said he felt strongly that someone was needed to enhance the city's image to the outside world. He said when a positive image is presented of Hoboken, the city stands more chance of getting federal grants as well as attracting industry to the city.

Cappiello's consideration of the speical aide's job came under strong attac
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Protest in vain

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The Dispatch, Hudson/Bergen Counties, N.J., Sat

Peace for some victi

"El Senor es mi Pastor, y no necessita nada mas..."

—from the 23rd Psalm



By BILL ALPERT

never made it to the window. Their bodies were found the following day in the rubble.

The tenement's landlords had been cited in January for violating the state regulation that requires smoke detectors

crew stood by filming. Both of the small caskets fit into the hearse.

Mourners then got into their cars and followed as the hearse drove Modesto and Javier away.

THE CASKET C is carried from yesterday.

Fire deaths unite religious le

HOBOKEN—Religious leaders from several local congregations will lead a prayer service tomorrow at the site of the tenement fire that took the lives of two children here Monday night.

"We will be praying for the children who died and for those still in the hospital," said Sister Norberta, who teaches at St. Francis School. "We also want to raise peoples' consciousnesses about the dangers of these fires throughout the winter."

The service is scheduled to take place at 5 p.m. in front of the burned out building at 67 Park Ave. Since the fire, the tenement has been demolished down to the third floor.

Sister Norberta said participants would include: Rabbi Mark Urkowitz of the Hoboken Jewish Center; Rev. Paul Haggerdon of St. Matthew's Trinity Church; Rev. Barbara Cathay of First Presbyterian Church of Hoboken; Rev. Joseph Madden of St. Joseph's Church; Rev. Jeffery Curtis of Holy Innocents Church; and Re Bertin of St. Francis. A chorus from the Mustard See School will sing.

"We'd like city officials to hear our prayers, too," Sister Norberta said. "They now say that they are too

demand

board of education president became official yesterday,

By CHUCK SUTTON
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—A local Puerto Rican activist group announced yesterday a petition drive for a state and federal investigation of the fires that "have destroyed the apartments, the security and the lives of Hispanics."

Hoboken Union of Tenants, sponsored by Citizens United in New Action, has also called a meeting for 5 p.m. Sunday at 918 Willow St. to choose a course of action for fighting arson and landlord abuse.

"HUT demands in the name of our community that the local administration in conjunction with the Hudson County prosecutor, the attorney general of New Jersey, and the federal Department of Justice intitiate a full investigation concerning the tragic fires," Juan Garcia, spokesman for HUT, said yesterday.

Earlier this week Rep. Frank J. Guarini, D-Hudson, and Mayor Steve Cappiello called on state Attorney General James R. Zazzali and U.S. Attorney William Robertson to launch an investigation "to deter perhaps sinister forces involved in these fatal fires."

HUT said it wants the whole arson problem investigated, not just the most recent fires.

"Although we agree whoever did this most recent act of arson should receive the worst punishment possible, we can not allow them (city officials) to try and fool us into focusing all our anger against just this criminal, and forget about those who have been burning us out all along," Garcia said.

Garcia said the arson afflicting the city's Hispanics is compounded by the renaissance trend in the city.

"Besides the physical and mental suffering afflicting the victims of the last two fires, it is also more than 25 families added to the more than 2500 which have been displaced by the renaissance in the last few years," Garcia said.

Peace for some victims, but...

"El Senor es mi Pastor, y no necessita nada mas..."

—from the 23rd Psalm

By BILL ALPERT
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—Carmen Galicia did not know about the funeral of her two sons.

Although the father of Modesto Echevarria Jr., 7, and Javier Rosa, 2, was there yesterday to mourn the victims of Monday night's tenement fire in Hoboken, their mother remains in fair condition in the burn unit of St. Barnabas Medical Center in Livingston along with their 9-year-old sister Raralenda. She does not know that her sons are dead.

The funeral service was brief. Modesto E. Cordero, the boys' father, stood in front of the small white caskets with about a dozen neighbors and relatives and recited the 23rd Psalm in Spanish, "El Senor es mi Pastor, y no necessita nada mas ..."

Cordero trembled, looking weak and haggard after the death of his sons. In the faint yellow light of the funeral chapel, the minister led a prayer for the two boys who died in their burning apartment at 67 Park Ave. after flames raced up the building's five floors.

Residents said they pulled fire alarms, but the bells did not ring. One resident, Feliciano Santos, said he did not know there was a fire until the flames were buckling in his apartment door.

Carmen Galicia jumped to the ground with her daughter from their third-story bathroom window. Modesto and Javier never made it to the window. Their bodies were found the following day in the rubble.

The tenement's landlords had been cited in January for violating the state regulation that requires smoke detectors in multiple dwellings.

State housing inspectors said they were too understaffed to take action after the landlords did not comply. They added that they could fine the landlords $100.

The City Council considered an ordinance requiring smoke detectors in all multi-family dwellings back in April, but tabled it after landlords complained that it would be too expensive.

The funeral was interrupted periodically by the hacking coughs of neighbors still suffering from smoke inhalation. After the prayers, the boys' father walked up to the small caskets and leaned on the lids, weeping.

Cordero said he had been in the hospital twice, overcome by grief, since his sons died. The father, who was separated from the family, was at work at the time of the fire.

He had not yet told the boys' mother about their death, for fear that it would set back her recovery from her own burns. She still keeps asking for the boys, he said.

"Could we have eight men as pallbearers?" the funeral director asked. Six men came up and the director pulled in two other men standing outside the chapel. It took only four men to lift each of the 4-foot-long caskets.

The men maneuvered the caskets down the steps and into the hearse, as a TV crew stood by filming. Both of the small caskets fit into the hearse.

Mourners then got into their cars and followed as the hearse drove Modesto and Javier away.

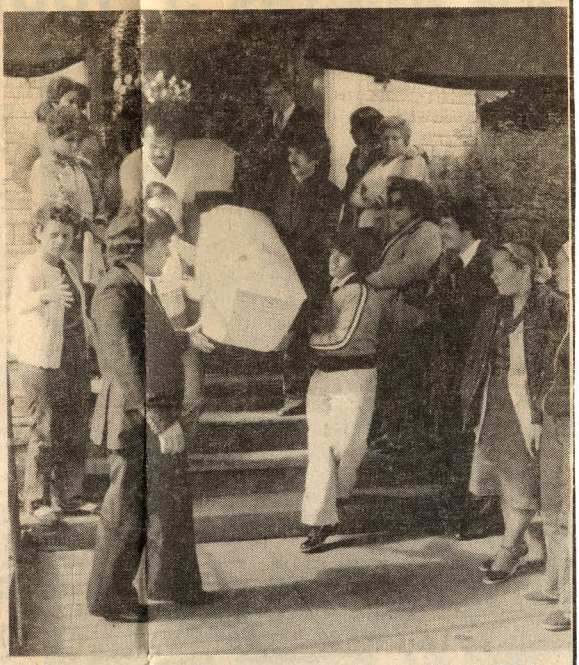


Photo by Bill Bayer

THE CASKET CONTAINING a young victim of the Hoboken fire is carried from Las Americas Funeral Home in Jersey City yesterday.

Fire deaths unite religious leaders in prayer

HOBOKEN—Religious leaders from several local congregations will lead a prayer service tomorrow at the site of the tenement fire that took the lives of two children here Monday night.

"We will be praying for the children who died and for those still in the hospital," said Sister Norberta, who teaches at St. Francis School. "We also want to raise peoples' consciousnesses about the dangers of these fires throughout the winter."

The service is scheduled to take place at 5 p.m. in front of the burned out building at 67 Park Ave. Since the fire, the tenement has been demolished down to the third floor.

Sister Norberta said participants would include: Rabbi Mark Urkowitz of the Hoboken Jewish Center; Rev. Paul Haggerdon of St. Matthew's Trinity Church; Rev. Barbara Cathay of First Presbyterian Church of Hoboken; Rev. Joseph Madden of St. Joseph's Church; Rev. Jeffery Curtis of Holy Innocents Church; and Rev. Bertin of St. Francis. A chorus from the Mustard Seed School will sing.

"We'd like city officials to hear our prayers, too," Sister Norberta said. "They now say that they are too overworked and understaffed to enforce fire ordinances. A fire like this is a horrible way to realize that we're understaffed.

"This is a tragic example of the way ordinances are ignored," she continued. "We would like the city to show the sincerity of its words with some action."

Sister Norberta said several congregations were encouraging their members to donate housewares for the fire's victims. She asked that anyone interested in coordinating this effort call the Jersey City chapter of the Red Cross. **—Bill Alpert**

Puerto Rican group demands arson probe

By CHUCK SUTTON
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—A local Puerto Rican activist group announced yesterday a petition drive for a state and federal investigation of the fires that "have destroyed the apartments, the security and the lives of Hispanics."

Hoboken Union of Tenants, sponsored by Citizens United in New Action, has also called a meeting for 5 p.m. Sunday at 918 Willow St. to choose a course of action for fighting arson and landlord abuse.

"HUT demands in the name of our community that the local administration in conjunction with the Hudson County prosecutor, the attorney general of New Jersey, and the federal Department of Justice intitiate a full investigation concerning the tragic fires," Juan Garcia, spokesman for HUT, said yesterday.

Earlier this week Rep. Frank J. Guarini, D-Hudson, and Mayor Steve Cappiello called on state Attorney General James R. Zazzali and U.S. Attorney William Robertson to launch an investigation "to deter perhaps sinister forces involved in these fatal fires."

HUT said it wants the whole arson problem investigated, not just the most recent fires.

"Although we agree whoever did this most recent act of arson should receive the worst punishment possible, we can not allow them (city officials) to try and fool us into focusing all our anger against just this criminal, and forget about those who have been burning us out all along," Garcia said.

Garcia said the arson afflicting the city's Hispanics is compounded by the renaissance trend in the city.

"Besides the physical and mental suffering afflicting the victims of the last two fires, it is also more than 25 families added to the more than 2500 which have been displaced by the renaissance in the last few years," Garcia said.

Sunday News 10/25/87

Hoboken fire kills 11

2 families victims; blaze believed set



F.N. KINNEY DAILY NEWS

Firemen remove body from tenement at 12th and Washington Sts., Hoboken.

By DON SINGLETON

Eleven persons, all members of two families, were killed yesterday when a predawn fire swept through a five-story tenement on the main street of Hoboken, N.J. Police called the fire suspicious.

One top Hoboken official told the Daily News that the owner of the building had been cited several months ago for a failure to install smoke detectors in the eight apartments. Although the building was due for reinspection, the detectors had not been installed as of yesterday, the official said.

"There also were several instances in recent months when fire bombs were thrown into that building," said Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello. "There is no question that this fire was suspicious."

The blaze, at 1200 Washington St., was reported at 4:12 a.m. by a man who was walking his dog. When firemen arrived from a firehouse less than two blocks away, the building was engulfed in flames. A second alarm was put out at 4:14 a.m. and the third alarm at 4:17.

Witnesses told police they saw someone run from the building moments earlier, jump into a car and say, "Let's get out of here." One police source said a "possible suspect" had been identified, and a man was being sought for questioning.

Firemen using aerial ladders snatched several trapped people from one top-floor apartment, but the rescuers were driven back as flames broke through and roared from the windows.

Hours later, firemen found the bodies of the victims huddled near the windows of the front apartments. One child was found in his bed, where he apparently was overcome by smoke as he slept. Several other children lay just beneath the bedroom window.

The dead, all found in front apartments on the fourth and fifth floors, were identified as Edwin Mercado, 39, Anna Mercado, 35, Denisse Mercado, 12, Ruth Mercado, 13, Walter Mercado, 10, Kenny Mercado, 9, and Manuel Vega, 74, identified as Mrs. Mercado's father, all found in apartment 8 on the fifth floor, and Reneida Rios, 43, Francisco Rios, 20, Maribel Rios, 19, and Jesus Rios 13, all found in apartment 6 on the fourth floor.

A man identified as Robert Burzichelli, 22, and a woman identified as Lauren Tarr, 19, were taken to St. Mary Hospital where they were reported in fair condition. ■

Hoboken resident speaks out on vacancy decontrol

7/24/81

Orlando Jose Hernandez and Gerri Wasserman of Hoboken, in an open letter to the city council of Hoboken on the issue of vacancy control. said in part:

I wish to speak on the issue of vacancy decontrol as a homeowner and as a Puerto Rican. I am a professor at The City University of New York and a writer. My wife is Jewish, and a potter. I speak for the two of us, and I dare say, for many other people, among them homeowners who share our concern.

Just over a year ago we bought a house in this town and rent out a one-floor apartment for $220 a month. This includes all utilities as well as full access to the yard and laundry facilities. Although our debts are substantial, from this recent investment, we believe the above arrangement is fair to both tenant and owner. We are eager to restore the house we live in and are doing so, but without inflating rents. That is without abusing legitimate rights of Hoboken residents to fair prices and without denying them a share of this community's prosperity. We came to Hoboken because we were literally forced out of our loft in Manhattan because of inflationary rents and insanity that

THURSDAY, JULY 24, 1981

HOBOKEN PICTORIAL

has consumed the real estate market in New York. Is it possible they have forgotten where they came from? Are they eager to enter a "dog-eat-dog" situation and force a similar predicament on tentants here? We strongly support vacancy control.

It seems evident the hardship clause which landlords can invoke in case of severe cost increases, more than adequately protects their stakes and interests. There is also an economic argument for retaining vacancy control. It is the people who have stayed behind, as Mayor Cappiello pointed out, who have made this community viable. It is the low middle-class and working people who have constituted the backbone of Hoboken and prevented it from becoming an urban slum. It was their lives and their neighborhoods that were at stake and they defended those neighborhoods better than any prosperous incoming population might. The urban story of the '60s and '70s is all too familiar. Panic-stricken upper middle class and well-to-do families just abandoned their neighborhoods instead of fighting back the problems that the American cities were facing then. Their mobility was the single most destablizing factor. These are the people to whom you will be entrusting the future of Hoboken should you go along with vacancy decontrol. These would be the only people that could afford the prices that the narrow-interested landowners want to impose. And it will certainly create a very unstable and inflationary situation, resulting not just in raises of rent, but of taxes and city services as well. We believe that entrusting the future of Hoboken to these people alone would be sheer folly.

There is more to this issue than economics of prosperity. There are the basic needs of the elderly and of those people with fixed incomes, and their right to live in the neighborhoods where they were brought up. I am referring to the right of my people, the Puerto Rican people, and other poor people, to share, even if minimally, in the well being of this community. Already many of them are being displaced and this trend will become intolerable without basic rent controls.

We plead for wisdom more than for compassion Hoboken must be a town for all and not just for the rich.

J.J 7/30/81

Mayors to look at rent control plans Tuesday

The North Hudson Regional Council of Mayors will meet at 3:30 p.m. Tuesday in West New York Mayor Anthony DeFino's office to decide on four recommendations made by the Hudson County Chamber of Commerce on rent control. But two of the proposals made by the HCCC don't appear to interest the mayors at all.

The first is vacancy decontrol without limits, the other is uniform rent control with a limit of 7½ percent increases for all seven municipalities.

Union City Mayor William Musto, chairman of the mayor's council, said the chiefs of Secaucus, Hoboken, Union City, Weehawken, North Bergen, West New York and Guttenberg are in favor of uniformity in the rent control laws, but have reservations about the chamber's recommendations of vacancy decontrol and rent increases.

"The chamber's proposal for vacancy decontrol, which would allow landlords to raise rents without any limits when tenants vacate the premises, hasn't been received too well by the North Hudson Regional Council of Mayors," said Musto.

"They don't think it's a good idea to make it unlimited," he said. "However, that is one of the topics that will be discussed at length Tuesday. I know I'm giving the proposal careful consideration for my city."

The chamber also recommended a uniform rent control limit on increases of 7½ percent for all municipalities. Six communities currently allow rents to be raised by a landlord between 2½ and 5 percent. Hoboken is the exception. The rent control limit there is 7½ percent.

"Each community is different, and each has it's own problems," Musto said. "We're thinking in terms of uniformity, but at what percentage we don't know at this point."

The chamber also recommended an oil pass-along allowance to landlords to offset costs, and a streamlining of the present administrative procedures under rent control ordinances.

West New York Mayor Anthony DeFino pointed out that in his town, landlords receive fuel pass-along breaks when they appeal for it with the local Rent Control Board.

The streamlining of procedures also will be reviewed.

The mayors also expect to discuss uniformity on arcades and Sunday liquor sales.

Rent law will force hirings—but not now

Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello said today he's going to wait and see how well the city clerk handles the rent registrations required by the city's new rent-leveling ordinance before hiring additional manpower.

"We're gong to need more people, I don't doubt that," the mayor said. "But I don't want to rush into it until I see what's going on."

The city's new rent-leveling ordinance, passed by the city council two weeks ago, requires all landlords to register their apartment rents with the city clerk's office and then notify the city clerk every time they raise a rent.

Tenants, brokers targeting rent law

J.J 8/5/81

Hoboken's revised rent leveling ordinance may not become law until next week, but already it is under attack.

A real estate broker, who asked not to be identified confirmed today that his group was going ahead with a fund-raising effort to gather funds to challenge the ordinance in court.

Specifically, the real estate brokers are upset about the clauses which limit all hardship rent increases granted by the city's rent leveling board to 25 percent and another clause which bars such increases to new real estate owners.

Meanwhile, tenants groups say they will gather signatures of 25 percent of the city's registered voters to put on the ballot the question of whether citizens want repeal of the section of the new ordinance allowing a 25 rent increase when an apartment becomes vacant.

Hoboken officials question legality of rent petition

Continued from Page 1.

The act also states that if the required number of signatures is gathered within the 20-day period between the time a mayor signs an ordinance and the time it goes into law, the ordinance is invalid until the election. The mayor signed the new ordinance 20 days ago tomorrow.

Anthony Amoruso, Hoboken city clerk, noted that even if the law department were to hold the petitions valid and the required number of signatures were gathered by tomorrow it would mean the old ordinance would be in effect until the November elections.

Amoruso noted that such would wipe out the various tenant-protection clauses in the new rent leveling ordinance.

Among them, he said, are the 25-percent limit on harship rent increases and the ban on such increases for new property owners with five or more units.

Hoboken Councilman Robert Ranieri said the clause allowing landlords to raise rents 25 percent instead of the previous seven and a half percent when apartments become vacant is the only clause in the new ordinance that favors landlords.

"The tenants are stabbing themselves in their back," he said.

A spokesman for the tenants group said the tenants still planned to go ahead with their drive and would fight the city in court if necessary.

JERSEY JOURNAL, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, 1981

Hoboken tenants told it's all or nothing with city's rent law

By Randolph Diamond

Efforts by a tenants group to void a section of Hoboken's new rent leveling ordinance that allows landlords to raise apartment rents 25 percent when they become vacant are not legal, Hoboken City Law Director Lawrence Florio stated today. The tenants group vowed to press on anyway.

Florio said that according to the state's Faulkner Act, under which Hoboken's government operates, citizens are allowed to challenge only an entire ordinance — not just a portion of an ordinance.

"It's either all or nothing," said Florio.

The official said the tenants are collecting signatures on invalid petitions in their drive to put the clause on the ballot because they do not state on the petition that they want the whole ordinance repealed.

Thomas Calligy, Hoboken's assistant law director, agreed the tenants would have had to indicate they want the whole ordinance repealed on their petitions for them to be legal.

The Faulkner Act states that if citizens get 25 percent of the registered voters to sign a petition opposing a particular ordinance they can get the ordinance put on the ballot in the next municipal election.

See HOBOKEN — Page 16.

5/8/81

Hispanic group targets three Hoboken councilmen for recall

By Randolph Diamond

CUNA, the Hoboken Hispanic organization that said it would start a drive to recall Mayor Steve Cappiello and the councilmen who voted for the city's new rent leveling ordinance, has decided instead to concentrate on recalling three of the councilmen.

"We're not going to go after the mayor," said Juan Garcia, executive director of CUNA.

Related story on Page 2.

"We can be just as effective if we get rid of the councilmen who support him. If we have councilmen on the council representing the people, then the mayor will be powerless."

While refusing to name the ward councilmen who would be targeted, Garcia said they wouldn't be anti-administration Councilmen Nunzio Malfetti and E. Norman Wilson Jr.

That leaves First Ward Councilman Anthony Romano, Second Ward Councilman and City Council President Walter Cramer, Third Ward Councilman Sal Cemelli and Fourth Ward Councilman Louis Francone, all administration supporters, as targets of the recall drive.

"All we need is a 5-4 majority on the council," said Garcia. "Then the people of Hoboken will have true representation instead of the current situation — where the administration ward councilmen represent the landlords."

Garcia said CUNA will start the recall drive in the early fall.

CUNA would need to gather 25 percent of the city's registered voters within 20 days of the

See HISPANIC — Page 18.

5/8/81

Says tenants' battle only hurts their cause

If Hoboken's tenants are successful in their battle to eliminate a clause allowing landlords a 25 percent rent increase when apartments become vacant, then the city's whole revised rent leveling ordinance may be in trouble, Hoboken Councilman-at-large Robert Ranieri warned today.

"The tenants are stabbing themselves in the back," said Ranieri. "They would be much better off to wait and see what the effects of the ordinance are before trying to put on the ballot the question of whether the 25 percent vacancy increase clause should be eliminated from the ordinance."

Ranieri said the council passed the revised rent leveling ordinance to give tenants better protection from the skyrocketing rents in the city and said most of the measures in the ordinance are tenant-based.

Among them, he said are the clauses which have put a 25 percent limit on hardship rent increases as well as barring new owners with five or more units from applying for a hardship increase for 13 months.

The rent leveling ordinance allows a landlord to apply for a hardship increase if he can show he is not making a reasonable profit — defined as 11½ percent — on his investment. Prior to passage of the revised ordinance last month there were no limits on how high a hardship increase could go.

Rips Cappiello on riot

The head of a local Hispanic organization today accused Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello of trying to incite riots as a ploy to drive the Hispanic poor out of the city.

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4,500 sign petitions against rent control law

8/13/81 J.J 8/13/81 J.J Thurs

Continued from Page 1.

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Florio said the state's Faulkner Act, under which Hoboken's government operates, says that citizens can challenge an ordinance by putting the question on the ballot if they can get 25 percent of the city's registered voters in agreement, but it does not say that sections of an ordinance can be broken down and selectively challenged.

But, Hernandez says the coalition's lawyers disagree and will take legal action, if necessary, to force the city clerk to recognize their petitions.

See 4,500 SIGN — Page 22.

Landlords' new tenant blacklist: Wh

AN OVERWHELMING MAJORITY of tenants are not aware that a special organization has been created to provide landlords with information on whether you have been a troublemaker while a tenant elsewhere. The organization's purpose: to help landlords avoid tenants who make too many complaints, call in the press, bring lawsuits, or just become pests.



SYLVIA PORTER

If the service becomes widely available and accepted, an almost inevitable result will be that if you get into a fight with your landlord, you might have difficulty getting another lease.

If you find that the toilet doesn't flush and the landlord says it's your fault, it might seem wiser to keep quiet and pay to have it fixed yourself. Otherwise, you could find yourself on an official "Troublesome Tenant Table" ("TTT" is not a real name, but the substance of this report is real.)

On the surface at least, the TTT seems completely legal. It's in the same category as a credit bureau keeping tabs on your record of paying your bills. And the use of blacklists has a long history.

In the 19th century, lists were compiled of factory workers who joined unions or were troublemakers. Members of the information exchange could refuse to hire those named on the lists. Some groups of employers used "Yellow Dog" contracts under which workers promised never to join a union. If a worker joined one, he could be fired and blacklisted.

NEW LABOR LAWS ban such practices.

But there are no laws to prohibit the new tenant blacklist. "TTT" could be considered a consumer credit reporting program, if the landlords extend credit and do not require advance payment of rent.

Even if permissible under existing law, TTT well could be legally questioned because of our increasing recognition of threats to our privacy. And tenants injured by TTT could bring libel suits against the former landlord and TTT agencies if any statement in the reports could be proven to be false and malicious. The courts could award punitive damages.

But let's be realistic. Most tenants don't have the money to finance a major lawsuit. Lawyers may hesitate to take on a case of this type in the hope of being paid fees based on a most speculative recovery. A legislative ban on TTT could run into a constitutional barrier, not because of the issue of impairment of

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Garcia said that in the aftermath of any riot, the city Community Development Agency would build new housing to which none of the original tenants would ever return.

Garcia said the Hispanic community will not fall for Cappiello's ploy but will unite in recalling the mayor and pro-administration city councilmen who supported the recent revision in the city's recent leveling ordinance which allows an apartment's rent to be raised 25 percent when it becomes vacant.

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"The landlords will do whatever they want," said Garcia. "The administration doesn't care about poor people in the city at all."

Garcia said it is ironic that Cappiello was quoted as saying that something has to be done to help improve housing conditions for the poor, because the problems were created by Cappiello's administration.

"Whatever happened to the millions of federal dollars which the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development poured into Hoboken through the local Community Development Agency in order to provide better housing for the poor, who at that time were over 50 percent of Hoboken's population?" Garcia asked.

"That very same money was utilized to get them out of town and will continue to be used until every Hoboken tenant will be affected."

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See 4,500 SIGN — Page 22.

Landlords' new tenant blacklist: What can be done

Sunday N.Y. News 8/9/81

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ASSUMING YOU STILL believe TTT requires some supervision, there still are other options. A TTT agency could be required to supply tenants with full copies of all information furnished to TTT by any landlord, with the name of the person furnishing the information, the date, and any proof.

A TTT agency also could be required to supply the tenant with the name and address of anyone requesting or receiving data on the tenant. The requirements could become onerous enough to discourage TTT services. And if interstate activity were involved, even the Federal Trade Commission might become involved to bar supplying of information to an out-of-state landlord.

TTT is a service that can be good or bad, helpful or harmful, depending on how it is used. In an era of scarcity of space to rent in which to work or live, TTT is a phenomenon that virtually created itself. Now it's up to us to view it and use it wisely. ■

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See 4,500 SIGN — Page 22.

4,500 sign petitions against Hoboken's rent control law

J.J Florio 8/13/81

The emergency coalition to save rent control in Hoboken was scheduled to present petitions containing 4,500 signatures this morning to City Clerk Anthony Amoruso.

The move is designed to block the clause in the city's revised rent leveling ordinance which allows landlords to raise the rents on their apartments 25 percent when they become vacant from becoming law.

Orlando Hernandez, a spokesman for the coalition, said yesterday that the coalition's action should have the effect of placing the whole question on the ballot in November.

Lawrence Florio, Hoboken's law director, has maintained that the group's petitions aren't valid,

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Sunday NY Times 8/9/81

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SYLVIA PORTER

If the service becomes widely available and accepted, an almost inevitable result will be that if you get into a fight with your landlord, you might have difficulty getting another lease.

If you find that the toilet doesn't flush and the landlord says it's your fault, it might seem wiser to keep quiet and pay to have it fixed yourself. Otherwise, you could find yourself on an official "Troublesome Tenant Table" ("TTT" is not a real name, but the substance of this report is real.)

On the surface at least, the TTT seems completely legal. It's in the same category as a credit bureau keeping tabs on your record of paying your bills. And the use of blacklists has a long history.

In the 19th century, lists were compiled of factory workers who joined unions or were troublemakers. Members of the information exchange could refuse to hire those named on the lists. Some groups of employers used "Yellow Dog" contracts under which workers promised never to join a union. If a worker joined one, he could be fired and blacklisted.

NEW LABOR LAWS ban such practices.

But there are no laws to prohibit the new tenant blacklist. "TTT" could be considered a consumer credit reporting program, if the landlords extend credit and do not require advance payment of rent.

Even if permissible under existing law, TTT well could be legally questioned because of our increasing recognition of threats to our privacy. And tenants injured by TTT could bring libel suits against the former landlord and TTT agencies if any statement in the reports could be proven to be false and malicious. The courts could award punitive damages.

But let's be realistic. Most tenants don't have the money to finance a major lawsuit. Lawyers may hesitate to take on a case of this type in the hope of being paid fees based on a most speculative recovery. A legislative ban on TTT could run into a constitutional barrier, not because of the issue of impairment of freedom of contract involved in the 1908 decision, but because of First Amendment protection of freedom of expression. To prohibit exchange of truthful information presumably would raise at least an issue of violation of the First Amendment.

ASSUMING YOU STILL believe TTT requires some supervision, there still are other options. A TTT agency could be required to supply tenants with full copies of all information furnished to TTT by any landlord, with the name of the person furnishing the information, the date, and any proof.

A TTT agency also could be required to supply the tenant with the name and address of anyone requesting or receiving data on the tenant. The requirements could become onerous enough to discourage TTT services. And if interstate activity were involved, even the Federal Trade Commission might become involved to bar supplying of information to an out-of-state landlord.

TTT is a service that can be good or bad, helpful or harmful, depending on how it is used. In an era of scarcity of space to rent in which to work or live, TTT is a phenomenon that virtually created itself. Now it's up to us to view it and use it wisely. ■

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NORTH HUDSON HOBOKEN
FINAL EDITION

THE JERSEY

and Jersey Obs

Tonight: Showers, low in 60s.
Tomorrow: Showers, high in 70s.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER



Photo by Jeff Huntley

Sister Norberta, Hoboken tenants organizer, helps an elderly resident sign a petition calling for a referendum on the recently-passed vacancy decontrol ordinance.

Pushing for a referendum

PAGE THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 1981

Meeting to plan $100,000 program

An important meeting of the Neighborhood Preservation Program Steering Committee will be held at the field office, 141 Garden St., Hoboken, on Thursday evening, September 24, at 7 p.m. to evaluate this year's program and to meet the new NPP Coordinator, Ms. Nancy Gugliel...

The committee will discuss plans for next year's program. "We anticipate an operating budget of $100,000 from the State of New Jersey Department of Community Affairs to create housing programs and neighborhood services for the First Ward" states Ross London, Chairman of the NPP Committee.

The public is welcome to participate at the meeting. Sal Santaniello, Director of Housing and Neighborhood Preservation for the Community Development Agency will be present at the meeting.

THE FIRST PERSON TO SEE THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL IS THE LANDLORD

HOBOKEN PICTORIAL

NORTH HUDSON HOBOKEN
FINAL EDITION

THE JERSEY JOURNAL

and Jersey Observer

Tonight: Showers, low in 60s.
Tomorrow: Showers, high in 70s.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1981

115th Year — No. 110

20 CENTS
Home Delivery
90 cents weekly

State tells Weehawken it's illegal to guarantee bonds for poultry plant

The state Local Finance Board has ordered Weehawken not to enter into a $17-million bond-issuing agreement to construct a waterfront poultry-processing plant, but township officials say the matter is far from dead.

State Attorney General James J. Zazzali ruled yesterday that Weehawken lacked statutory authority to guarantee the obligation of its port authority on the agreement.

The Local Finance Board quickly took Zazzali's advice and directed Barry Skokowski, director of the Division of Local Services, to order the township not to enter the agreement to back the bonds of the authority.

A board source commented "the township can't back them. The authority is out of business" on this proposal.

However, Mayor Wally P. Lindsley doesn't believe the matter is over or the proposal dead.

"The final decision will be made in the court," said Lindsley. "What we have here is an opinion by the attorney general's office. That's an opinion, not a court decision. Court decisions overturn legal opinions all the time."

A copy of the ruling by the attorney general's office and the Local Finance Board will be sent to Superior Court Judge Gregory Castano, who has already started hearing the merits of the case launched by three Weehawken Township Committee members.

They contend that the ordinance approving the agreement between Weehawken and the local port authority is not legal because it was not approved by a two-thirds majority of the Township Committee.

Under the terms of the agreement, the local port authority would use the bond money to purchase waterfront property, redevelop the site, then lease it to Hudson Poultry Inc. and Robert A. Dunlap Associates for the plant's operation, which is primarily meant to provide processed poultry for Middle Eastern markets.

The developers would then help pay off the bond issue.

Although the Lindsley administration and various officials were invited to attend the Trenton session, none showed up yesterday. The only appearance was made by George T. Hanley of the Newark bond counsel firm of Frohling, Hanley and Fitzpatrick, retained by the township.

Committeewoman Alane Finnerty, who helped lead the Weehawken Taxpayers Association fight against the contemplated sales through Hudson Poultry to Kuwait and Egypt, commented, "The first thing I'm going to do is go out and buy a chicken," related Mrs. Helen Matthrews, the finance board secretary.

"We're gratified by the ruling," said Mrs. Claire Burke, a spokesman for the Target '80 steering committee which pushed to have the state attorney general's office and the Local Finance Board become involved in the project.

"The future of the municipality was on the line and it would have been a bleak one had the state ruled that the proposal was valid and the two companies involved in it eventually defaulted on their agreement. It appears that this prospect has been avoided."

In citing the local bond law, Zazzali said, "Since there is no statute for authority for a municipality to guarantee the obligation of the authority but rather a specific prohibition against same, the Township of Weehawken may not legally enter into the contemplated agreement."



Photo by Jeff Huntley

Sister Norberta, Hoboken tenants organizer, helps an elderly resident sign a petition calling for a referendum on the recently-passed vacancy decontrol ordinance.

Pushing for a referendum on Hoboken decontrol law

By John Kampfe

Even though Hoboken's vacancy decontrol ordinance has already been passed by the City Council, a citizens' group still has hopes of getting rid of the law.

Sister Norberta and members of Por La Gente were out yesterday getting signatures for petitions that are calling for the issue to be voted on by the people in November.

"There are a lot of people signing," said Sister Norberta as she stood near a table set up in front of a check-cashing business located behind City Hall.

She said the group wants to get at least 1,500 more signatures that would be added to the 3,000 already obtained. They must be submitted 60 days before the Nov. 3 election, which is this week.

Sister Norberta said she is optimistic that once enough signatures have been obtained, the decontrol question will be placed on the November ballot in the form of a referendum.

"I think there is a pretty good chance," she said. "If it isn't put on the ballot, then the city is going to have a lot of trouble with people who are upset over it."

She predicted that if the issue is on the ballot, voters will "definitely" come out against the concept of vacancy decontrol.

Sister Norberta explained that the 3,000 signatures were obtained without a "terribly large amount of work" and a concentrated, organized campaign against vacancy decontrol will amass a lot of support.

"We feel that with the number of signatures we've gotten in five days," she said, "the voice of the people has to be heard."

Sister Norberta stood in front of the check-cashing service handing out literature against decontrol while asking people in Spanish and English whether they had signed petitions.

"They (the people) are very positive," she related. "They definitely wanted to sign. People are worried about this problem and realize they've got to stop it."

Sister Norberta has charged that the city did not take the city's poor into consideration when the council voted for vacancy decontrol. She has said that the law will drive the underprivileged out of Hoboken.

Letters to the Editor

Hoboken resident speaks out on Real Estate

I am a senior citizen and have lived in Hoboken the past 58 years. I have seen the good and bad days. In that time, some friends that left Hoboken, want to return and asked me to let them know. When I told them the price, they like to pass out. Could not believe it. The rents now charged are a disgrace and is forcing the old timers out and stopping former residents from returning.

The money gods from New York is part of the cause. But I believe the Real Estate agents are the real culprits, all after big commissions. The higher sale price they get the bigger their take.

An example. I have friends that lived in a four family house. The owner decided to sell and told one of the tenants that said he was interested. The owner told him he expected 80,000 dollars but had given it to an agent and to contact him which he did. He told him $125,000 was the asking price, only $45,000 more than the owner expected, so it is an agent's price war for the loot. Look at all of the "For Sale" signs in the city that tell the story. What would, or will happen to the new owners if the city decides to assess according to sale price which I believe can

Attention landlords!

HP 10/1/81

Beginning October 1, 1981, until June 1, 1982, heat of 68 degrees must be provided in all Multiple Dwelling Units in Hoboken from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m.

This is by order of the Board of Health.

In Hudson

J.J 12/4/81

Hoboken hearing deferred

The two men who were arrested at the Hoboken City Council meeting Wednesday night on charges of disrupting the meeting were given additional time to obtain attorneys in municipal court yesterday. Keith Pavlick, 24, address listed as 258 Third St., and John Zorinsky, 31, of Brooklyn, appeared in municipal court and were told they would be notified when to return for another hearing. No date was specified. The two men, according to police, were among 100 who allegedly disrupted the council when it tried to conduct a meeting. They were part of group that protested the council's inaction in passing a smoke detector ordinance or preventing arson and providing housing for tenants who have been burned out of their homes during recent fires.

Looser Controls May Soisey Renters

N.Y. Times 10/7/81

By ROBERT HANLEY

JERSEY CITY — Traditionally, New Jersey has been a renters' market. Apartments abounded, and so did rent control laws, which were enacted by more than 100 towns and cover nearly half of the state's estimated 2.9 million renters.

Lately, however, landlords and real estate groups have begun a concerted attack on these laws and though tenant organizations and their lobbyists in the State Legislature have fought back, the number of such measures being repealed or modified is increasing. What's more, conversion of buildings to condominiums is brisk, further shrinking prospects for the state's renters and tilting the market in favor of the those who can afford to buy.

Princeton, for example, recently threw out rent controls. Hackensack, Hoboken, Rutherford, Leonia, Cliffside Park and Englewood eased them by passing various forms of vacancy decontrol, which allows landlords to increase rent sharply once a tenant moves and. tenants groups complain, often leads to the harassment of residents to force them to leave. In the last 13 months, landlords in Fair Lawn and West Orange managed to get abolition of rent control on the ballot, but voters there decided to keep it. A similar campaign in Elizabeth this year led to the indictment of several landlords on charges of submitting fraudulent petitions.

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Looser Controls May Sour the Market for New Jersey Renters

N.Y. Times 10/7/81

By ROBERT HANLEY

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Lately, however, landlords and real estate groups have begun a concerted attack on these laws and though tenant organizations and their lobbyists in the State Legislature have fought back, the number of such measures being repealed or modified is increasing. What's more, conversion of buildings to condominiums is brisk, further shrinking prospects for the state's renters and tilting the market in favor of the those who can afford to buy.

Princeton, for example, recently threw out rent controls. Hackensack, Hoboken, Rutherford, Leonia, Cliffside Park and Englewood eased them by passing various forms of vacancy decontrol, which allows landlords to increase rent sharply once a tenant moves and, tenants groups complain, often leads to the harassment of residents to force them to leave. In the last 13 months, landlords in Fair Lawn and West Orange managed to get abolition of rent control on the ballot, but voters there decided to keep it. A similar campaign in Elizabeth this year led to the indictment of several landlords on charges of submitting fraudulent petitions.

The biggest battle yet started last month in Jersey City, once a healthy industrial town but now an aging one struggling with joblessness, a declining tax base and resulting urban blight. The principal combatants are a young, conservative Democratic mayor, Gerald McCann, who is convinced that softening rent controls will attract new middle income housing and the taxpaying residents it brings, and hastily-organized tenants groups fighting to protect renters with low incomes.

Of the Jersey City's 223,500 residents, 166,750 live in rental apartments and 103,718 are protected by controls, according to city figures. A bill that Mr. McCann pushed through the City Council in early September would have reduced the number under controls to about 80,000, chiefly by exempting rehabilitated units from rent limits and easing them for apartments that become vacant. But two weeks ago, before the measure could take effect, angry tenants forced a suspension of its enactment by submitting petitions calling for a referendum. The signatures were being validated last week to determine whether to put the question to the voters.

Mr. McCann contends that rent controls are impeding the rehabilitation of older units and forcing landlords to abandon them. Easing them, he says, is the only way to get more housing built.

Tenants groups in Jersey City dispute Mr. McCann's view on abandonment, citing a study by Dr. Peter Marcuse, a professor of urban planning at Columbia University, that found that in 113 cities around the country where it was a problem, only six had rent controls. Conversely, the study found that of 100 other cties with rent controls, only eight reported "significant" abandonment. The problem, these groups argue, has varied and complex causes, including "redlining" by banks that refuse loans in particular neighborhoods; declining landlord income and profits amid higher costs; poverty, joblessness and overcrowding among new tenants; increasing vandalism and crime, and declining city services.

The Threat of Conversions

Rent control is the issue in Jersey City, but it isn't the only threat faced by New Jersey renters. Conversion of rental apartments into condominiums and cooperatives is another trend that is disturbing, and displacing, many of them.

In the last two years, such conversions have increased significantly. In 1979, 13 projects with 2,000 rental units were put up for sale. In 1980, the figures rose to 61 projects and 7,598 units. In the first seven months of this year, another 68 projects with 7,556 units were converted.

Most of these conversions involved luxury and middle income housing, principally in and around Atlantic City and Fort Lee.

"Nothing is going to stop conversions; it's just too profitable for landlords," said Mitchell Kahn, a vice president of the New Jersey Tenants Organization, which has tried to fight conversions in the State Legislature with middling success.

Declining profitability is the landlords' main argument for selling. Generally, they cite the sharply increasing costs for heating fuel, financing and maintenance, all of which, they say, is made worse by rent controls.

While conversions may worry tenants, they have little power to prevent them. Under state law, only landlords convicted of real estate fraud are denied permission to convert. Both Fort Lee and Atlantic City enacted moratoriums on conversions, but the courts have held that only the State Legislature had that power.

Early last year, the New Jersey Tenants Organization, which has about 85,000 members, asked the Legislature for a two-year ban on conversions. That move failed. The tenant organizations then requested a law requiring two-thirds of a project's tenants to approve a conversion. That, too, failed.

The tenant-protection bill that finally was enacted covered only disabled and elderly renters, sparing them from eviction from converting buildings for 40 years. It offered no new protection for young and middle-aged tenants who are unwilling or financially unable to buy a converted apartment.

However, existing New Jersey law prohibits their eviction for three years, and they may be granted five additional one-year leases if they can prove that their landlord has not offered them comparable housing.

ARSON

Arson — the invisible killer

By JOE LAURA
Staff Writer

10/81

HOBOKEN—An invisible killer continues to stalk this city. It's called arson, and its effects are devastating, as this community knows well.

In the aftermath of Saturday's fire, which claimed 11 lives, city officials are searching for clues to its suspicious origin. But the problem, they realize, is larger than one fire. It is the problem of a city in transition, with wide extremes in housing and lifestyles that are not easily reconcilable.

Since March 1978, 41 persons have died here in arson-related fires, and no one has ever been convicted of arson. Many in the tenants' group Por La Gente (For The People) believe the city's "gentrification" movement, the upgrading of housing by more affluent newcomers, is the primary force behind the city's 3½ years of fire and death.

Sister Norberta, an organizer of the group, says many of the older tenements, like the one that burned Saturday, "stand in the way" of the gentrification movement. Insurance monies coupled with the enormous profit potential for rehabilitated and renovated apartments, the group claims, presents an expedient scenario for arson.

They note, accurately, that larger neighboring cities like Jersey City have not been plagued with arson the way Hoboken has, and nor have they experienced as powerful a gentrification movement.

Others concerned with arson here and in general say the tenants' claims are valid under certain circumstances. But they also say gentrification is only one factor that must be considered with many others in arson.

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See ARSON, Page 34

Oct 26, 1981

Arson suspected in fatal fire

Continued from Page 1.

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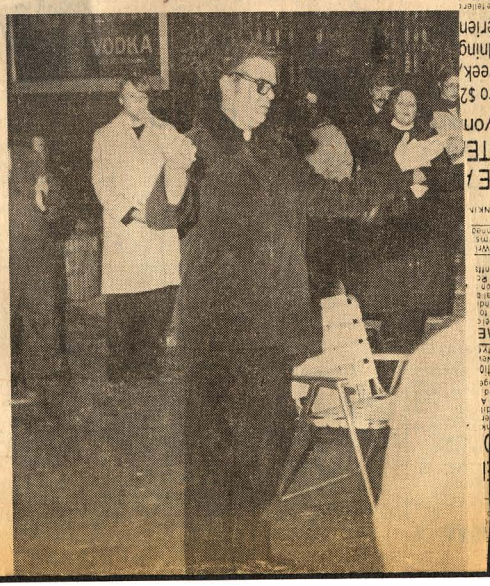
Deputy Fire Chief Raymond T. Sheehan stated that it was suspected that arson was the cause of the fire which started just after 4 a.m. because of the location of the start of the blaze — the first floor hallway.

Another Hoboken fire official, calling the fire "suspicious" pointed to another blaze at the same location to verify his feelings.

Deputy Fire Chief Edward Fitzsimmons recalled that there had been several beer bottles filled with gasoline found lined up in the front hallway of the building at the time of the first blaze, which occurred last May. The building is listed as being owned by Olga Ramos.

That blaze, unlike Saturday's, had been quelled quickly by tenants.

Tenants, too, had had the same suspicions after that May blaze. In fact, they had contacted The Jersey Journal, saying that they feared living in the building due to the fire and the absence of smoke alarms in the structure,



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Changing patterns of development in urban areas, vacancy rates, rent control laws, the condition of a particular building and its owners' financial situation are all factors considered in arson investigations, according to the American Insurers Alliance, a trade association representing more than 100 insurance firms nationwide.

Despite these factors, Alliance Vice-President Joseph Cucci says many landlords who may be considered a bad risk for property fire insurance are still able to obtain it through a state-mandated insurance pool similar to automobile insurance pools that create assigned-risk categories for certain drivers.

"Conceivably," Cucci says, "you could get insurance and set a torch to a building five days later" and still get property fire insurance later.

If the prevention of arson is difficult, the arson conviction rate is almost nil. Nationwide, it is less than 1 percent, according to a 1980 Justice Department

See ARSON, Page 34

ARSON

Continued from Page 1

study of arson in urban areas.

The study also found that at least 1,000 lives have been lost and nearly $1.5 billion lost in property damage due to arson in the country last year.

Mayor Steve Cappiello admits that Hoboken has a "serious problem" with arson-related fires, but says he believes most of them are not motivated by profit. Deputy Fire Chief Edward McDonald agrees with him.

"Sometimes they're just started by mischievious kids. A lot of times they're just playing, but people still die," says McDonald.

The federal arson study backs up their contentions. In 1980, only 14 percent of all arson cases were attributed to profit motivations. The remaining 86 percent were attributed to revenge, spite and vandalism.

McDonald says all of the fatal fires here have been classified as "incendiary," meaning they were set deliberately. But he says there is a difference between the incendiary fires and arson, although he admits it is a very thin one. He and Cappiello noted that the Jan. 20, 1979, fire that killed 21 persons is believed to have been set by a child who later perished in it.

Federal government and insurance company statistics, however, list all incendiary fires as arson.

New York City accounted for one-eighth of the nation's arson cases in 1980 and, when coupled with surrounding urban areas like Hoboken, the figure is much higher, according to federal statistics.

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Continued from Page 1.

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Tenants, too, had had the same suspicions after that May blaze. In fact, they had contacted The Jersey Journal, saying that they feared living in the building due to the fire and the absence of smoke alarms in the structure, which housed 21 tenants.

There were still no smoke alarms at the tenement almost six months later when the fire struck the building again two days ago, according to fire officials.

In fact, Sister Norberta, just before leaving for the memorial service, decried the lack of smoke alarms and stated she had worked with tenants to have them placed in the building.

Mayor Steve Cappiello could not be reached for comment yesterday. Officials had said after a fatal fire on Oct. 12 that inspections of buildings for smoke alarms would be speeded up to see that landlords complied with the state mandate for such alarms in multi-family dwellings.

The 11 persons killed in Saturday's blaze were identified as coming from two families. They were Goduvim Mercado, 39; Ana Mercado, 35, his wife; Manuel Vega, 76, Mrs. Mercado's father, and the Mercados' children, Ruth, 13; Dennise, 12, Kenneth, 9 and Walter, 10.

The remaining four were identified as members of a recent Cuban refugee family. They were Reineira Rios, 43, and her children Frank, 20; Marybell, 18 and Jesus, 13.

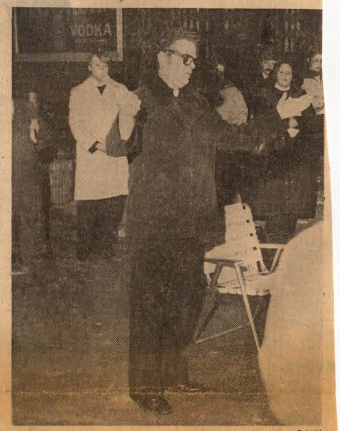


Photo by Steve Golecki

The Rev. Joseph Madden of St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church in Hoboken offers a benediction at last night's prayer vigil in front of 1200 Washington St., where 11 perished in a fire Saturday.

As officials searched through the debris left by the blaze, at least one official pointed toward a vendetta type of action as a reason for the "suspicious" blaze.

Deputy Chief Fitzsimmons recalled a series of three fires at a building also owned by Ms. Ramos at 413 First St.

He stated that, again, beer bottles were also found scattered throughout the hallway in at least one of these blazes. Ms. Ramos could not be reached for comment yesterday.

It was reported that the majority of the victims had died from smoke inhalation, with one survivor asserting that nobody came out of the top floor because the stairs caught fire.

At the ecumenical service last night, Washington Street was filled with people as the Rev. Geoffrey Curtis, an Episcopal rector, asserted: "Arson is a terrible thing." There were hymns and prayers in both English and Spanish.

Sister Norberta said a special meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. Thursday to discuss how Hoboken can mobilize to fight the recent numerous arson attempts.

Meanwhile, George Rivera of Funeraria Rivera, a North Bergen funeral home, has verified reports that he will help with some of the costs of the funeral arrangements.

He stated that the members of the Mercado family will be buried in Puerto Rico. He was unsure where the other four persons would be buried.

Oct 27, 1981

THE JERSEY JOURNAL
and Jersey Observer
Hudson County's Leading Newspaper

Published daily except Sunday by
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Alvin Schub, Advertising Director

Detection

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Protesters demand Hoboken open up rehab housing

Nov. 19, 1981

The Hispanic group in Hoboken that is pushing for a federal investigation of two recent fires, which claimed the lives of 13 persons, and improved housing conditions will present a list of three demands to Mayor Steve Cappiello when they meet publicly at 4 p.m. Saturday in City Hall.

These demands are:

- Priority housing for the fire victims. The group is suggesting the use of the 180 units recently renovated opposite the Shop Rite on Washington Street.
- Immediate suspension of the rent vacancy decontrol ordinance.
- Passage of the smoke detector ordinance.

"We have 4,370 signatures supporting the demand for a federal investigation," said the legal council for the group, Ramon Irrizzary, of Newark. "We will continue picking up signatures until Nov. 30 and on Dec. 2, we will turn them into the mayor and the city council."

Irrizzary said he will be going to see the state attorney general after turning in the petition to give him a copy.

See HISPANICS — Page 33.

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TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1981

Can you help cops catch a

By Randolph Diamond

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"Anyone who has the slightest piece of information" should contact the authorities, said Ray Falco, Hoboken's chief fire inspector. "We really need some information."

Meanwhile, Patrick Donatacci, Hoboken's detective commander, revealed that four young men, believed to be in their late teens or early 20s, were seen by a person strolling past the fire scene just seconds before the blaze.

Hudson County Prosecutor Harold J. Ruvoldt Jr. said meanwhile, the blaze was due to arson.

The prosecutor said he reached that conclusion on the basis of reports from his arson investigators. He declined further comment.

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Oct 27, 1981

THE JERSEY JOURNAL
and Jersey Observer
Hudson County's Leading Newspaper
Published daily except Sunday by
The Evening Journal Association
August Lockwood, Editor
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Way back then the tenants made a point of complaining that smoke detectors were not in the building. What was done about that complaint?

So what good would it do to run around checking to see if smoke detectors are installed?

Enforcement must be linked with detection or there is no protection.

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Can you help cops catch arsonist?

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"The person, whom we don't want to name, saw the men drinking as he passed the building," said Donatacci. The person did not notice anything strange then. The person was out for a walk and about 30 seconds after passing the building that was soon to be on fire, the person decided to return home for a coat. The person passed the building again and there were flames all throughout. "The four men were gone," he asserted.

Donatacci revealed that the building at 12th and Washington streets had been scheduled to be sold yesterday by its current landlord, Olga Ramos, to a new person. Donatacci said the Eileen Cappock real estate agency of Hoboken, was handling the transaction.

See POLICE — Page 9.

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Nov. 19, 1981

...ispanics to present demands to Cappiello

Continued from Page 1.

"There is an epidemic of evictions in Hoboken," said Irrizzary. He had no figures to support his statement, however.

Irrizzary said evictions have tripled in the last two months, and that CUNA has been trying to handle the displaced tenants.

Thomas Soto, one of the group's participants, referred to a recent newspaper article which said that at least 10,000 people had been displaced in Hoboken in the last four years.

Gladys Garcia, one of the displaced fire victims, was at a press conference yesterday. She complained that her family was divided among relatives and friends. She had been to city hall for help, but she was told she would be called as soon as an apartment was made available, she said.

She said that 10 families were displaced with her but she did not know their status.

Meanwhile, Irrizzary said he would ask the mayor to vigorously support and lobby for the referendum to repeal the vacancy decontrol law, which would then have to be voted on by the public.

"All we want is an immediate and real commitment from the mayor regarding what we consider to be an emergency situation," said Irrizzary.

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Leo Serrano, a Hoboken policemen who was the salesman handling the sale of the building, would not reveal who had intended to buy the building. But Serrano said the buyer had planned extensive renovations.

Upon questioning by a reporter, however, Serrano admitted that the current tenants might not have been able to afford the rents once renovation was completed.

Donatacci said yesterday that detectives had questioned Miss Ramos for three hours about Saturday's fire as well as a previous suspicious fire in the building last May and a few other suspicious fires in two other Hoboken buildings she owns.

Donatacci said he hopes to bring Miss Ramos in for more questioning today, as well as her boyfriends, Reinaldo Negron, who also has been questioned previously. Police obtained a search warrent to for Miss Ramo's house and confiscated a sweater, jacket and socks and shoes belonging to Negron.

Donatacci said Negron's confiscated belongings have been sent to the state police laboratory.

Donatacci said Miss Ramos has been uncooperative during the questioning.

The detective commander said police are trying to find out whether Miss Ramos had recently changed the insurance coverage on her building.

One detective, who asked not to be identified, put the building's selling price at $85,000.

Detectives say some of the tenants who survived Saturday's fire told them that Miss Ramos had been trying to get them out of her building for a year and that they believed it was possible she would try to burn the building down.

A man who identified himself as the bartender at the Traffic Lounge, a bar owned by Miss Ramos, said she would not talk to a reporter.

However, Miss Ramos has previously denied harassing her tenants or trying to get them out of the building.

Concerning the tenants, Hudson County Red Cross Director Joseph Lecowitch said the agency has found accomodations for all those left homeless by the blaze. Meanwhile, two persons admitted to St. Mary Hospital for smoke inhalation have been released.

The persons, Robert Burzichelli and Lauren Tarr were released yesterday afternoon, according to hospital officials.

Meanwhile, Alfred Arezzo, Hoboken's building inspector, said that while fire damage to the five-story building was extensive he believes the foundation is still sound and that the building can be saved.

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Photo by Jeff Huntley

Sister Norberta, Hoboken tenants organizer, helps an elderly resident sign a petition calling for a referendum on the recently-passed vacancy decontrol ordinance.

Pushing for a referendum on Hoboken decontrol law

By John Kampfe

Even though Hoboken's vacancy decontrol ordinance has already been passed by the City Council, a citizens' group still has hopes of getting rid of the law.

Sister Norberta and members of Por La Gente were out yesterday getting signatures for petitions that are calling for the issue to be voted on by the people in November.

"There are a lot of people signing," said Sister Norberta as she stood near a table set up in front of a check-cashing business located behind City Hall.

She said the group wants to get at least 1,500 more signatures that would be added to the 3,000 already obtained. They must be submitted 60 days before the Nov. 3 election, which is this week.

Sister Norberta said she is optimistic that once enough signatures have been obtained, the decontrol question will be placed on the November ballot in the form of a referendum.

"I think there is a pretty good chance," she said. "If it isn't put on the ballot, then the city is going to have a lot of trouble with people who are upset over it."

She predicted that if the issue is on the ballot, voters will "definitely" come out against the concept of vacancy decontrol.

Sister Norberta explained that the 3,000 signatures were obtained without a "terribly large amount of work" and a concentrated, organized campaign against vacancy decontrol will amass a lot of support.

"We feel that with the number of signatures we've gotten in five days," she said, "the voice of the people has to be heard."

Sister Norberta stood in front of the check-cashing service handing out literature against decontrol while asking people in Spanish and English whether they had signed petitions.

"They (the people) are very positive," she related. "They definitely wanted to sign. People are worried about this problem and realize they've got to stop it."

Sister Norberta has charged that the city did not take the city's poor into consideration when the council voted for vacancy decontrol. She has said that the law will drive the underprivileged out of Hoboken.

Hoboken fire

Oct 27, 1981

Tenants say owner threatened arson

By ROY KAHN
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—The owner of the building where 11 people died in a fire Saturday threatened to burn it down 16 months ago after failing to get a $50 rent increase, tenants say.

A June 9, 1980 rent leveling and stabilization board file memo, initialed by board Administrator Bernadine Van Carpels and obtained by The Dispatch, states two tenants told Van Carpels that "on Friday, owner Olga Ramos told them she would get them out, even if she had to burn down the building."

The two tenants were Jennie Vega and a man named Jesus, who Van Carpels believed was the superintendent.

The June 9 meeting and the alleged threat came only five days after Ramos received notification from the board that a $50 rent increase she had planned to implement on July 1 was illegal.

The proposed hike was "in excess" of the 7.5 percent annual increase allowed under the city rent ordinance, the notice stated. For a $210 per month apartment, the increase could be no more than $16, the notice read.

In a previous interview, Ramos denied ever threatening the tenants of 102 12th St., and police said she has been cooperating in the investigation.

Efforts to reach Ramos yesterday were unsuccessful. When a call was made to the Traffic Lounge at 1327 Willow St., which she owns, a woman said, "She is not here. She will not be here later, she will not be here tomorrow or any day this week. She has gone on an extended trip."

On Saturday, police secured a search warrant for Ramos' home and confiscated a sweater, a jacket, and socks and shoes belonging to Reinaldo Negron, who police described as her boyfriend.

Detective Capt. Patrick Donatacci said yesterday that police are investigating a number of leads which might include, but are not limited to, possible involvement by the owner.

"You have every possible motive in this case," he said. "Everything from a love triangle, to revenge, to money. We are looking into everything."

In an interview the day after the fatal fire, Vega said Ramos had not threatened her, but had made the threat to then-superintendent Caridad Capote, who she said told her about the threat.

Capote, who the tenants affectionately called "Mima," would not deny Ramos had made the threat to her, but would not confirm it either.

See OWNER, Page 34



File photo by Chuck Zoeller

THERE ARE MANY unpleasant tasks involved in firefighting — and arson only makes it worse.

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File photo by Chuck Zoeller

THERE ARE MANY unpleasant tasks involved in firefighting and arson only makes it worse.

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Continued from Page 1

"I won't deny it, I won't confirm it," she said through an interpreter Tuesday. "(But) I will testify in court because what happened was beyond human. I just want to get the people who did it."

She did say that conditions at the building began to deteriorate shortly after the rent increase was denied. Capote, who left the building in November 1980 to take a job in a larger apartment building nearby, said she was responsible for the upkeep of the 12th Street structure.

"My obligation was to clean the hallways, take the garbage out, and if something needed fixing, I would call to get it fixed and give Olga Ramos the bill," she said.

After Capote moved, the building, identified as "El Dorado" on the stone entranceway, rapidly fell into disrepair.

Vega, the only tenant alive today who was involved in the 1980 dispute and still living in the building, said Capote's replacement cleaned the halls and took out the garbage, but never made repairs.

"I would tell him to tell Olga the bathroom needs fixing, and he would come back and say, 'She already knows, we have to wait and see what happens,' " Vega said.

No one could be found to verify Vega's story because the families who lived there at the time could not be found, and all the members of the two other families involved in the dispute died in Saturday's fire.

Tenants and community organizers from Por La Gente, however, confirmed that in the case of the top-floor apartment rented by the now-deceased Mercado family, the roof leaked and buckets were used inside the apartment to catch the water when it rained.

In an interview earlier this week, Ramos confirmed that after her proposed rent increase was denied she stopped caring for the building, except for simple maintenance which was the job of a live-in superintendent.

The superintendent, identified by tenants as Rigoberto Villareal, moved out in August and was not replaced.

Meanwhile, the occupants of the five-story brick building have been changing.

In a city where officials say the vacany rate is zero, one of the eight apartments was vacant, and with the exception of the Mercado, Rios and Vega families, there were no more than two people in each apartment.

Police said at least one apartment was being provided rent-free for two tenants, Adolfo Leiros and Estaban Blanco Vento.

Ramos said it was a temporary arrangement and when the building was sold, the pair would be forced out. A deal to sell the building was scheduled to be finalized last Monday, two days after the fire.

As the police investigation continues, officials still are waiting for state police laboratory reports, which are expected to confirm whether or not the fire was an arson.

Donatacci said he did not know when those results would be available.

Without that information, county and police investigators have tentatively called the blaze an arson because they say it started in the first-floor hallway on the side of the staircase where nothing else could of have caused it.

All landlords aren't vi

By Randolph Diamond

From all accounts the five-story apartment building at 321 Willow Ave. in Hoboken was a mess.

savings into upgrading 321 Willow Avenue. They have put in new bathrooms and corrected the flooding problem in the basement. There is new electrical wiring and windows. Slowly but surely 321 Willow Ave. is again becoming a desirable place to live.

To finance their improvements the McAllisters say they have to raise the rents. And Hoboken's rent leveling law allowes buildings to be taken off rent control for 12 months when a landlord does improvemkents equal to the assessed valuation of the building.

The building at 321 Willow Ave. is assessed at approximately $15,000 and the McAllisters have already spent over $50,000, so, when their renovations are complete within a frew months, the city's rent leveling board is expected to grant them an exemption from rent control.

Tenants in the building have already been notified that they can expect their rent to go up to $350 a month when renovations are complete.

The rents will not be excessive as far as the Hoboken rental market goes today. Similar apartments in other buildings near the McAllister's are going for over $500 a month.

Mrs. Caroline Coburn, who said she has lived in the building for 15 years and in Hoboken for all of her life.

"If they raise the rent to $350, I guess I'll have to move in with my daughter in Toms River," she said. "But I don't like Toms River. Its not like Hoobken. I have friends in Hoboken and I like living here."

But the McAllisters feel sorry for Mrs. Coburn and are trying to work out an agreement with her so that she can stay in her apartment and pay what she can afford.

"We feel the other people in the building can find another place," said Mrs. Allister. "But we realize it's a different case with Mrs. Coburn."

Indeed Terri Ratti, a social worker who works with senior citizens being displaced in Hoboken nots the McAllisters are unusual in that they are trying to help Mrs. Cuburn and not raise the rents to whatever they can get.

"Many landlords wouldn't care," she said. "They do the renovations, get off rent control for 12 months, raise the rents to

All landlords aren't vicious

By Randolph Diamond

From all accounts the five-story apartment building at 321 Willow Ave. in Hoboken was a mess.

Rats and roaches in the apartments were common, as were water leaks. The basement often became flooded and the mailboxes were broken, as was its front door.

When Samantha and Raymond McAllister took over the building a year ago there were literally hundreds of housing violations, according to a state bureau of housing inspection reports.

"I don't think any repairs had been made to this building for at least 30 years," said Raymond McAllister of the turn-of-the century structure. "The building was headed towards being condemned because it was so bad."

None of the tenants of 321 Willow Avenue disagree that conditions in the building were pretty horrendous.

But the rents for the ten four-room apartments in the building were also rather low, with rents ranging from approximately $80 to $100 a month.

It was a rent that an elderly lady without any income but her Social Security check or a young family that had just moved to the United States from Puerto Rico without any savings could afford.

But the rents will soon be changing. Since purchasing the building the McAllisters have put in $50,000 of their own savings into upgrading 321 Willow Avenue. They have put in new bathrooms and corrected the flooding problem in the basement. There is new electrical wiring and windows. Slowly but surely 321 Willow Ave. is again becoming a desirable place to live.

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"Real estate brokers told us we were crazy when he said we were going to charge $350 a month," said Raymond McAllister. "They told us we could much more. But I think $350 is a fair price."

But $350 a month is more than most families who already live in the building can afford.

"I've been here about two years," said Alicia Vesquez, who lives in one of the building's apartments with her infant son." We're just going to have to move out of Hoboken. I can't afford $350 and there are no cheap apartments left in Hoboken."

Ms. Vesques, a native of Puerto Rico, is on public assistance and has no other income.

In another apartment, a couple who ask not to be identified said they just don't know what they are going to do when the rent goes up.

"Never mind Hoboken," they say. "There are just so few apartments around anywhere."

The couple both work in a factory but say there is no way they could afford $350.

"Maybe $200 or somthing but not $350," the husband said.

Most worried of all, however, is 81-year-old Caroline Coburn, who said she has lived in the building for 15 years and in Hoboken for all of her life.

"If they raise the rent to $350, I guess I'll have to move in with my daughter in Toms River," she said. "But I don't like Toms River. Its not like Hoobken. I have friends in Hoboken and I like living here."

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"Many landlords wouldn't care," she said. "They do the renovations, get off rent control for 12 months, raise the rents to whatever they can get and it's too bad for everyone who can't afford that new rent."



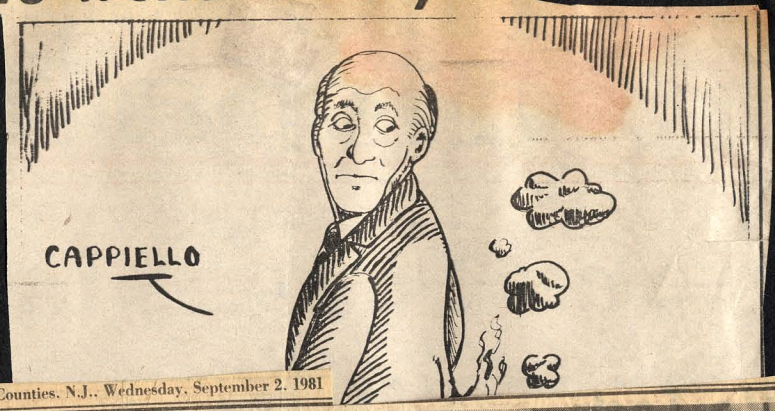
Samantha and Raymond McAllister at work renovating one of the apartments in the building at 321 Willow Ave.

There are six other Hoboken buildings in addition to the McAllister building that will soon be off rent control because the landlords are doing renovations equal to the assessed valuation of the buildings, says Hoboken's rent leveling administrative Bernie Van Carpels.

And city housing officials say they know of numerous landlords who will soon be doing renovations and thus will also be able to get off rent control. And housing officials note they are only talking about buildings with the tenants still in them, not buildings which have already been emptied of their tenants.

The Dispatch, Hudson/Bergen Counties, N.J., Saturday, October 24, 1981

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ergen Counties, N.J., Wednesday, September 2, 1981

on signers

generally the least-registered group and have the most interest in getting good government."

She would not say whether the drive was a response to the Reagan administration's cuts in social programs.

The effort here yielded about 200 new registrants and an equal number of signatures of people who want to put the city's new vacancy decontrol ordinance on the ballot, said Sister Noberta, a member of Por La Gente.

The fight against vacancy decontrol has been running on rough roads since the City Council passed the controversial ordinance earlier this year.

At first the groups could not secure sufficient signatures fast enough to stop the decontrol regulation from being implemented. Then the city attorney said the petitions were invalid because they addressed only part of the ordinance and not the whole thing.

The tenant groups are protesting the portion of the municipal law that would allow landlords to increase the rent on vacant apartments by as much as 25 percent. They claim it will encourage landlords to harass tenants into leaving and ultimately will result in the elimination of housing for low-income people in the mile-square city.

Provided that the legal question is resolved in the tenant's favor, they will need the signatures of 4,500 registered voters to have the question placed on the ballot. Sister Norberta said yesterday that they have about 3,200.

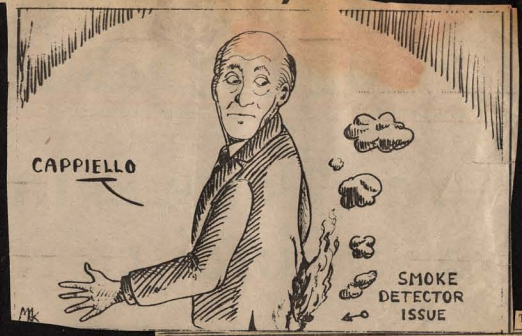


Photo by Bill Barr

SISTER NORBERTA, left, stands outside a Bloomfield Street check-cashing facility yesterday and asks a Hoboken resident to sign a petition to put the recently passed vacancy decontrol ordinance to a referendum.

The Dispatch, Hudson/Bergen Counties, N.J., Saturday, October 24, 1981

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The Dispatch, Hudson/Bergen Counties, N.J., Wednesday, September 2, 1981

Decontrol foes seek petition signers

By ROY KAHN
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—Opponents of the city's new vacancy decontrol ordinance took to the streets yesterday looking for signatures on petitions asking that the law be put before the voters in the November election.

The activity, organized by a number of local tenant groups including Por La Gente and the Coalition to Save Rent Control, focused on a check-cashing storefront on Bloomfield Street.

The effort was coordinated with a voter-registration experiment set up by a Maryland civil rights lawyer and a coalition of state unions.

The experiment involved signing up voters at more than 30 food stamp sales points in eight counties, said Joyce Morgan, a volunteer on the registration project.

"We are trying to increase the voter registration in the state," she said. "It is being geared to people who are food stamp recipients because they are generally the least-registered group and have the most interest in getting good government."

She would not say whether the drive was a response to the Reagan administration's cuts in social programs.

The effort here yielded about 200 new registrants and an equal number of signatures of people who want to put the city's new vacancy decontrol ordinance on the ballot, said Sister Noberta, a member of Por La Gente.

The fight against vacancy decontrol has been running on rough roads since the City Council passed the controversial ordinance earlier this year.

At first the groups could not secure sufficient signatures fast enough to stop the decontrol regulation from being implemented. Then the city attorney said the petitions were invalid because they addressed only part of the ordinance and not the whole thing.

The tenant groups are protesting the portion of the municipal law that would allow landlords to increase the rent on vacant apartments by as much as 25 percent. They claim it will encourage landlords to harass tenants into leaving and ultimately will result in the elimination of housing for low-income people in the mile-square city.

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Photo by Bill Bayl

SISTER NORBERTA, left, stands outside a Bloomfield Street check-cashing facility yesterday and asks a Hoboken resident to sign a petition to put the recently passed vacancy decontrol ordinance to a referendum.

The Dispatch, Hudson/Bergen Counties, N.J., Thursday, October 8, 1981

Council tables mayor's nomination to rent c

By CHUCK SUTTON
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—In a surprise move, the City Council voted yesterday to table Mayor Steve Cappiello's nomination of tenant advocate Sister Norberta to the Rent Leveling and Stabilizatin Board.

Two days ago, there was no indication that the council was considering tabling the nomination.

"I would have been more surprised if the council had approved the nomination without hesitation," Norberta said in reaction to the council's action.

The council also did not approve the recent nomination of another tenant advocate, Ramona Pignatero.

The City Council also rejected the first reading of an ordinance that would create the post of water superintendent, a political stumbling block to appointing Ray Vitale to that position.

Council member Helen Macri asked that Norberta's nomination, announced Monday, be tabled for further study by the council. Councilman Louis Francone seconded the motion.

"I'd like to review the nomination," Macri said explaining her motion to table. Macri indicated that she had immediate reservations about appointing Norberta because "she's always for the tenant and the board needs someone who is impartial."

Norberta is the leading spokeswoman for Por La Gente, a community organization of which the Hoboken tenant's organization is a subdivision.

When announcing his appointment of Norberta, Cappiello said that he wanted Norberta for the position because she would ensure enforcement of ordinances and he expressed confidence that Norberta would be fair to homeowners.

"I would hope that the council will recognize the seriousness of this continuing vacancy on the board in this time of severe housing shortages," Norberta warned.

She added "the people's rights may not be fully protected unless the board is at its capacity."

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She added "the people's rights may not be fully protected unless the board is at its capacity."

The council had rejected Pignatero's nomination after she had become active in the referendum drive to overturn vacancy decontrol. Cappiello withdrew Pignatero's nomination saying "she said she would always be for the tenant."

The Rent Leveling and Stablilizatin Board, often referred to as the rent control board, grants hardship increases for landlords, rebates for tenants, and reviews capital improvement requests and landlord tenant disputes that cannot be resolved by board administrator, Bernadette Van Carples.

The motion to table Norberta's nomination means the issue can be brought up as soon as the next meeting or tabled indefinitely.

Macri and Councilman Thomas Kennedy opposed the introduction of an ordinance by Councilman Robert Ranieri to establish the position of a water superintendent under the public works department.

While Macri and Kennedy insisted that job specifications should be reviewed by the council before approval, Ranieri insisted that the council's responsibility is to create the position and it would be up to the public works director and the city personnel director to determine the qualifications.

Vitale is the brother-in-law of Councilman Francone and served as public works director under Cappiello years ago.

Classmates mourn 5 empty seats

11/81

The mood was somber yesterday in Hoboken's Wallace School, where five of the children who perished in Saturday's fire at the building at 102 12th Street had gone to school.

"The teachers and the students are all upset," said Wallace Vice Principal Pat Gagliardi. "Practically everyone in the school had come in contact with one of the children at one time."

Gagliardi said many teachers had changed their regular lesson plans and were giving their students a light work load because many children seemed too upset to learn.

With tears in his eyes, Gagliardi said many teachers had observed moments of silence in their classes, while others had discussion periods.

There was no question, however, Gagliardi said, that most affected by Saturday's tragedy were the five classes which the children who died in the fire attended.

"Everyone just cried in my class for about 10 minutes," said teacher Joseph Miele. "I told them I understood what they were going through."

Twelve-year-old Dennise Mercado, one of the dead children, occupied a front desk in Miele's classroom and the students remembered her well.

"She was like a sister to me," said 11-year-old Isidro Cora. "Dennise would come to my house and help me with my homework when I didn't understand it. She was the nicest person in the world."

"I couldn't say a bad thing about Dennise," said another classmate. "She was always so friendly."

See CLASSMATES — Page 9.



Photo by Bill Greenblatt

A forlorn bouquet adorns the doorway of the Hoboken building in which 11 people lost their lives to arson Saturday.

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In teacher Pat Pasculli's 8th grade class the teacher said there was also a lot of crying. Pasculli said everyone was very upset.

"The students really aren't learning anything today," he said. "They were feeling too bad."

Thirteen-year-old Jesus Rios, another victim of the fire, had been a student in Pasculli's class and his classmates said they would miss him.

"He loved to play pinball," said 12-year-old Charles Bender. "I used to play with him all the time. He was a real nice guy."

All the students in the eighth grade at the Wallace School, along with some of the other classes of the dead children, will be attending mass for all the dead children tomorrow morning at St. Peter and Paul's Church in Hoboken.

The idea of the children going to the mass was orginated by Miele, who said he felt it would be a way for the students to express their grief.

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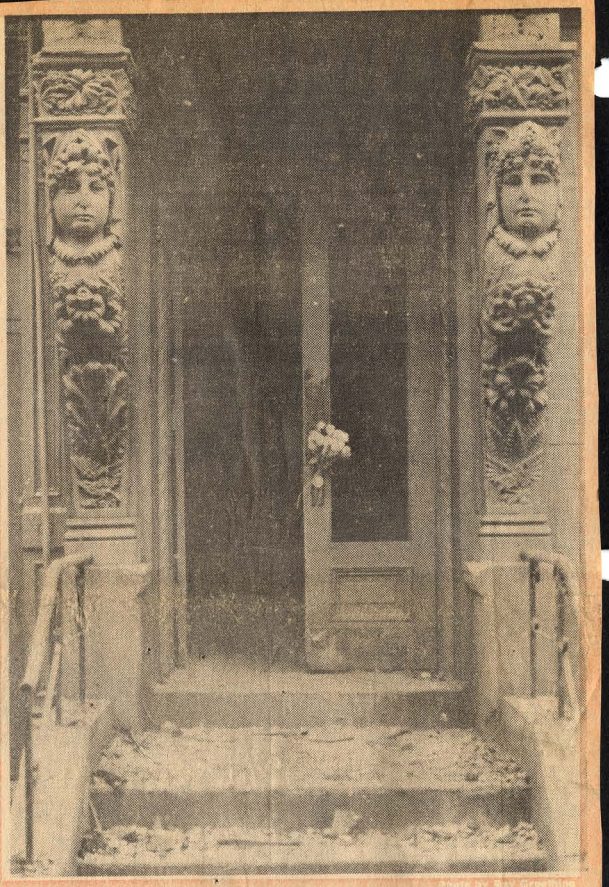


Photo by Ray Greenlee

A forlorn bouquet adorns the doorway of the Hoboken building in which 11 people lost their lives to arson Saturday.

After Fire: Perplexity In Hoboken

By DAVID BIRD
Special to The New York Times

HOBOKEN, N.J. Oct. 25 — Ministers from many of this city's churches gathered for a prayer service tonight amid fire hoses and rubble in front of the tenement where fire took the lives of 11 persons early yesterday.

The dead were members of two families: the Mercados, who had come from Puerto Rico, and the Rioses, natives of Cuba. Kenneth Mercado, 10 years old, was one of the victims. The prayers were in English and in Spanish.

Several hundred people crowded in front of the building on Washington Street, at the corner of 12th Street. Washington Street, the town's main thoroughfare, was blocked to all traffic during the hourlong service, which began shortly after 5 P.M.

"Oh, God, our help in ages past," the ministers chanted in unison, "our hope for years to come, our shelter from the stormy blast and our eternal home."

'Lobbying' Promised

The prayer meeting had been organized by Sister Norberta, a community





DISPATCH - OCT. 30 - 81

Smoke detector law stalled

By ROY KAHN
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—Plans by the City Council to introduce a local smoke detector ordinance have stalled for the second time in three weeks because of unresolved technical questions.

According to a memo circulated by the legal department yesterday, it is legal to adopt the existing state smoke alarm regulations in local ordinance form. But the council still has to decided who is going to enforce the ordinance and how fast owners must comply.

The ordinance, which would actually be the state smoke alarm regulations in local form, was first discussed shortly after the fatal Columbus Day tenement fire.

At the time, city inspectors and other officials acknowledged that the state regulations were not being enforced expeditiously and suggested that a local ordinance would enable them to speed compliance.

Assistant City Corporation Counsel Thomas Calligy, who called on the council to move slowly on the ordinance when it was first proposed, said he wasn't sure whether the city could legally adopt the state regulations as its own. Also, he said early this month that he was concerned that a city ordinance would open the local government to negligence suits if people died in buildings which did not comply with the code.

Even though the state attorney general's office had said there was no legal conflict, Calligy's concerns prevented the ordinance from going before the City Council two weeks ago. After the delay, the ordinance's sponsor, Councilman Robert Ranieri, said it would be discussed at the next week.

As of yesterday's memo, the ordinance has been put on hold again, and as Calligy could not be reached for comment, it was not known how long it would take to resolve his questions.

Mayor Steve Cappiello and Council President Walter Kramer said they would adhere to the advice of the legal department.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, MONDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1981

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The prayer meeting had been organized by Sister Norberta, a community activist of the St. Francis Roman Catholic Church here.

"Tonight we'll pray," she said. "Tomorrow we'll do some lobbying and haranguing about this awful tragedy."

People had gathered all day in small knots in the gray cold to look at the burned-out tenement. There had been talk that the five-story red-brick building, which was built at the turn of the century, had been set afire deliberately to drive out longtime residents. Then, the reasoning went, the apartments could be rented for more money to the newcomers who have found Hoboken a charming and less expensive alternative to Manhattan.

Arson Tests Planned

Capt. Jack Sheehan of the Hoboken Fire Department said yesterday that the blaze was under investigation because of the way it had started in a bottom stairwell and had spread quickly. This indicated that someone had set it with a volatile fuel, "an accelerant," the captain said.

Lieut. Neil Hunt, chief of the arson investigation unit of the Hudson County Prosecutor's Office, emerged from the building late this afternoon with three shiny metal cans containing samples of the debris from the stairway. The samples were to be sent to a laboratory to determine what accelerant, if any, might have been used to touch off and spread the blaze.

"These kind of fires are becoming more and more common," Lieutenant Hunt said. "More people are using fire as revenge."

The people who suggested that the idea was to drive out the old tenants would not give their names. But most people did not want to believe them.

"I just can't believe it," said Marge Lupo, a middle-aged woman who has lived in Hoboken all her life, as she looked up at the lingering curls of smoke coming from a fourth-floor window. "How could someone do it, starting a fire in the middle of the night with everyone asleep and helpless? There are other ways to get people out."

Down the street at Tucker's Drugs, at 10th Street and Washington Street, a sign in the window said: "Hoboken postcards and landscapes for sale." The brightly colored postcards showed modern high-rises and old brownstones existing harmoniously together.

Speculation About Cause

Behind the counter, Arnold Epstein, a pharmacy student who has lived in town for four years, talked about the fire.

"I've heard people say it was a torch job, but if you think it's a torch job, you have to think again. That hasn't happened in this town yet. The reason is that it's simple to get people out. There are no leases. It's a very political town, and the landlords are very much a part of the politics, and they've made sure it's easy to get people out."

The pharmacist on duty, Bernard Jacobson, interjected: "If it's arson, it sounds to me like a crime of passion — a jealous lover."

Mr. Epstein said there was little racial animosity in Hoboken. The families in the burned-out building had been mainly Hispanic people. A store on the building's ground floor was La Virgen del Camino Farmacia.

"It wasn't a Hispanic pharmacy anymore than we are a Hispanic pharmacy," Mr. Epstein said. "Hispanic and other people went there, just like Hispanic and other people came here."

Down the street from the fire, between 11th and 12th Streets, a row of shops indicated Hoboken's ethnic diversity. One after another the stores were: Ecuador Spanish-American Grocery; Dr. A. Portnoy, optometrist; Schnackenberg's Luncheonette and the Giorgio Italian and French Pastry Shop.

At the scene of the fire, Captain Sheehan looked up at the fourth-floor window and shook his head.

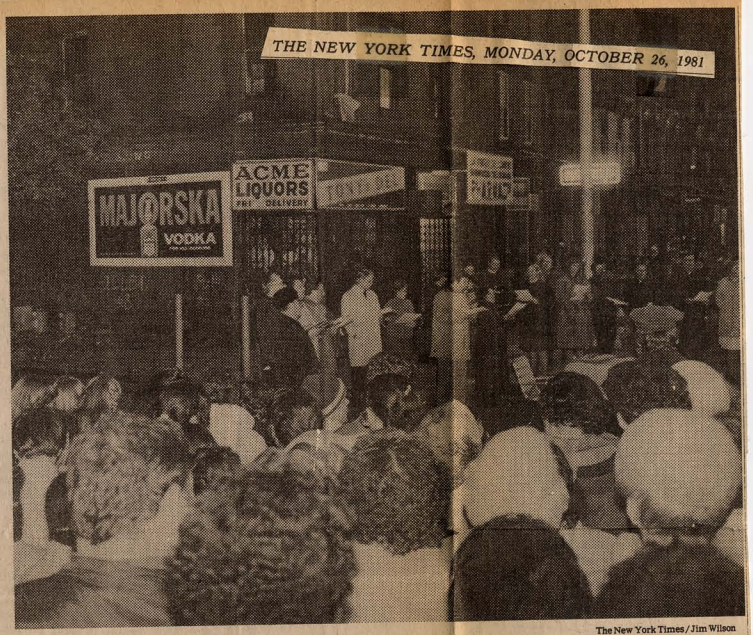
"There's no way we're going in there now," he said. "The building's too dangerous. Besides there's nothing left in there."

Later Captain Sheehan's men doused the fire with the aid of an aerial ladder. A young man approached the captain and asked if he could go in to rescue his uncle's belongings.

"No way," Captain Sheehan said.

The young man, Vincent Cruz, said his uncle, Efrain Cruz, had awakened suddenly when he began to smell smoke and had managed to rush down the fire escape and take refuge in Vincent's home nearby.

Vincent Cruz looked in at the charred entryway of the building and turned to leave. "I guess there's nothing left," he said, "so why bother to go in."



The New York Times / Jim Wilson

A prayer service being held yesterday afternoon outside the Hoboken tenement in which 11 died in a fire Saturday.

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The New York Times

yesterday.

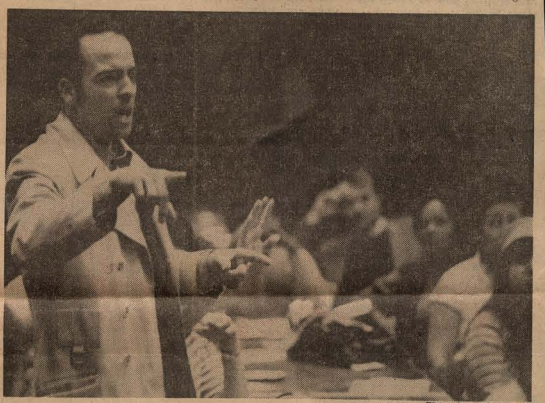


Photo by Ted Boswell

A CITIZEN questions fire officials last night at a heated meeting organized by community groups concerned about the arson problem in Hoboken. See story on Page 6.

DISPATCH - OCT. 30 - 81

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By ROY KAHN
Staff Writer

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Dispatch, Hudson/Bergen Counties, N.J., Friday, October 30, 1981

Frightened tenants begin arson watch

HOBOKEN—Responding to rumors that their building may be hit next by arson, tenants of 1327 Willow St. began organizing an arson watch last night.

The movement developed during a meeting held last night at St. Francis' Catholic Club on Jefferson Street to discuss ways of combating what is believed to be an arson wave in the city. Since Oct. 12, 13 people have died, including seven children, in two tenement fires that city police believed to be arson.

Last night's meeting was organized by Por La Gente and other community groups and was attended by more than 85 angry and frustrated people.

"They are trying to push the poor people out, to make this an exclusive upper-middle class community," Thomas Soto told the group.

Soto, a member of the Coalition to Save Rent Control, charged Mayor Steve Cappiello and the City Council are indirectly responsible for the recent deaths because of the atmosphere created by the vacancy decontrol ordinance.

"The landlords, in for their own profit, are being encouraged to push out the poor," Soto said. "Hoboken is a working-class community, and there is an offensive going on against the poor."

Cappiello attended last night's meeting but he did not address the crowd. But outside the meeting room, the mayor dismissed charges that vacancy decontrol created an atmosphere that is anti-poor. He conceded, however, that a small number of landlords might attempt to exploit the decontrol ordinance for their own profit. Most landlords would not, he added.

Cappiello also said the trend toward converting low-income housing into expensive housing was slowing down. In respnse to further questioning, Cappiello conceded that landlords still were quite anxious to convert poor housing into expensive dwellings.

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Renters movement named

Hudson Dispatch 11/5/81

AMOR means anger, too

By CHUCK SUTTON
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—The Spanish word "amor" means "love," but in this city, AMOR translates into "uniting the people to stop arson for profit."

It stands for the Ana Mercado Organization of Renters, named for the tenant activist who perished in a suspicious fire Oct. 24. The Citizens United for New Action has bestowed the name on its mobilization for a Nov. 14 demonstration.

At a meeting Sunday night, in front of 300 people gathered outside the CUNA center on Willow Street, CUNA leader Juan Garcia read letters Mercado had written to President Reagan and Rep. Frank J. Guarini, D-Hudson, just weeks before she died in the fire at 102 12th St. The crowd then voted to name the drive after the tenant activist.

Since then CUNA has circulated more than 800 petitions calling for a federal investigation of arson here. Today it will begin passing out flyers for the demonstration.

Tom Soto, coordinator for the march, said several organizations have joined in the mobilization, including the Concerned Citizens Commitee, which opposed rent decontrol in Jersey City; the People's Congress of New Jersey; Por La Gente (For the People) of Hoboken; the Emergency Coalition to Save Rent Control; the East Orange Tenants Organization, and groups from as far away as Paterson and Trenton.

"People are realizing that the problem of arson is a growing problem around the state. People are also realizing that there must be a focal point for the fight against arson. Hoboken is becoming the focal point," Garcia said.

The march is scheduled to start at noon at 12 and Washington streets and will proceed to the scene of the Oct. 12 fire at 67 Park Ave. that took two lives.

The march is to end at City Hall, where CUNA will give petitions calling for a federal investigation of arson incidents in Hoboken to city officials and to a group of lawyers who will take them to Washington.

New York Times
11/8/81

Section 11

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Hoboken: Fear Of Fire Haunts Many

By JOSEPH LAURA

HOBOKEN

FOR MOST people who live on the clean, tree-lined streets of Hoboken's brownstone revival neighborhoods, life is comfortable. The homes are well kept and an air of a community is on the rise.

But for many residents of the city's less-fashionable tenements, fear, not comfort, is their constant companion.

Standing outside the five-story tenement in which she lives, Brigita Rodriguez said:

"I have three children, and I'm afraid for them. Me and my husband, I don't care so much, but our children — they're afraid."

And with good reason.

On Oct. 24, the building next door, at 1202 12th Street, caught fire at 4 A.M. Within two hours, 11 of its 21 tenants, including seven children who once played with Mrs. Rodriguez's youngsters, were dead.

That blaze was the second fatal fire here in three weeks. The first, in the early hours of Columbus Day, killed

(2) new York Times 11/8/81

In Hoboken, Fear of

Continued From Page 1

similar in concept to the automobile insurance pool — is the reason, he explained.

"Conceivably," Mr. Cucci went on, "you could get insurance, set a torch to a building five days later and still apply for another insurance policy."

If the prevention of arson is difficult, the arson conviction rate is almost nil.

Nationwide, the rate is less than 1 percent, according to a 1980 Department of Justice survey on arson in urban centers. The survey also attributed to arson at least 1,000 deaths and property damage amounting to $1.5 billion.

Mayor Steve Cappiello acknowledges that Hoboken has a "very serious" arson problem. It is a city in transition, he said, with wide extremes in housing and styles of living that are not easily reconciled.

The Mayor conceded that he was "not happy" with all aspects of the city's much-heralded renaissance. He says that many longtime residents have left because of the lure of high profits for their homes or prohibitively high rental prices. The prices for many of this city's apartments and homes, he asserted, are "overrated."

Even so, Mr. Cappiello said he did not believe the majority of fires here represented arson for profit. Deputy Fire Chief Edward McDonald agrees.

"Sometimes, they're just started by mischievous kids," Chief McDonald said. "A lot of times they're just playing, but people still die."

He noted that the January 1979 fire that killed 21 persons here was believed to have been set by a child who was among the victims.

The Federal arson study supported the contentions of Mayor Cappiello and Chief McDonald. It showed that only 14 percent of all arson had a profit motive, that revenge, spite and vandalism accounted for the other 86 percent and that juveniles were responsible for 40 percent of all arson in 1980.

Chief McDonald maintained that absentee landlords and deteriorating buildings were the major problems here. Whatever anger tenants might feel toward neglectful landlords, he said, the tenants must still exercise greater caution to prevent fires.

"I've seen open wood fires on gas stoves when there is no heat," Chief McDonald said. "I feel sympathy for the tenants, but they don't realize the danger they're putting themselves in — and putting others in."

According to the majority of tenants, their greatest danger lurks outside, not inside, their buildings.

Only last May, the building that burned at 1202 12th Street last month was set afire, and bottles filled with gasoline were found inside the hallway before they exploded. The tenants of that building suspect that the landlord may be a target for revenge, noting that another apartment house owned by the same person has had three arson attacks this year.

To fight what they call their arson war, members of Por La Gente are stationing guards on rooftops to watch for arsonists. Other tenants have begun sleeping at the homes of friends or relatives.

"If someone sets out to burn a building, we can stave them off, but we cannot stop them," said Sister Norberta. "And that's no victory, I can assure you. With certain landlords, if they

two brothers 7 and 2 years old.

Investigators have attributed both fires to arson.

The scope of the Oct. 24 fire has been eclipsed here only by a tenement blaze that shocked this city on Jan. 20, 1979, when 21 persons died.

The most recent fires have been a reminder of Hoboken's history of arson. Since March 1978, 41 persons, including 30 children, have died in arson-related fires. To date, no one has been convicted.

"People are very frightened. They're still in mourning now, but the fear will return soon," said Sister Norberta of St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, who has organized Por La Gente (For the People), a tenants' group formed to fight arson.

Despite their fears, Sister Norberta said that most of the residents, even those who have survived the fires, will continue to live in the same tenements because there is no affordable housing elsewhere.

Hoboken's vacancy rate is generally 1 percent or less, according to city officials.

Many in the tenants' group, including Sister Norberta, maintain that the spiraling "gentrification" movement here, an upgrading of housing by more-affluent people, is a major cause for many of the successful and unsuccessful arson attempts. Insurance money is coupled with the enormous profit potential in apartment rehabilitations and renovations, they say.

"Is this the price we have to pay for renaissance?" asked Sister Norberta, who said that many deteriorating tenements were "standing in the way" of the gentrification movement.

Others concerned with Hoboken's problem, and arson in general, say that the tenants' claims could be valid in certain situations. However, they contend that gentrification is only one factor that must be considered among those relating to arson.

Insurance companies review changing patterns of development within a city, vacancy rates, rent control, the conditions of a building and a landlord's financial situation in all arson investigations, according to the American Insurers Alliance, a trade association representing more than 100 insurance companies nationwide.

Despite all these factors, Joseph Cucci, Alliance vice president, said that many landlords who might be considered bad insurance risks were still able to obtain fire insurance in New Jersey. A state-mandated insurance pool for property owners — it is

Continued on Page 14

(2) New York Times 11/8/81

In Hoboken, Fear of

Continued From Page 1

similar in concept to the automobile insurance pool — is the reason, he explained.

"Conceivably," Mr. Cucci went on, "you could get insurance, set a torch to a building five days later and still apply for another insurance policy."

If the prevention of arson is difficult, the arson conviction rate is almost nil.

Nationwide, the rate is less than 1 percent, according to a 1980 Department of Justice survey on arson in urban centers. The survey also attributed to arson at least 1,000 deaths and property damage amounting to $1.5 billion.

Mayor Steve Cappiello acknowledges that Hoboken has a "very serious" arson problem. It is a city in transition, he said, with wide extremes in housing and styles of living that are not easily reconciled.

The Mayor conceded that he was "not happy" with all aspects of the city's much-heralded renaissance. He says that many longtime residents have left because of the lure of high profits for their homes or prohibitively high rental prices. The prices for many of this city's apartments and homes, he asserted, are "overrated."

Even so, Mr. Cappiello said he did not believe the majority of fires here represented arson for profit. Deputy Fire Chief Edward McDonald agrees.

"Sometimes, they're just started by mischievous kids," Chief McDonald said. "A lot of times they're just playing, but people still die."

He noted that the January 1979 fire that killed 21 persons here was believed to have been set by a child who was among the victims.

The Federal arson study supported the contentions of Mayor Cappiello and Chief McDonald. It showed that only 14 percent of all arson had a profit motive, that revenge, spite and vandalism accounted for the other 86 percent and that juveniles were responsible for 40 percent of all arson in 1980.

Chief McDonald maintained that absentee landlords and deteriorating buildings were the major problems here. Whatever anger tenants might feel toward neglectful landlords, he said, the tenants must still exercise greater caution to prevent fires.

"I've seen open wood fires on gas stoves when there is no heat," Chief McDonald said. "I feel sympathy for the tenants, but they don't realize the danger they're putting themselves in — and putting others in."

According to the majority of tenants, their greatest danger lurks outside, not inside, their buildings.

Only last May, the building that burned at 1202 12th Street last month was set afire, and bottles filled with gasoline were found inside the hallway before they exploded. The tenants of that building suspect that the landlord may be a target for revenge, noting that another apartment house owned by the same person has had three arson attacks this year.

To fight what they call their arson war, members of Por La Gente are stationing guards on rooftops to watch for arsonists. Other tenants have begun sleeping at the homes of friends or relatives.

"If someone sets out to burn a building, we can stave them off, but we cannot stop them," said Sister Norberta. "And that's no victory, I can assure you. With certain landlords, if they

Fire Haunts Many

cannot get people out one way or another, fire might be a solution."

After the recent fires, city officials intensified inspections for fire-prevention and Building Code violations. Also, the City Council is pushing for an ordinance requiring smoke detectors in all multifamily dwellings with four or more housing units.

The state has a similar regulation for multiple-dwelling units, but local officials said that the law lacked teeth and there was not sufficient manpower to enforce it. Despite the state law, there were no smoke detectors in either of the buildings that burned here last month.

With all the investigations and studies on arson, officials are still at a loss on how to stop it or apprehend those responsible for it. While he searches for answers, Chief McDonald said, he still finds it hard to believe people would risk the lives of others merely to collect insurance money.

"If they're going to do it," he declared, "they should do it at a time when people are not asleep. At 4 o'clock in the morning, even the insomniacs are in bed."

NYTimes 11/8/81

When Professionals

By JEFFREY ROTHFEDER

JOEL SOLOW describes his eight months out of work earlier this year simply: "The whole period was absolute misery. It's very difficult to get across to somebody who's not in that position the humiliation involved."

As a lawyer, Mr. Solow was part of a large and mostly forgotten segment of the unexpectedly idle — the out-of-work white-collar worker.

Most unemployed professionals — lawyers, teachers, researchers, engineers, executives and the like — who are forced to collect public compensation acknowledge an uncomfortable and somewhat disturbingly prejudiced realization: The unemployment line is the great equalizer.

Suddenly these highly educated workers find themselves statistically clustered with manual workers in monthly labor reports and earning the same as them in weekly benefits.

And while the official unemployment figures are used as a benchmark of the nation's labor condition, some say they tell only part of the tale when it comes to the number of out-of-work professionals.

According to the Federal Department of Labor, the nation's overall unemployment rate in September stood at 7.5 percent. This includes 4.1 percent of professionals who were out of work — up three-tenths of 1 percent from a year ago — and 10.2 percent of blue-collar workers who were unemployed — down six-tenths of a percent. The number of professionals not working last month, the Government said, was 2.2 million.

The statistics for New Jersey are far less conclusive and much more dated. The Labor Department reported that 4 percent of the state's professionals were unemployed for all of 1980 — down one-tenth of 1 percent from 1979 — and 10.2 percent of blue-collar workers were looking for jobs — up 1.5 percent. The 1980 professionals percentage translates into 80,000 workers.

Those who dispute the Government's figures on unemployed professionals — and who contend that the number is much higher — say that many in this group remain a hidden

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Sunday News 11/8/81

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and FRED KERBER

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The heat generated by flames will draw an elevator to the fire floor, where riders can be trapped when the doors open and flames shoot into the shaft, creating a potential "towering inferno," fire officials explained.

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New York Times 11/8/81

Hoboken Struggles With Gentrification

Continued From Page 1

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His attempt to increase rents at a midtown tenement was thwarted by a tenant who united the building's occupants and then established the Hoboken Organization of Tenants.

The increase would have been used to improve the building, Mr. Seidman said, but the tenant argued that it was illegal. The landlord has decided to go the condominium route instead.

Mr. Seidman envisages his other Hoboken properties being turned into middle-class housing, with one-bed-

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"Housing should not be subject to the vagaries of the private market," said Hoboken's biggest landlord, Joseph Barry, a Maplewood lawyer. "Housing should be treated like a necessity."

With his father and another partner, Mr. Barry operates the Applied Housing Corporation, which has used Federal funds to build about 800 subsidized living units in Hoboken in the last decade.

"Applied Housing is really like a public utility for the low end of the housing market," he said.

Other Hoboken landlords complain that Mr. Barry's efforts have removed too much property from the city's tax rolls and thus increased their burden. About 37 percent of Hoboken housing is subsidized, according to Mr. Barry's estimates.

Tenant groups say that Applied Housing is part of the displacement problem, not its solution, an allegation Mr. Barry denies. When all rehabilitation work is completed in about 18 months, he said, 700 families will have been dislocated to make room for 1,200 apartments.

Mr. Barry agrees with tenants that displacement as a result of gentrification is a problem. The Applied Housing waiting list, he said, has grown to 800, or one applicant for each existing apartment, although the turnover rate has dropped from about 10 apartments a month to one.

"It started about a year and a half ago," Mr. Barry said. "We used to have a large turnover and not as much desperation to get an apartment."

The Hoboken Housing Authority operates 1,353 low-income units, and the story there is similar.

"People here are not moving out because there's no place for them to go," said Joseph A. Caliguire, the Housing Authority director.

For Mr. Barry, a solution to Hoboken's housing crunch is the development of luxury units on the waterfront. The additional apartments, he said, would appeal to the middle class and therefore relieve some of the pressure on the tenement stock.

Meanwhile, even new Hoboken residents are complaining about the high rents.

Diane Camilleri, a 35-year-old veterinarian who moved here from New York City two years ago, now pays $500 for six rooms, a rent she acknowledges is a bargain by Manhattan standards. Still, she is distressed by the array of surcharges and "hardship" increases that landlords can pass on to tenants.

"There are some landlords who don't want to do it, but don't have a choice," Dr. Camilleri said. "For others, it's just greed."

Scarcity is the real source of Hoboken's housing problems, not people forced out of New York because of high rents, Dr. Camilleri asserted.

Some longtime Hoboken residents — among them, Bernadine Van Carpels, adminstrator of the Rent-Leveling Board, take a similar view.

"I happen to think of the newcomers as just another group of immigrants," she said.

Other Hoboken people view the new arrivals less philosophically.

"What about people like me who were born and raised in Hoboken," asked a 33-year-old woman who was forced to leave when her $200 rent was doubled.

"These people," she said of the newcomers, "have no idea what they're buying."

"It was always our city, our town," said Miss Ratti. "Now all of a sudden it isn't. It's a Greenwich Village West. How many of them look down at us poor deprived people. We don't need them telling us how to eat with a fork."

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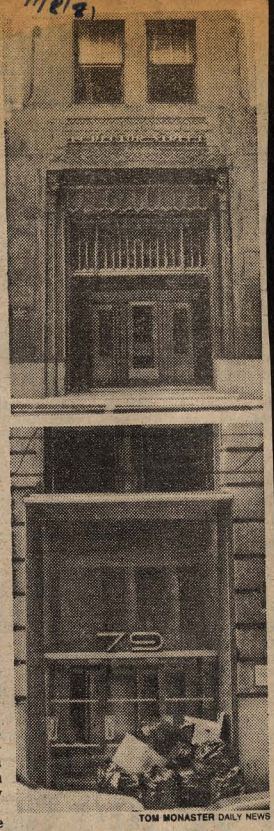
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TOM MONASTER DAILY NEWS

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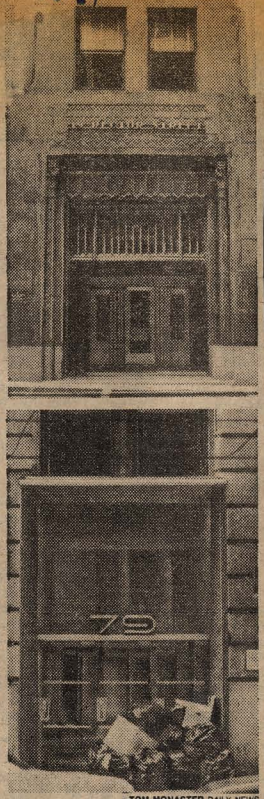
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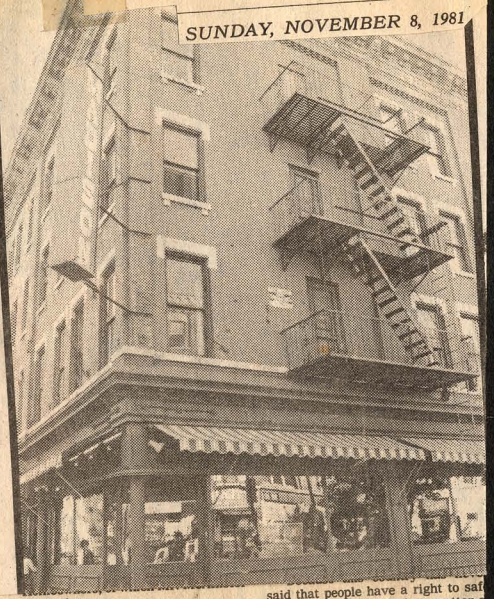
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Hoboken: Change Bringing Problems

By KENNETH SCHEPT

The New York Tim

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1981



HOBOKEN

EFREYN and Carmen Ramos pay $108 a month for a four-room, cold-water railroad apartment on lower Willow Avenue here. Recently, they and their nine fellow tenants received rent-increase notices. After certain improvements are made, the notice said, the Ramoses' rent would be $360.

The Ramoses, both 46 years old, have lived in the building for four years. Mr. Ramos is disabled, his wife is a sewing-machine operator and a young grandson lives with them. They cannot afford the increase or the month-and-a-half security deposit also requested.

While Mr. McAllister acknowledges that people will be displaced when his rent increases go into effect, he also notes that all 10 apartments have new bathrooms, which, along with other improvements, have cost nearly

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Reporting an increase in displace

PAGE 14 THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1981

Senate Va. 175 Copies 11/9/81

Residents protected by states tenants' law

With thousands of Hoboken and Hudson County residents living in fear that their apartments will be converted to condominiums and they will be forced out, Assemblyman Thomas A. Gallo today assured them they have the rights and protection under a state tenants' law which went into effect last July.

To acquaint residents with their rights, Gallo said he is distributing a pamphlet which answers 14 of the most asked questions concernin the conversion of an apartment house to condominums. Gallo said the pamphlets will be available at two locations in Hoboken: The other reasons.

The assemblyman said he was impressed by the wealth of information in the pamphlet published by the New Jersey Department of the Public Advocate and immediately made arrangements to have a supply available for Hoboken residents. He commended Stanley Van Ness, the state's public advocate, for recognizing the problems communities are facing because of the

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Raymond McAllister, their landlord, also lives in Hoboken. He and his wife moved here from New York City in 1974 to their own row house on an uptown block in the heart of Hoboken's renaissance area.

Mr. McAllister, a 40-year-old investment adviser, now owns three tenement buildings in Hoboken. He regards them as the basis of his retirement portfolio, as well as an opportunity to contribute to the revitalization of the city.

The conflict between the needs of Mr. McAllister and the Ramoses is symptomatic of changes in this city of 45,000 people since the brownstone craze took hold about 10 years ago. With the middle class entrenched in expensive, flower box-adorned row houses along the city's northern streets, entrepreneurs now target more blighted areas, where tenants often pay below-market rents.

"I get almost daily inquiries from people threatened with displacement," said Terri Ratti, a social worker. "Gentrification [the upgrading of housing by more-affluent people] is so insidious. You just don't see it happening until it's too late."

While Mr. McAllister acknowledges that people will be displaced when his rent increases go into effect, he also notes that all 10 apartments have new bathrooms, which, along with other improvements, have cost nearly $60,000, or several times more than the building's assessed value. He expects this to allow him to decontrol the building under a provision of Hoboken's rent-leveling ordinance.

Revision of that ordinance has been the focus of both landlord and tenant attention in recent months, polarizing the groups into separate camps and spawning the League of Hoboken Homeowners, of which Mr. McAllister is a leader.

A new amendment to the ordinance is designed to assure landlords an adequate return on their investment and protect tenants from unfair rents. But neither group is completely satisfied.

The homeowners are challenging the amendment in court, charging that a provision limiting a landlord's "hardship" rent increase to 25 percent contradicts another clause guaranteeing a return of about 11½ percent.

Tenants argue that the amendment continues to allow landlords too many loopholes for raising rents through "hardship" increases or surcharges.

"Because this country has never said that people have a right to safe and decent housing, it is a matter of those who can afford it have it," said a tenant advocate, Sister Norberta of St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church.

Reporting an increase in displaced persons moving into western Hoboken from areas where housing rehabilitation has pushed them out, Sister Norberta declared:

"I think people should have a right to some stability. Families have a right to live in a neighborhood."

Hugh Hothem, a 36-year-old psychotherapist and a member of the Steering Committee of the League of Hoboken Homeowners, contends that what is good for landlords is ultimately good for tenants. Decontrol, he says, would permit profit levels that could allow landlords to maintain some apartments at lower rents.

Mr. McAllister has just applied that principle to the building where the Ramoses live, offering a lower rent to an elderly 20-year resident.

According to Larry Seidman, a Hoboken landlord, continued rent control will only lead to the phenomenon most dreaded by tenants: condomania.

Mr. Seidman, a lawyer, recently completed converting a building on lower Bloomfield Street into condominiums, where a one-bedroom unit sells for $70,000. Three years ago, a four-story Victorian home on upper Bloomfield Street cost that.

"If a landlord can't get 11½ percent

Continued on Page 16



The New York Times/Carl T. Gossett (right) and Frank C. Dougherty

Renovated Madison House, left, and fire scene on Park Avenue in Hoboken where two died last month

OCEAN COUNTY

The New York Times

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1981

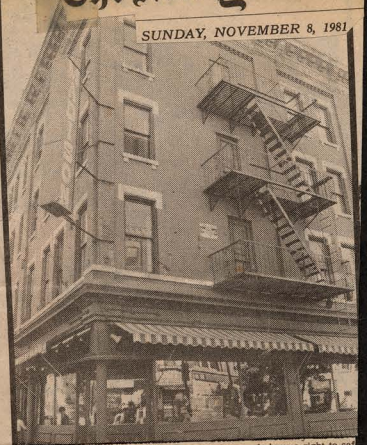
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sent to Ca 175 Capitols 11/9/81

Residents protected by states tenants' law

With thousands of Hoboken and Hudson County residents living in fear that their apartments will be converted to condominiums and they will be forced out, Assemblyman Thomas A. Gallo today assured them they have the rights and protection under a state tenants' law which went into effect last July.

To acquaint residents with their rights, Gallo said he is distributing a pamphlet which answers 14 of the most asked questions concernin the conversion of an apartment house to condominums.

Gallo said the pamphlets will be available at two locations in Hoboken: The Rent Leveling Office at City Hall and the Multi-Service Building at Second and Grand sts., where senior citizen programs are held.

"Condominium is a word that has struck fear into the lives of many people who feel they cannot afford the purchase price of the apartment they have lived in for many years," said the assemblyman. "They are afraid they must also leave the neighborhood where they have spent most of their lives."

Gallo said the pamphlet points out that senior citizens and the disabled who qualify, cannot be evicted for 40 years on the grounds that their home is being converted. He added, however, that a tenant, of course, must continue to pay rent and follow reasonable rules and regulations, otherwise he or she can be evicted for other reasons.

The assemblyman said he was impressed by the wealth of information in the pamphlet published by the New Jersey Department of the Public Advocate and immediately made arrangements to have a supply available for Hoboken residents. He commended Stanley Van Ness, the state's public advocate, for recognizing the problems communities are facing because of the nationwide trend toward condominiums. He also thanked Mayor Steve Cappiello for cooperating in the distribution of the pamphlets.

Gallo also reminded residents that information about condominiums and tenants rights under the New Jersey law may be obtained by dialing a toll-free telephone hot line, 800-792-8600.

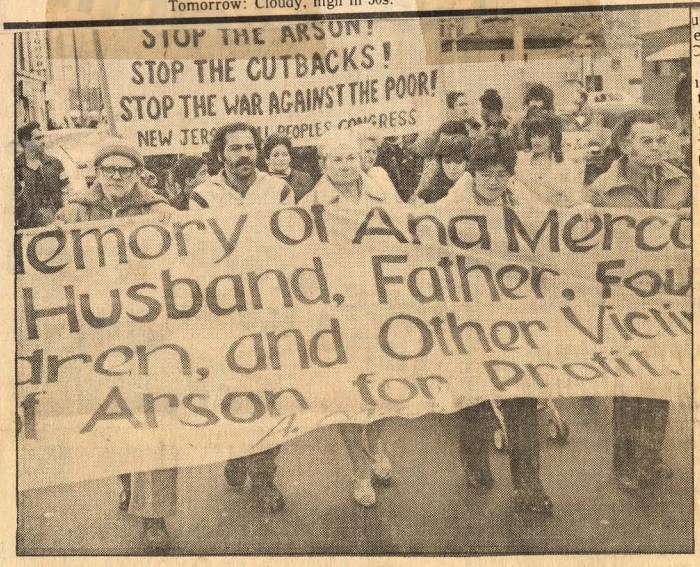
"For everyone with a telephone, the answers to their questions are at their fingertips," said the assemblyman.

NORTH HUDSON HOBOKEN
FINAL EDITION

THE JERSEY and Jersey

Tonight: Cloudy, low in 40s.
Tomorrow: Cloudy, high in 50s.

MONDAY, NO



Four hundred persons march to Hoboken City Hall to protest the deaths and displacements caused by the recent wave of fires in Hoboken.

400 rally in Hoboken arson protest

By Randolph Diamond

It was billed as a rally to protest the recent suspicious fires and the displacement of the poor they have caused in Hoboken, in particular against the Hoboken renaissance in general.

See Editorial: DETECTORS on Page 16.

Saturday's noon-time protest started at the scene of the latest fatal fire, at 102 12th St., in which 11 persons died three weeks ago. Four hundred persons, mostly Hispanics, gathered outside the still-standing building that had been sold only the day before to a Hoboken-based developer, who will turn the remains of the charred building into either rental apartments or condominiums.

Hundreds of persons gathered outside 102 12th St. after that fire on Oct. 25 for memorial services led by Sister Norberta of St. Francis Church.

See 400 RALLY—Page 29.

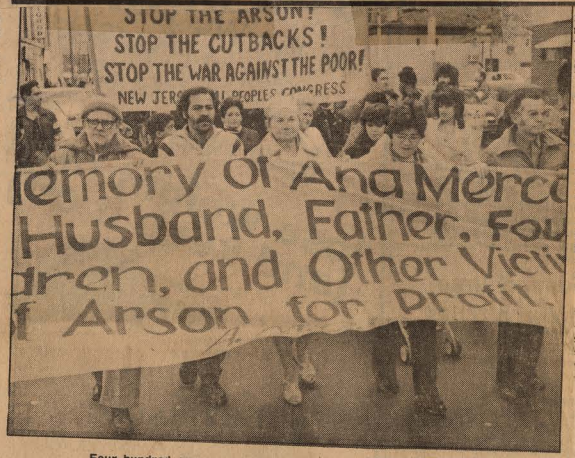
NORTH HUDSON HOBOKEN
FINAL EDITION

THE JERSEY JOURNAL

and Jersey Observer

Tonight: Cloudy, low in 40s.
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MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1981



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See 400 RALLY—Page 29.

THE JERSEY JOURNAL, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1981 25

400 rally in Hoboken arson

Continued from Page 1.

who said, "You can see the renaissance of Hoboken moving right up the block. They (the blaze victims) were in the way."

The 400 persons participating in the rally did not know the building at 102 12th St. had been sold. There was constant shouting during the two-hour-long march that went through many of Hoboken's low-income sections. The slogans demanded the city's vacancy decontrol ordinance had to be stopped.

The march finally ended at Hoboken City Hall, where speaker after speaker from a number of community organizations denounced Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello. They charged he was allowing the displacement of the poor by allowing the city council to pass a vacancy decontrol ordinance, by encouraging developers to renovate buildings and by the failure of the city to catch any of the arsonists who set a number of fatal, suspicious fires since 1978. They said the blazes have led to the death of almost 50 persons and the displacement of hundreds of the city's poor.

"We're not here for political jobs, Mr. Mayor," shouted one speaker, Vincent Copeland, who said he was a member of the community groups that had sponsored the rally. "We're not here for shakedowns. We're not here for kickbacks. We're just here for simple justice," he said.

Juan Garcia, the executive director of Citizens United for New Action (CUNA), a Hoboken Hispanic organization, blasted the mayor for allowing what he said was the displacement of 10,000 of the city's poor in the last three years, 90 percent of whom he said were of Hispanic origin.

"If you can't change the laws, change the people who make the laws," said Garcia as the crowd chanted in agreement.

Garcia demanded that Cappiello, who was sitting in his second floor office during the demonstration, come down and "face the people."

A few minutes later a Hoboken police officer came down with a message from the mayor that he would be happy to meet Garcia and his committee after the rally.

Garcia read the message and shouted, "We don't have a committee. He will have to meet with all of us now. The people here make the decisions, not one committee." The mayor didn't come down.

Garcia characterized the mayor as being a racist and read portions of an interview the mayor gave two years ago in which he said many of the newly immigrated Hispanics were in need of education in sanitary habits.

Perhaps the most emotional moment during the rally came near its beginning when Garcia introduced 37-year-old Gladys Garcia, who was badly burned in the Columbus day fire in the tenement house at 67 Park Ave. in which two persons were killed.

Mrs. Garcia, whose 12-year-old son Antonio was critically injured after jumping from the fourth floor of the burning tenement and is still hospitalized, said she has been looking for an apartment for her and five children for the last month without any luck.

"I've called the Housing Authority and Applied Housing and I'm told there are no apartments," she said. "I'm staying with relatives now, but their landlord says I can't continue to stay. I don't know what to do."

Mrs. Garcia said she had been to see the mayor, to no avail.

"If the mayor won't find her an apartment, then we all will," Garcia shouted as the crowd cheered.

Among the groups that participated in the demonstration besides Garcia's CUNA, were Por La Gente (For the People), the Hoboken Union of Tenants and several militant community and political groups from New Jersey and New York.

After the rally Cappiello told the Jersey Journal from his City Hall office that he felt there was no point in addressing the crowd.

"They would have just shouted at me," he said. "They wouldn't have allowed me to speak."

Cappiello said he sympathized with those displaced because of the renaissance and fatal fires and said his administration has been trying to do everything within its power to help poor people.

"We have a built a number of senior citizen projects and housing for low-income people," he said. "I'm not denying people have been displaced. But we have done what we can to help the poor."

The mayor said the police department has been working as hard as it could to crack the recent wave of arson cases in Hoboken but he said, unfortunately, arson is nearly impossible to prove.

He said there was no proof that the fires have had anything to do with the Hoboken renaissance and noted many suspicious fires are started when someone has a vendetta against someone else living in a building.

Cappiello said he was trying to help Mrs. Garcia find an apartment but said he couldn't create apartments.

November 13, 1981 workers

Hoboken tenan protest of arson-

month of October alone.

Since 1978, there have been 41 deaths in arson-related fires, something that even the city administration and the Fire Department admit. This is an extremely high figure for a city with a total population of only around 45,000 people.

Other demands of the demonstration include: provide emergency housing for forcibly displaced tenants, jail and prosecute all landlords violating the Smoke Detector or Rent Registration Laws, establish an independent tenant advocate office to enforce tenants' rights, and immediately repeal the Vacancy Decontrol Law, which raises rents at least 25% and which is seen as giving the green light to real estate interests and speculators to [illegible] the poor out of Hoboken.

[illegible]ight's meeting, held at

will be the result of pressure by the people's organization and strength.

Also mentioned at the meeting was press coverage of the plight of Hoboken tenants. The *Hudson County Dispatch*, for example, carried an article on Nov. 5 on how Mayor Cappiello has abandoned plans to enforce apartment buildings to maintain fire detection alarms, under pressure from city landlords.

The Nov. 8 *New York Times* carried two articles in its New Jersey section on the wave of arson in Hoboken. The article admits that out of the 41 arson deaths since 1978, "no one has been convicted to date."

An article appearing in the Nov. 5 *El Diario de la Prensa*, a Spanish language daily, advertised the Nov. 14 march and rally.

Over 10,000 leaflets in Spanish

relative of one of those that died and I began to cry."

Another said, "It is so important that we find a way to stop this. The landlords have all kinds of ways to force out poor people . . . and the politicians are behind them."

At Mount Olive Church, whose congregation is Black, one of the ministers took the leaflets and said that the church had burned down in 1976, and that instead of helping them rebuild, the city had given the church 24 hours to vacate the property.

Clearly the people are angry and itching to fight back. Tenants in Hoboken have taken great pride in organizing themselves. November 14 promises to sound the opening bell in the struggle of poor and working people in Hoboken for decent housing and a decent life.

Pari

Sat., Nov. 14

March Against Arson-for-Profit

Gather 12 Noon at 12th St. & Washington

(Site of the last arson)

Rally 2 P.M. at City Hall

No More Arson Deaths! No More Displacements! Stop the War Against the Poor!

13 Latino and Black victims, mostly children, have been killed by arson in the last 2 weeks, and at least 50 families have been burnt out of their homes this year. And tenants tell of threats by their landlords to get them out by any means necessary.

Evictions, harassment, and displacement have increased sharply since the Vacancy Decontrol law was passed on July 15th. Untold hundreds of low and moderate income working class families have been displaced to make

Whose children will be next?



November 13, 1981 workers world

Hoboken tenants plan protest of arson-for-profit

By David Perez

HOBOKEN, N.J., Nov. 8—"On to Nov. 14!" proclaimed over 50 people tonight at a community meeting here as momentum continues to build for a Nov. 14 march against arson-for-profit.

The demonstration, called by Citizens United for New Action (CUNA), the Emergency Coalition to Save Rent Control in Hoboken, Por la Gente/For the People, and the New Jersey All-Peoples Congress (APC), was planned in response to the recent deadly wave of landlord-instigated arson fires that have killed 13 Latino and Black people, nine of them children, in the month of October alone.

Since 1978, there have been 41 deaths in arson-related fires, something that even the city administration and the Fire Department admit. This is an extremely high figure for a city with a total population of only around 45,000 people.

Other demands of the demonstration include: provide emergency housing for forcibly displaced tenants, jail and prosecute all landlords violating the Smoke Detector or Rent Registration Laws, establish an independent tenant advocate office to enforce tenants' rights, and immediately repeal the Vacancy Decontrol Law, which raises rents at least 25% and which is seen as giving the green light to real estate interests and speculators to ...e the poor out of Hoboken.

...ight's meeting, held at the CUNA office in the primarily Puerto Rican community, reports were heard on the upcoming Nov. 14 march. Tom Soto of the N.J. APC went over the route of the march, which will assemble at 12th St. and Washington at 12 noon, march through poor sections of Hoboken, and finally march on Washington St. to City Hall, where a 2 p.m. rally will be held.

There was also a report from a high school youth who told of meeting with other youths to enlist aid for security for the march.

Juan Garcia, director of CUNA, remarked that there has been talk that the cops are beginning an investigation of the last fire. Of course, any such investigation will be the result of pressure by the people's organization and strength.

Also mentioned at the meeting was press coverage of the plight of Hoboken tenants. The *Hudson County Dispatch*, for example, carried an article on Nov. 5 on how Mayor Cappiello has abandoned plans to enforce apartment buildings to maintain fire detection alarms, under pressure from city landlords.

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An article appearing in the Nov. 5 *El Diario de la Prensa*, a Spanish language daily, advertised the Nov. 14 march and rally.

Over 10,000 leaflets in Spanish and English calling for the march have been distributed, many by children. On Nov. 7, close to 25 people participated in a major leafletting campaign to insure that every street corner, store front, and light post would be covered with leaflets. Many bodegas, laundromats, and barbershops took leaflets for their windows and counters.

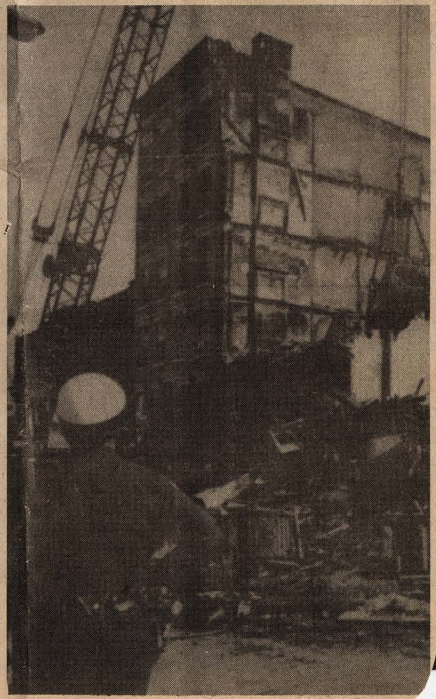
Good response

But it was on the steets that the deepest support and enthusiasm was expressed. As a middle-aged Latino woman said, "I stood in front of the building that had burned [the one on 12th and Washington—DP] and I felt sick, sick, sick, sick. Later I passed a relative of one of those that died and I began to cry."

Another said, "It is so important that we find a way to stop this. The landlords have all kinds of ways to force out poor people . . . and the politicians are behind them."

At Mount Olive Church, whose congregation is Black, one of the ministers took the leaflets and said that the church had burned down in 1976, and that instead of helping them rebuild, the city had given the church 24 hours to vacate the property.

Clearly the people are angry and itching to fight back. Tenants in Hoboken have taken great pride in organizing themselves. November 14 promises to sound the opening bell in the struggle of poor and working people in Hoboken for decent housing and a decent life.



Park Avenue in Hoboken where two died last month.

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(Site of the last arson)

Rally 2 P.M. at City Hall

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Evictions, harassment, and displacement have increased sharply since the Vacancy Decontrol law was passed on July 15th. Untold hundreds of low and moderate income working class families have been displaced to make way for the rich.

The City Council and Mayor Cappiello are to blame for these arson deaths because they passed Vacancy Decontrol and gave the landlords a financial incentive to drive out tenants!

Vacancy Decontrol and other laws weakening rent control throughout New Jersey have been encouraged by the Reagan administration's war against the poor and workers. Local politicians, both Democrats and Republicans, have been working hard for the large landlords, the real estate companies, the banks, and big business against the interests of poor and working people. The result is displacements, layoffs, cutbacks in food stamps, welfare, medical care, public transportation, aid to housing, education and even the arts. Politicians are passing laws to increase landlords' profits, like Hoboken's decontrol law, but laws that are supposed to protect tenants' rights, like fire protection and against harassment, aren't enforced. In addition small home and store owners have been hit with enormous tax increases while the really wealthy get large tax breaks.

Whose children will be next?



Politicians Say Cut Back—We Say Fight Back!

Hundreds of angry Hoboken residents packed City Hall to protest Vacancy Decontrol on July 15th. People in cities and towns all across this country are starting to resist the local effects of the federal program of gentrification, racism, cutbacks and the pouring of billions of dollars into the bloated Pentagon budget.

This fight back movement was seen when 500,000 workers and community groups marched against Reaganism on Solidarity Day, Sept. 19, in Washington, D.C. The people of Hoboken, as well, will not sit by while children are killed in arson fires and our city is turned into a preserve for the rich. Tenants and small home owners, as well as landlords who respect tenants' rights, must stand up and say 'No!' to the greed of the real estate interests and speculators who drive us out of our homes in order to make more profits.

Stop the arson fires! Repeal Vacancy Decontrol now!
Jail and prosecute all landlords violating the Smoke Detector or Rent Registration laws!
Emergency housing for forcibly displaced tenants!
Establish an independent tenant advocate office to enforce tenants' rights!

Leaflet issued by: **CUNA (Citizens United for New Action), N.J. All Peoples' Congress (APC),**
Other endorsers: Emergency Coalition to Save Rent Control in Hoboken, Hoboken Union of Tenants (HUT), Ana Mercado Organization of Renters (AMOR), Por la Gente/For the People

For more information call:653-1770, 433-2332

Labor donated

Sábado, 14 de Nov.

Marcha Contra Incendios Crim[redacted]es

Lugar de reunión: 12 pm Washington y la[redacted] 12

(Lugar del último incendio)

Concentración, 2 p.m., Edificio Municipal

¡Alto a los incendios criminales y a las evicciones!
¡Alto a la guerra contra los pobres!

13 víctimas Latinas y Negras, casi todos niños han muerto a causa de incendios deliberados en las últimas dos semanas. Por lo menos 50 familias fueron obligadas a mudarse este año a causa de incendios y los inquilinos hablan de amenazas hechas por los propietarios para lograr su evicción de cualquier forma.

Han aumentado las evicciones, el hostigamiento, y los desplazamientos desde que se aprobó el 15 de julio la ley que elimina el control de las rentas en alquileres vacíos. Un sin número de familias de clase obrera con ingresos moderados enfrentan la mudanza obligatoria para así abrir paso a los ricos.

El Concilio de la Ciudad y el Alcalde Cappiello son responsables por las muertes de las víctimas de los incendios—porque ellos aprobaron la ley que terminó con el control de rentas otorgando a los propietarios un incentivo monetario para echar a los inquilinos.

Leyes como estas que debilitan el control de rentas en el estado de Nueva Jersey son el resultado de las políticas de la administración de Reagan que ha lanzado la guerra contra los pobres. Los políticos de Hoboken, tanto Demócratas como Republicanos, se han unido a los intereses de los propietarios, negocios de bienes y raíces, bancos y al alto comercio, contra los intereses de los pobres y el pueblo trabajador. Los resultados son mudanzas, suspensiones en los empleos, recortes y reajustes en los cupones para alimentos, asistencia pública, atención médica, transporte público, viviendas y la educación.

Mientras se aprueban leyes que favorecen y aumentan las ganancias de los ricos como la eliminación del control de las rentas en Hoboken, sin embargo, las leyes que supuestamente protegen los derechos de los inquilinos, protección contra incendios y el hostigamiento, no se imponen.

¡Políticos Demandan Recortes—El Pueblo Demanda Resistencia!

El 15 de julio cientos de residentes de Hoboken se congregaron en el Concilio de la Ciudad para protestar las leyes que dieron fin al control de las rentas. En todo el país, en pueblos y ciudades, los residentes han iniciado un movimiento de resistencia contra los efectos del programa federal de favorecer a los ricos e impulsar recortes, racismo y la entrega de millones de dólares al ya extenso presupuesto del Pentágono.

Tenemos que organizar un movimiento de resistencia aquí en Hoboken. Las grandes posibilidades y logros que un movimiento de resistencia puede alcanzar se dejaron ver el Día de Solidaridad, 19 de Septiembre, en Washington, D.C. cuando 500,000 obreros y organizaciones comunales marcharon contra el Reaganismo.

¿Serán sus niños las próximas víctimas?



El pueblo de Hoboken a su vez no se cruzará de brazos permitiendo que nuestros hijos sean incendidos y que nuestra comunidad se vuelva un refugio para los ricos. Inquilinos, dueños de edificios pequeños, así como los propietarios que respetan los derechos de los inquilinos, han de enfrentar la avaricia de las fuertes compañías de bienes y raíces con un rotundo ¡NO! a los que nos echan de nuestros hogares para así aumentar sus ganancias.

- **Alto a los incendios criminales.**
- **Revocación de las leyes que terminaron con el control de rentas.**
- **Carcel y procesamiento a los que violan leyes de registro de rentas y detector de incendios.**
- **Viviendas para los inquilinos forzados a mudarse.**
- **Establecer una oficina independiente de asuntos de viviendas e inquilinos para proteger los derechos de estos.**

Iniciado por: **Ciudadanos Unidos Pro Nueva Acción (CUNA), El Congreso del Pueblo de Nueva Jersey (APC),** Otros endorsantes: Emergency Coalition to Save Rent Control in Hoboken, Hoboken Union of Tenants (HUT), Ana Mercado Organización de Rentantes(AMOR), Por la Gente/For the People

Para más información llame: 653-1770, 433-2332

Obra de mano donada

THE JERSEY JOURNAL, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 1981

In the North

Editor:
Haig Anlian

Job as tenant advoc
draws just 2 applica

rehab housing

The Hispanic group in Hoboken that is pushing for a federal investigation of two recent fires, which claimed the lives of 13 persons, and improved housing conditions will present a list of three demands to Mayor Steve Cappiello when they meet publicly at 4 p.m. Saturday in City Hall.

These demands are:

- Priority housing for the fire victims. The group is suggesting the use of the 180 units recently renovated opposite the Shop Rite on Washington Street.
- Immediate suspension of the rent vacancy decontrol ordinance.
- Passage of the smoke detector ordinance.

"We have 4,370 signatures supporting the demand for a federal investigation," said the legal council for the group, Ramon Irrizzary, of Newark. "We will continue picking up signatures until Nov. 30 and on Dec. 2, we will turn them into the mayor and the city council."

Irrizzary said he will be going to see the state attorney general after turning in the petition to give him a copy.

See HISPANICS — Page 33.

Hispanics to
demands to C

Continued from Page 1.

"There is an epidemic of evictions in Hoboken," said Irrizzary. He had no figures to support his statement, however.

Irrizzary said evictions have tripled in the last two months, and that CUNA has been trying to handle the displaced tenants.

Thomas Soto, one of the group's participants, referred to a recent newspaper article which said that at least 10,000 people had been displaced in Hoboken in the last four years.

Gladys Garcia, one of the displaced fire victims, was at a press conference yesterday. She complained that her family was divided among relatives and friends. Sh
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HOBOKEN
FINAL EDITION

JERSEY JOURNAL

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Tonight: Cloudy, low in 30s.
Tomorrow: Rain/snow, high around 40.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER

Arson hits Hoboken a

Saturday's discussion between city officials and community activists.

Protesters receive Cappiello pledge for decontrol review

By Raul Vicente Jr.

Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello has agreed to have the city's legal department review whether city officials could suspend the city's newly-adopted vacancy-decontrol ordinance.

"I will ask the city attorney for an opinion on the legality of an immediate suspension of the law," Cappiello said during a heated session with eight tenant and community leaders at City Hall on Saturday.

"Further, if the city council supports the investigate using city-owned property as priority housing for fire victims and to make records pertaining to housing, police, fire, and vacancy decontrol applications available to the leaders.

Cappiello's agreement to investigate the suspension of the decontrol law came after he'd been cornered on the issue by community leader Thomas Soto. Later on in the meeting, he apparently changed his mind and said he would not do so, but an uproar from the group forced him to agree to it anew.

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In the North

Editor:
Haig Anlian
Reporters:
Mary Fitzgibbons, Peter Hallam, Thomas Rojas, Agustin Torres, Raul Vicente Jr. and Lisa Vives.
North—854-1000
Hoboken—656-0720

y'll view film

e Weehawken Golden Thumb Garden ill see a film on "The Art and Meaning bana," Japanese floral arrangements, ed by the Japanese consulate, at the meeting at 217 Hackensack Ave., ac- president

Job as tenant advocate draws just 2 applicants

The Hoboken Community Development Agency has a job opening for a tenant advocate, but to date, only two persons have applied for the position.

Two weeks of advertising for the position, which is geared to assist landlords and tenants on how the rent decontrol law works, has surprisingly had little response, said Sharon Curko, administrative services officer for the agency.

The position calls for a bi-lingual person with knowledge of the new ordinance, housing laws and issues, management and community organization, she said.

The applicants must be able to work full-time, have flexibility regarding the hours that they will work and must be a Hoboken resident, said Ms. Curko.

Ms. Curko said that if the number of applicants has not been significantly increased by Friday, the agency will readvertise for the position. The CDA wants to get as many applications as possible.

Mayor Steve Cappiello said he will meet next week with Fred Bado, director of the CDA, to discuss the status of the position.

He added that in order for the vacancy decontrol law to work, someone must be on call to intercede when tenants and landlords get involved in disputes over application of the law.

Congressional panel gives OK for return of piers to Hoboken

A Congressional subcommittee has granted preliminary approval for the return of three federally-owned piers in Hoboken to city control. Final approval by the full Senate and House of Representatives is also expected.

Rep. Frank J. Guarini, who sponsored the transfer legislation, called the early approval, "a giant step forward."

Mayor Steve Cappiello said, "The acquisition of piers A, B, and C are an important part of Hoboken's renaissance."

According to Guarini, the legislation, which has the approval of the Port Authority as well as the city, will allow transfer of the ownership of the piers to Hoboken for a price slightly less than market value.

No monetary value was placed on the property, however.

See FEDS — Page 33.

Seek to replace Hispanic aide

Hoboken city officials are looking for possible funding sources to reestablish the Hispanic mayor's aide position which ended when the CETA program was discontinued because of federal cutbacks.

City Hall now uses Hispanic personnel currently on the city payroll, but, "an effective liaison to the Hispanic community must be full-time," said Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello.

Cappiello said that many of the problems experienced by Hispanics could be resolved easier and faster if the city could replace the much-needed aide's position.

The mayor said that there are no funds in the city budget to hire a Hispanic aide, but he is looking in other areas, such as state and federal givernments, to help fill the vacancy.

He did not indicate how much the job pays or if anyone was being considered for the position, but he did say that he definitely wants to fill the slot.

Continued from Page 1.

"The ownership of the piers by Hoboken is mandatory in order to bzeak the 50-year lease signed in 1952 which allowed them to be used by the Port Authority only as a maritime terminal," said Guarini.

The piers were used heavily during World War I for troop movements and again during World War II for shipping purposes.

"The possible uses of the piers are mind-boggling," Guarini and Cappiello said. "Potential uses include a marina, exposition hall, shopping areas, highrise condominiums, cultural and art facilities and office space."

The Port Authority, which had been leasing the piers from the federal government, announced last Monday that it was moving some of its offices from the New York World Trade Center to Pier A in Hoboken.

Guarini said, "While the Port Authority's moving its facilities to Hoboken is of a temporary nature, I believe it will serve businessmen with an excellent example on the use of facilities on the Jersey side of the Hudson River."

He continued, "The vote of the full Merchant Marine House Subcommittee is expected the first week in December and favorable consideration is expected in the House and the United States Senate."

Protesters demand Hoboken open up rehab housing

The Hispanic group in Hoboken that is pushing for a federal investigation of two recent fires, which claimed the lives of 13 persons, and improved housing conditions will present a list of three demands to Mayor Steve Cappiello when they meet publicly at 4 p.m. Saturday in City Hall.

These demands are:

- Priority housing for the fire victims. The group is suggesting the use of the 180 units recently renovated opposite the Shop Rite on Washington Street.
- Immediate suspension of the rent vacancy decontrol ordinance.
- Passage of the smoke detector ordinance.

"We have 4,370 signatures supporting the demand for a federal investigation," said the legal council for the group, Ramon Irrizzary, of Newark. "We will continue picking up signatures until Nov. 30 and on Dec. 2, we will turn them into the mayor and the city council."

Irrizzary said he will be going to see the state attorney general after turning in the petition to give him a copy.

See HISPANICS — Page 33.

Hispanics to present demands to Cappiello

Continued from Page 1.

"There is an epidemic of evictions in Hoboken," said Irrizzary. He had no figures to support his statement, however.

Irrizzary said evictions have tripled in the last two months, and that CUNA has been trying to handle the displaced tenants.

Thomas Soto, one of the group's participants, referred to a recent newspaper article which said that at least 10,000 people had been displaced in Hoboken in the last four years.

Gladys Garcia, one of the displaced fire victims, was at a press conference yesterday. She complained that her family was divided among relatives and friends. She had been to city hall for help, but she was told she would be called as soon as an apartment was made available, she said.

She said that 10 families were displaced with her but she did not know their status.

Meanwhile, Irrizzary said he would ask the mayor to vigorously support and lobby for the referendum to repeal the vacancy decontrol law, which would then have to be voted on by the public.

"All we want is an immediate and real commitment from the mayor regarding what we consider to be an emergency situation," said Irrizzary.

HOBOKEN
FINAL EDITION

JERSEY JOURNAL and Jersey Observer

Home Delivery
$1.10 weekly

Tonight: Cloudy, low in 30s.
Tomorrow: Rain/snow, high around 40.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1981

115th Year — No. 179

Arson hits Hoboken again—two dead

By James Kopchains

Two men died as the third major arson fire in Hoboken in over a month roared through the landmark American Hotel on River Street Saturday night and Sunday morning.

Eleven persons, including two firemen, were injured in the blaze, which left over 60 persons homeless, including one family that lost two children in an Oct. 12 arson blaze at 67 Park Ave. Ironically, the Red Cross had sheltered several families from that Park Avenue fire at American Hotel after that blaze.

"The fire is definitely classified as arson," Hudson County Prosecutor Harold Ruvoldt Jr. said last night. According to Ruvoldt, the fire began in two places simultaneously.

Arson investigators from Ruvoldt's office and members of the city's arson squad will continue to pick through the building today for further clues.

The dead men were identified as Walter Mitchell, 51, and Howard Warshaver, 52, according to Deputy Chief Edward Fitzsimmons. Both men were described as tenants at the hotel, Fitzsimmons said.

The men were found in separate rooms on the fifth floor of the five-story brick building, which covers addresses 76, 78, and 80 River St., Fitzsimmons said. Both were found in the 76 River St. portion, at the corner of River Street and Hudson Place.

Fitzsimmons said the two firefighters injured, John Smith and Jay Aceta, were both taken to St. Mary Hospital for smoke inhalation. A hospital spokeswoman said the two men were still being detained at the hospital last night.

Others listed as injured were three children, Peter Lyden, six months, Louise Majias, 5, and Nover Lisbeth, 3. Others injured were: Timothy Smith, 21, Walter Bysozas, 18, George Sexton, 57, Michael Mastrangelo, 69, and Lydia Rivera, 43.

All those injured with the exception of the firemen were released from St. Mary Hospital following treatment.

The first alarm was listed at 11:34, he said, and the fire was officially under control two hours later. Besides all availble units from the city, Fitzsimmons said two companies each from Jersey City and Union City were called in.

See ARSON — Page 23.

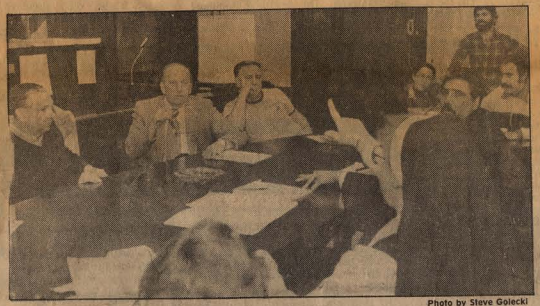


Photo by Steve Golecki

Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello, second from left, prepares to answer a question from tenant group leader, Sister Norberto, at Saturday's discussion between city officials and community activists.

Protesters receive Cappiello pledge for decontrol review

By Raul Vicente Jr.

Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello has agreed to have the city's legal department review whether city officials could suspend the city's newly-adopted vacancy-decontrol ordinance.

"I will ask the city attorney for an opinion on the legality of an immediate suspension of the law," Cappiello said during a heated session with eight tenant and community leaders at City Hall on Saturday.

"Further, if the city council supports the suspension, I will ask them to vote on it and I will support their decision."

Saturday's meeting seemed at times to resemble one long battle as tempers grew short and speakers sometimes resorted to name-calling. By the time it was over, Cappiello had also agreed to investigate using city-owned property as priority housing for fire victims and to make records pertaining to housing, police, fire, and vacancy decontrol applications available to the leaders.

Cappiello's agreement to investigate the suspension of the decontrol law came after he'd been cornered on the issue by community leader Thomas Soto. Later on in the meeting, he apparently changed his mind and said he would not do so, but an uproar from the group forced him to agree to it anew.

Although each of the leaders voiced opinions on issues throughout the three-hour session, most of the discussion was handled by Newark attorney Ramon Irrizzary, who was representing the entire group of leaders.

See HOBOKEN — Page 23.

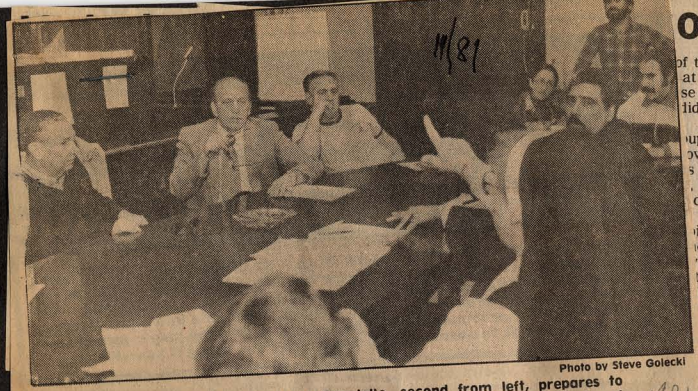


Photo by Steve Golecki

Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello, second from left, prepares to answer a question from tenant group leader, Sister Norberto, at Saturday's discussion between city officials and community activists.

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"However, if the attorney general clarifies the point of liability, we will support it and I will ask the council to vote on a new law," the mayor said. "I will push for an early answer from the attorney general."

...will review rent decontrol

...ge 1.

...der vacancy decontrol, landlords are permitted to raise the rents on apartments after they are vacated by the previous tenants. Once rented again, the apartment again falls under city rent-control guidelines.

Most of the time was spent on decontrol. The leaders have been calling for suspension of the law, which they believe to be unfair. During the session they presented several cases where landlords reportedly would not accept money from tenants who agreed to new rent increases, in order to evict them to take advantage of the vacancy decontrol ordinance.

The leaders have all expressed support for a referendum to repeal the vacancy-decontrol ordinance. Cappiello has only agreed to support the referendum process requested by the group, but would take no stand on the referendum itself.

The leaders have already been able to collect over 9,000 signatures for the referendum and have so far also totalled another 4,000 signatures calling for a federal investigation into two recent suspected arsons within the city.

The two fires, the first at 67-69 Park Ave. and the other at 12th and Washington streets, claimed a total of 14 lives, many of them children. Irrizzary said at the session that most of those displaced by the fires still did not have proper housing.

Cappiello told the group he would look into all city-owned property for any vacancies that may exist. If there are any, Cappiello said the residents could rent them from the city.

However, the mayor pointed out the city's housing authority was an autonomous agency and he could not guarantee that there would be apartments available.

When asked for the records, Cappiello agreed, though added that all the records would have to be kept within the confines of confidentiality and that nothing under investigation would be given out.

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THE JERSEY JOURNAL, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1981

hearts 'cry out in grief, anger'

Community leaders told the crowd to attend a special meeting Monday at 7 p.m. in which plans for a protest at Wednesday's city council meeting will be discussed.

According to Thomas Soto, one of the meetint's organizers, various tenant groups are planning to confront the city council about its failure to enact a local smoke detector ordinance, which would more strictly enforce the installation of detectors.

The meeting will be held at the St. Francis Church parish hall at 311 Jefferson St.

Leading the vigil last night were several of city's most prominent clergymen. Each addressed the crowd with their prayers and meditations on the loss of life in the fire.

"Our hearts cry out in grief and in anger," Rev. Paul Hagedorn, pastor of St. Matthew-Trinity Lutheran Church, said. "We pray for those families that have again been hurt by a loss.

"We pray that the people of this city might be made angry with indignation by these events. We pray for justice."

Deacon Alberto Romero of Ss. Peter and Paul Church called the fires not just the problems of Hispanics in the city. "They affect all the people," he said, then read off the names of non-Hispanics who have died or beeninjured in the fires.

The Rev. William Beatty of Mount Olive Baptist Church quoted passages from Paul's Epistles and the Psalms for the victims, identified as Howard Warshaver and Walter Mitchell.

Other speakers include the Rev. George Ligos of Ss. Peter and Paul and Rev. Triffle Felske of St. John's Lutheran Church.

Among the persons present, several said they feared that their houses may be next in line for arson. One father, Hector Vasquez, said he was especailly worried since he had learned his house was to be sold to be converted to a condominium.

To Vasquez, this could mean that a fire could be set in order to force the tenants out.

"I and my family live on the top floor," he said. "We'd be in the greatest danger should a fire break out."

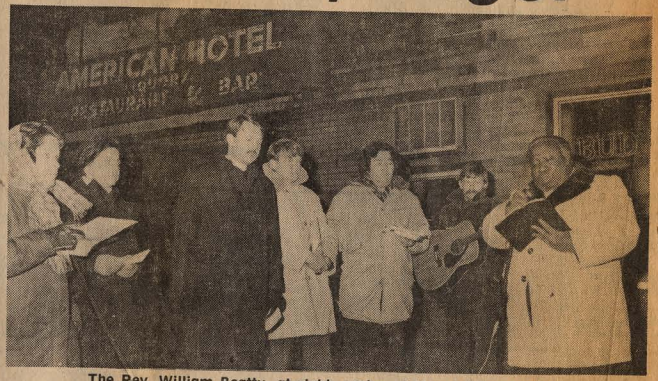
Regarding the meeting today, Hoboken Police Chief George W. Crimmins described it as a "meeting of the minds, to help determine what our investigations proved and make a clear decision on where we are and what the next steps will be."

According to Crimmins, thee have been conflicting reports that there were several fires in progress, and in several different areas of the hotel when firefighters responded.

Preliminary reports have indicated that the fire was set to a mattress in a vacant apartment on the fourth floor, and that arson is suspected.

Just before last night's vigil ended, Sister Norberto, one of the leaders, asked that their fin prayer be a "symbol" strengthen their determination stop the arsons in the city.

The crowd then sang, the voices softly filling the circ they had formed.



The Rev. William Beatty, at right, pastor of Mount Olive Baptist Church, leads the crowd in prayer at last night's vigil held in front of the burned-out American Hotel in Hoboken.

THE JERSEY JOURNAL, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1981

Their hearts 'cry out in grief, anger'

By James Kopchains
and Peter LaVilla

At the end they all held hands.

About 60 persons stood in front of the burned-out American Hotel in Hoboken last night, each praying and holding one another for support in the icy night wind.

As they stood in their vigil, each person said his or her own prayer for the two men who died in the blaze Saturday night and his or her own response to the three arson fires that have killed 16 people in little more than a month in the city.

While they prayed, investigators from the city police and fire departments, the county prosecutor's office and the State Police continued to piece together what information they could about the fire.

The investigators are scheduled to meet today to pool these clues and put together what actually caused the fire at the landmark hotel.

At the vigil, no one seemed too concerned with whom or what caused the fire. Rather, their thoughts were for the victims and how to prevent any more fatal fires in the future.

Community leaders told the crowd to attend a special meeting Monday at 7 p.m. in which plans for a protest at Wednesday's city council meeting will be discussed.

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MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1981

Arson hits Hoboken again—

By James Kopchains

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Eleven persons, including two firemen, were injured in the blaze, which left over 60 persons homeless, including one family that lost two children in an Oct. 12 arson blaze at 67 Park Ave. Ironically, the Red Cross had sheltered several families from that Park Avenue fire at American Hotel after that blaze.

"The fire is definitely classified as arson," Hudson County Prosecutor Harold Ruvoldt Jr. said last night. According to Ruvoldt, the fire began in two places simultaneously.

Arson investigators from Ruvoldt's office and members of the city's arson squad will continue to pick through the building today for further clues.

The dead men were identified as Walter Mitchell, 51, and Howard Warshaver, 52, according to Deputy Chief Edward Fitzsimmons. Both men were described as tenants at the hotel, Fitzsimmons said.

The men were found in separate rooms on the fifth floor of the five-story brick buildin covers addresses 76, 78, and 80 River St., mons said. Both were found in the 76 Rive tion, at the corner of River Street and Place.

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Fitzsimmons said the owner of the building was listed as Walter Bush, of Jamaica, Queens, though recent reports have had Bush agreeing to sell the 74-room hotel to a developer for about $675,000. However, Fitzsimmons said that Bush reported the sale had not been closed yet.

Though equipped with smoke detectors, the fire spread so rapidly that it had already turned into an inferno by the time the firefighters arrived on the scene, according to eyewitnesses. Joseph Lecowitch, executive director of the Hudson County chapter of the Red Cross, said firemen had to use aerial ladders to rescue trapped tenants from the roof and fire escapes.

Lecowitch and his volunteers were also exhausted yesterday after working all night to find shelter for those left homeless.

"We first set up a shelter at the Clam Broth House (located about a block away)," Lecowitch said. "Later we moved them to the City Hall where we set up a

Reached by telephone last night, one of the children of the family, Wanda, said she and her family were awakened by their father and ran out to safety. Though reluctant to discuss this fire, she did say, "It was all so terrible."

At the time of the Park Avenue fire, Lecowitch had predicted that that would be only the first deadly fire this winter. His prediction was proven chillingly true two weeks later on Oct. 24 when an arson-originated fire swept through an apartment house at 102 12th Street, killing 11 persons.

After each of these fires a memorial service was held outside the buildings for the victims.

Saturday's blaze will be no different, with a memorial service scheduled for tomorrow at 8:30 p.m. on River Street in front of the hotel.

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See ARSON — Page 23.

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MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1981

Arson strikes again

Continued from Page 1.

He said the blaze began between the third and fourth floors of the landmark hotel, which was built in the 1870s. The building was equipped with smoke detectors which were reportedly connected to fire headquarters.

Still, the fire spread so rapidly that it was already blazing away when firemen first arrived on the scene, according to another official in the department.

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Lecowitch described most of left homeless as "transients" though he said that there were several families included in the group.

Among those being housed at the Holiday Inn are the Galicia family, two of whose children, Javier, 2, and Modesto, 7, died in the Park Avenue fire, according to Lecowitch. Another family being sheltered at the Holiday Inn is the Caraballo family, also left homeless in the Park Avenue fire.

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Nov. 24, 1981

Fire refugees' room pinpointed in arson

By Peter LaVilla

Investigators now believe that Saturday night's fire that killed two men at the American Hotel in Hoboken started in a room given to one of the families displaced by another fatal arson blaze last month.

Meanwhile, a cloak of mystery has now descended on the fire investigation as detectives try to determine not only who set fire to a mattress in that room, but also why the tenants assigned to it weren't actually living there.

Also, State Police have been called in by Hoboken police to help in the investigation.

According to Hoboken Police Capt. Patrick Donatacci, who is heading the city's investigation, [illegible] was used by victims of tragedies or transients, he added.

the fires were started not only in the unoccupied room on the fourth floor, but also in other areas on the fourth and fifth floors.

The investigation also showed that the fourth floor room, where the unidentified family was to have been staying, was unoccupied long before the fire occurred, he said.

Donatacci said the family had been a victim of the 102 12th St. fire, which claimed the lives of 11 tenants, and was listed as being housed at the American Hotel since the Oct. 24 blaze.

However, Donatacci said family members did not stay at the hotel but where they have been remains a mystery.

See FIRE — Page 23.

department, and the prosecutor's office are conducting investiga- [illegible] well, the spokesperson said. [illegible] also is listed in good conditi

Mastrangelo was waiting for a bus in a nearby area when he was overcome by smoke, police said.

Meanwhile, 22 of the 60 homeless are being housed at the YMCA in Jersey City and the Meadowlands Motel in North Bergen, according to Joseph Lecowitch, executive director of the Hudson County chapter of the American Red Cross.

Lecowitch said many of the fire victims went to relatives while others were housed by friends.

Memorial services are being planned for 8:30 tonight in front of the hotel for the fire victims.

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11/21?

Ruvoldt hopes to detect potential arsons

In the wake of the most recent suspected arson in Hoboken which raised the death toll in that city to 15 in one month, Hudson County Prosecutor Harold J. Ruvoldt Jr. is re-evaluating the county's arson squad.

Calling "economic" arson a "predictable" crime, Ruvoldt said if he could set up a system by which to identify the next building targeted for the torch, he could "reduce arson and reduce fatalities."

"There are ways to determine which building in which area," Ruvoldt said, "is most likely to go up next."

"But the cost of such predictions is usually out of the realm of one municipality," he added.

Ruvoldt said he has been in touch with the state law enforcement agency that supplied grants for the county arson operation and with several insurance companies to get the necessary monies to pay for the computer software that could identify potential arson areas.

In addition to preventive measures, Ruvoldt's proposed program also would expand in the area of detection and successful prosecution.

See RUVOLDT — Page 23.

Ruvoldt agreed that arson is the "most difficult crime to detect and the most difficult crime to prosecute."

But with the changes he is proposing and hopes to get funds for, he said there would be a decrease in the number of arsons and therefore a decrease in the number of fatalities.

Ruvoldt said he hoped to have a new program ready for review by the state Jan. 1.

...re refugees' room pinpointed in arson

Continued from Page 1.

"We're told that they refused to live in the hotel," he said. "However, the hotel people tell us that they were assigned to the room. Meanwhile, the fire occurred in their room. Somebody set the mattress on fire."

The fire was reported at 80 River Street and travelled south, killing two men living in 76 River Street, Donatacci said. The dead men were identified as Walter Mitchell and Howard Warshaver. Both men were residents of the hotel which primarily was used by victims of tragedies or transients, he added.

The fire has already been called the work of an arsonist by Hudson County Prosecutor Harold Ruvoldt Jr. However, Donatacci said it would not officially be declared arson until the State Police completes its investigation.

"We have not officially declared the fire the work of an arsonist because our investigation is continuing," Donatacci said. "However, we have reason to believe that it was arson based on our investigation thus far."

"Our department, the fire department, and the prosecutor's office are conducting investigations. We want the State Police in on it. Once all the data has been gathered, we'll reach one conclusion."

Of the 16 persons reported injured in the blaze, three were detained at St. Mary Hospital for treatment. A hospital spokeswoman said Firemen John Smith and James Azacetta are in good condition. They suffered from smoke inhalation.

The third man, Michael Mastrangelo, also suffered from smoke inhalation, and was treated for an asthma attack as well, the spokesperson said. He also is listed in good condition. Mastrangelo was waiting for a bus in a nearby area when he was overcome by smoke, police said.

Meanwhile, 22 of the 60 homeless are being housed at the YMCA in Jersey City and the Meadowlands Motel in North Bergen, according to Joseph Lecowitch, executive director of the Hudson County chapter of the American Red Cross.

Lecowitch said many of the fire victims went to relatives while others were housed by friends.

Memorial services are being planned for 8:30 tonight in front of the hotel for the fire victims.

...Ruvoldt hopes to detect potential arsons

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...d from Page 1.

Ruvoldt said improvements could be made in detecting arsons if response time could be shortened.

"I would like to see an arson specialist rotate among the rank and file so that the first group to respond to a fire would include that specialist."

Ruvoldt said at present a great deal of time lapses before it is determined that a fire may be up [illegible]

arson. By the time a specialist is on the scene much of the evidence has been destroyed by the fire.

"Once we are able to preserve more evidence," Ruvoldt said, "we have a better chance of prosecuting the perpetrator."

"Successfully prosecuting and sending someone to jail for arson in itself would be a deterrent," Ruvoldt asserted.

In identifying buildings where landlords are suffering financial losses, where an economic arson would most likely occur, Ruvoldt said landlords could be warned.

"Just the fact a landlord is told by a law enforcement official," Ruvoldt said, "that his financial problems are known and we will be looking for him if there is a fire there is less likely to be an arson attempt."

Ruvoldt agreed that arson is the "most difficult crime to detect and the most difficult crime to prosecute."

But with the changes he is proposing and hopes to get funds for, he said there would be a decrease in the number of arsons and therefore a decrease in the number of fatalities.

Ruvoldt said he hoped to have a new program ready for review by the state Jan. 1.

HOBOKEN PICTORIAL
PAGE 4 THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 1981

Letters to the Editor

Cry of the poor heard

Saturday, November 14, was truly a day of witnessing to a conviction for justice by hundreds of low-housing income tenants of Hoboken and concerned believers. Their witness to the cry of the poor was forcefully heard through the well-planned and well-spoken word of Tom Soto from New Jersey All Peoples' Congress and Juan Garcias, representing Citizens United for New Action. These dedicated men spoke from the heart where beliefs rest but become "unrested" by the untold grief of the people and known injustices. One could detect in their speeches a hunger of the Spirit.

The focus of the rally was to directhumanistic plas backed up by statistics to Mayor Cappiello and the City Council. "No more arson deaths for the sake of profit, and no more displacements," was the objective of the speakers.

Yes, the cry of the poor was heard. We know their hunger but why do we turn a deaf ea.. "Why do we feel so helpless? Why can't all concerned unite and finally put our convictions on the line? If this is a war against poverty, why is it that only the warriors are ready, and accounted for? Where are the others? How present is the otherside to the voice of the poor, their cry for justice?

It is the duty of the press and we, the people to keep abreast and to assist in the progress and process of this ever present crisis of our society.

Sister Maria Cordis
Sacred Heart Convent

6/81

THE JERSEY JOURNAL

Condos

If you haven't noticed, there is a boom on condominiums throughout New Jersey.

And, if you haven't noticed, there is a big, big gap in the New Jersey law that is hurting tenants.

Across the river in New York, the law provides that an apartment house cannot be converted to a condominium unless two thirds of the tenants agree to the conversion.

There is no such tenant protection under the present New Jersey law.

Assembly Bill 2286, sponsored by Assemblyman Byron M. Baer and cosponsored by Michael J. Matthews, Robert P. Hollenbeck, Dennis L. Riley, Richard F. Visotcky, James W. Bornheimer and Joseph D. Patero has been referred to the Committee on Commerce, Industry and Professions.

The legislation points out that there is "a critical shortage of affordable rental housing, that conversions of rental apartments seriously exacerbates this shortage, and that it is in the public interest to insure that affordable rental housing is available to all citizens."

The bill then proposes the protection of the two-thirds tenant vote that New York provides.

You should contact your assemblymen and state senators and urge them to support the bill. You might also point out that no Hudson County assemblyman is listed among the cosponsors.

howdown

cosmetic cut in defense spending, estimated at $196 billion. Congress plans to replace that spending level with a higher level when it passes the regular defense appropriations bill in a few weeks, making the cut meaningless.

One of the big areas of dispute was the section funding social programs. The measure, drafted by a House-Senate conference committee, provided $83.1 billion for that part of the budget, programs administered by the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education.

The White House position was that was far too much.

The bill also contained $10 billion in funds for military aid to foreign governments. Reagan had requested $11.6 billion and House Democrats said he was angry about the lower level.

Neither House members nor top-level federal officials would have gotten a raise under the bill.

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confidentiality and that nothing under investigation would be given out.

Questioned on the passage of a local smoke-detector ordinance that would supersede the state law, Cappiello explained the city could not put such an ordinance into effect until the state attorney general could clarify the city's share of liability under such an ordinance.

"However, if the attorney general clarifies the point of liability, we will support it and I will ask the council to vote on a new law," the mayor said. "I will push for an early answer from the attorney general."

Arson strikes again

Continued from Page 1.

He said the blaze began between the third and fourth floors of the landmark hotel, which was built in the 1870s. The building was equipped with smoke detectors which were reportedly connected to fire headquarters.

Still, the fire spread so rapidly that it was already blazing away when firemen first arrived on the scene, according to another official in the department.

Fitzsimmons said the owner of the building was listed as Walter Bush, of Jamaica, Queens, though recent reports have had Bush agreeing to sell the 74-room hotel to a developer for about $675,000. However, Fitzsimmons said that Bush reported the sale had not been closed yet.

Though equipped with smoke detectors, the fire spread so rapidly that it had already turned into an inferno by the time the firefighters arrived on the scene, according to eyewitnesses. Joseph Lecowitch, executive director of the Hudson County chapter of the Red Cross, said firemen had to use aerial ladders to rescue trapped tenants from the roof and fire escapes.

Lecowitch and his volunteers were also exhausted yesterday after working all night to find shelter for those left homeless.

"We first set up a shelter at the Clam Broth House (located about a block away)," Lecowitch said. "Later we moved them to the City Hall where we set up a shelter in the municipal chambers."

Eventually, Lecowitch said the Red Cross placed about 60 persons in the Holiday Inn on Tonnele Avenue in North Bergen.

Lecowitch described most of left homeless as "transients" though he said that there were several families included in the group.

Among those being housed at the Holiday Inn are the Galicia family, two of whose children, Javier, 2, and Modesto, 7, died in the Park Avenue fire, according to Lecowitch. Another family being sheltered at the Holiday Inn is the Caraballo family, also left homeless in the Park Avenue fire.

Reached by telephone last night, one of the children of the family, Wanda, said she and her family were awakened by their father and ran out to safety. Though reluctant to discuss this fire, she did say, "It was all so terrible."

At the time of the Park Avenue fire, Lecowitch had predicted that that would be only the first deadly fire this winter. His prediction was proven chillingly true two weeks later on Oct. 24 when an arson-originated fire swept through an apartment house at 102 12th Street, killing 11 persons.

After each of these fires a memorial service was held outside the buildings for the victims.

Saturday's blaze will be no different, with a memorial service scheduled for tomorrow at 8:30 p.m. on River Street in front of the hotel.

Both Sister Norberto, one of the leaders of Por Le Gente (For the People), a community organization, and April Seidenzahl, coordinator for a clergy-sponsored storefront office dedicated to helping fire victims, visited with those left homeless at the Holiday Inn yesterday.

Reagan and Congress in budget showdown

Continued from Page 1.

The House was to meet at 10 a.m. EST today to try to override the veto. But it seemed certain it would be unable to muster enough votes to override the veto. House Democratic leaders prepared another stopgap measure that would keep spending at its current levels until Feb. 25.

After a weekend of long hours and heavy wrangling between the House and Senate, Congress produced the $427.9 billion measure late Sunday that would fund virtually all government agencies.

But, even as the final debate began in the House Sunday afternoon, Reagan was calling Democratic and Republican leaders to say the bill was too big and that he would veto it.

Angry House Democratic leaders accused Reagan of reneging on assurances relayed by Stockman that he would sign the bill. They proclaimed the measure met Reagan's overall demands and professed confusion.

But they decided to play out the tense battle with the White House, passing the bill, 205-194.

The scene then shifted to a chaotic Senate, where key Republicans had worked handin-hand with Reagan aides and had expected the bill might be accepted by the White House.

Senate Appropriations committee Chairman Mark Hatfield, R-Ore., said Reagan's plan was "outrageous."

"We did not engage in chicanery and phony numbers," declared Hatfield, who said he was offended at the White House accusation that the measure far exceeded Reagan's target for domestic spending cutbacks.

The Senate approved the bill, 46-39, with several Republicans first voting against it then switching their votes.

Republican leader Howard Baker had asked them to send the bill to Reagan and get the episode over with, but some members said they didn't understand why they should pass a measure they knew would be vetoed.

Reagan was upset both by the level of spending for social programs and by the House's insistence on cutting foreign aid, which he told key congressmen would send the wrong signal to America's allies.

Administration officials said the bill contained only a quarter of the domestic cuts Reagan had requested.

Reagan urged Congress to pass a 15-day extension of the previous stopgap funding bill, giving the legislative body more time to come up with a compromise acceptable to him.

The bill approved by Congress Sunday was necessary because it has not completed work on its 13 regular appropriations bills. It contained approximately a 2 percent cut in spending, and its drafters said that cut about $3.5 billion, the total size Reagan had said he would accept.

The measure included a cosmetic cut in defense spending, estimated at $10B billion. Congress plans to replace that spending level with a higher level when it passes the regular defense appropriations bill in a few weeks, making the cut meaningless.

One of the big areas of dispute was the section funding social programs. The measure, drafted by a House-Senate conference committee, provided $83.1 billion for that part of the budget, programs administered by the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education.

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Hoboken will review rent decontrol

Continued from Page 1.

Under vacancy decontrol, landlords are permitted to raise the rents on apartments after they are vacated by the previous tenants. Once rented again, the apartment again falls under city rent-control guidelines.

Most of the time was spent on decontrol. The leaders have been calling for suspension of the law, which they believe to be unfair. During the session they presented several cases where landlords reportedly would not accept money from tenants who agreed to new rent increases, in order to evict them to take advantage of the vacancy decontrol ordinance.

The leaders have all expressed support for a referendum to repeal the vacancy-decontrol ordinance. Cappiello has only agreed to support the referendum process requested by the group, but would take no stand on the referendum itself.

The leaders have already been able to collect over 9,000 signatures for the referendum and have so far also totalled another 4,000 signatures calling for a federal investigation into two recent suspected arsons within the city.

The two fires, the first at 67-69 Park Ave. and the other at 12th and Washington streets, claimed a total of 14 lives, many of them children. Irrizzary said at the session that most of those displaced by the fires still did not have proper housing.

Cappiello told the group he would look into all city-owned property for any vacancies that may exist. If there are any, Cappiello said the residents could rent them from the city.

However, the mayor pointed out the city's housing authority was an autonomous agency and he could not guarantee that there would be apartments available.

When asked for the records, Cappiello agreed, though added that all the records would have to be kept within the confines of confidentiality and that nothing under investigation would be given out.

Questioned on the passage of a local smoke-detector ordinance that would supersede the present state law, Cappiello explained the city could not put such an ordinance into effect until the state attorney general could clarify the city's share of liability under such an ordinance.

"However, if the attorney general clarifies the point of liability, we will support it and I will ask the council to vote on a new law," the mayor said. "I will push for an early answer from the attorney general."

York Times

VEMBER 8, 1981

Section 11

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Hoboken: Fear Of Fire Haunts Many

By JOSEPH LAURA

HOBOKEN

FOR MOST people who live on the clean, tree-lined streets of Hoboken's brownstone revival neighborhoods, life is comfortable. The homes are well kept and an air of a community is on the rise.

But for many residents of the city's less-fashionable tenements, fear, not comfort, is their constant companion.

Standing outside the five-story tenement in which she lives, Brigita Rodriguez said:

"I have three children, and I'm afraid for them. Me and my husband, I don't care so much, but our children — they're afraid."

And with good reason.

On Oct. 24, the building next door, at 1202 12th Street, caught fire at 4 A.M. Within two hours, 11 of its 21 tenants, including seven children who once played with Mrs. Rodriguez's youngsters, were dead.

That blaze was the second fatal fire here in three weeks. The first, in the early hours of Columbus Day, killed two brothers 7 and 2 years old.

Investigators have attributed both fires to arson.

The scope of the Oct. 24 fire has been

NEW JERSEY WEEKLY

The New

SUNDAY,

Hoboken: Change Bringing Problems

By KENNETH SCHEPT

HOBOKEN

EFREYN and Carmen Ramos pay $108 a month for a four-room, cold-water railroad apartment on lower Willow Avenue here. Recently, they and their nine fellow tenants received rent-increase notices. After certain improvements are made, the notice said, the Ramoses' rent would be $360.

The Ramoses, both 46 years old, have lived in the building for four years. Mr. Ramos is disabled, his wife is a sewing-machine operator and a young grandson lives with them. They cannot afford the increase or the month-and-a-half security deposit also requested.

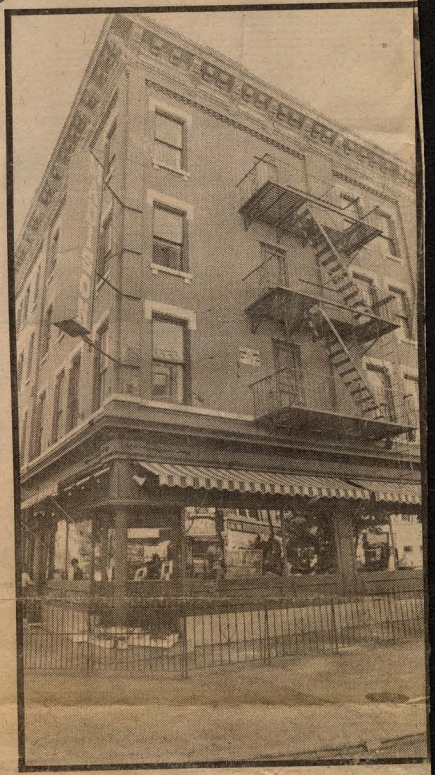
Raymond McAllister, their landlord, also lives in Hoboken. He and his wife moved here from New York City in 1974 to their own row house on an uptown block in the heart of Hoboken's renaissance area.

Mr. McAllister, a 40-year-old investment adviser, now owns three tenement buildings in Hoboken. He regards them as the basis of his retirement portfolio, as well as an opportunity to contribute to the revitalization of the city.

The conflict between the needs of Mr. McAllister and the Ramoses is symptomatic of changes in this city of 45,000 people since the brownstone craze took hold about 10 years ago. With the middle class entrenched in [illegible] houses along the city's northern streets, entrepreneurs now target more blighted areas, where tenants often pay below-market rents.

"I get almost daily inquiries from people threatened with displacement," said Terri Ratti, a social worker. "Gentrification [the upgrading of housing by more-affluent people] is so insidious. You just don't see it happening until it's too late."

While Mr. McAllister acknowledges [illegible]ple will be displaced when his [illegible]anges go into effect, he also [illegible] apartments have new [illegible] along with other [illegible]e cost nearly



Renovated Madison House, left, and fire scene on Pa

$60,000, or several times more than the building's assessed value. He expects this to allow him to decontrol the building under a provision of Hoboken's rent-leveling ordinance.

Revision of that ordinance has been the focus of both landlord and tenant attention in recent months, polarizing the groups into separate camps and spawning the League of Hoboken Homeowners, of which Mr. McAllister is a leader.

A new amendment to the ordinance is designed to assure landlords an adequate return on their investment and protect tenants from unfair rents. But neither group is completely satisfied.

The homeowners are challenging the amendment in court, charging that a provision limiting a landlord's "hardship" rent increase to 25 percent contradicts another clause guaranteeing a return of about 11½ percent.

Tenants argue that the amendment continues to allow landlords too many loopholes for raising rents through "hardship" increases or surcharges.

"Because this country has never said that people have a right to safe and decent housing, it is a matter of those who can afford it have it," said a tenant advocate, Sister Norberta of St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church.

Reporting an increase in displaced

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And with good reason.

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That blaze was the second fatal fire here in three weeks. The first, in the early hours of Columbus Day, killed two brothers 7 and 2 years old.

Investigators have attributed both fires to arson.

The scope of the Oct. 24 fire has been eclipsed here only by a tenement blaze that shocked this city on Jan. 20, 1979, when 21 persons died.

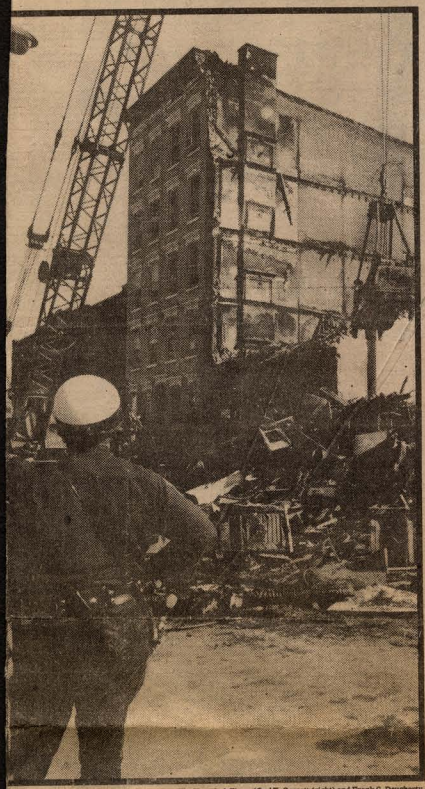
The most recent fires have been a reminder of Hoboken's history of arson. Since March 1978, 41 persons, including 30 children, have died in arson-related fires. To date, no one has been convicted.

"People are very frightened. They're still in mourning now, but the fear will return soon," said Sister Norberta of St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, who has organized Por La Gente (For the People), a tenants' group formed to fight arson.

Despite their fears, Sister Norberta said that most of the residents, even those who have survived the fires, will continue to live in the same tenements because there is no affordable housing elsewhere.

Hoboken's vacancy rate is generally 1 percent or less, according to city officials.

Many of the tenants' group, including Sister Norberta, [illegible]



The New York Times/Carl T. Gossett (right) and Frank C. Dougherty

rk Avenue in Hoboken where two died last month

persons moving into western Hoboken from areas where housing rehabilitation has pushed them out, Sister Norberta declared:

"I think people should have a right to some stability. Families have a right to live in a neighborhood."

Hugh Hothem, a 36-year-old psychotherapist and a member of the Steering Committee of the League of Hoboken Homeowners, contends that what is good for landlords is ultimately good for tenants. Decontrol, he says, would permit profit levels that could allow landlords to maintain some apartments at lower rents.

Mr. McAllister has just applied that principle to the building where the Ramoses live, offering a lower rent to an elderly 20-year resident.

According to Larry Seidman, a Hoboken landlord, continued rent control will only lead to the phenomenon most dreaded by tenants: condomania.

Mr. Seidman, a lawyer, recently completed converting a building on lower Bloomfield Street into condominiums, where a one-bedroom unit sells for $70,000. Three years ago, a four-story Victorian home on upper Bloomfield Street cost that.

"If a landlord can't get 11½ percent

Continued on Page 16



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Many [illegible] tenants' group, including Sister Norberta, [illegible] gentrification" movement here, an upgrading of housing by more-affluent people, is a major cause for many of the successful and unsuccessful arson attempts. Insurance money is coupled with the enormous profit potential in apartment rehabilitations and renovations, they say.

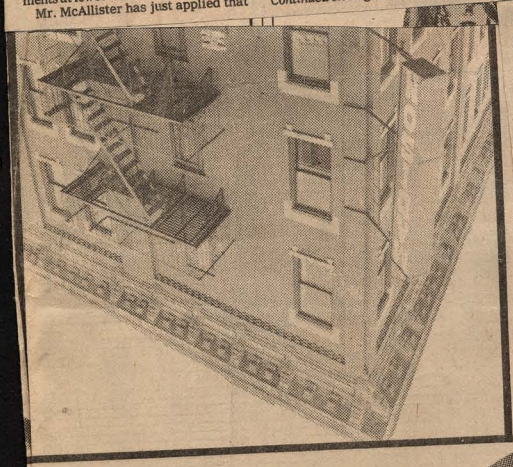
"Is this the price we have to pay for renaissance?" asked Sister Norberta, who said that many deteriorating tenements were "standing in the way" of the gentrification movement.

Others concerned with Hoboken's problem, and arson in general, say that the tenants' claims could be valid in certain situations. However, they contend that gentrification is only one factor that must be considered among those relating to arson.

Insurance companies review changing patterns of development within a city, vacancy rates, rent control, the [illegible] of a building and a landlord's financial situation in all arson investigations, according to the American Insurers Alliance, a trade association representing more than 100 insurance companies nationwide.

Despite all these factors, Joseph Cucci, Alliance vice president, said that many landlords who might be considered bad insurance risks were still able to obtain fire insurance in New Jersey. A state-mandated insurance pool for property owners — it is

Continued on Page 14



SUNDAY, [illegible]

The New [illegible]

[illegible] JERSEY [illegible]

Mercado kids died in fire

11/81-

Students pray for friends killed in Hoboken blaze

By ROY KAHN
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—There were no coffins and no family members to say prayers, but there were children.

About 150 students from Wallace School, classmates of the four Mecardo children who died in Saturday's apartment house fire on 12th Street, gathered at Sts. Peter and Paul Roman Catholic Church yesterday morning to pray for their friends.

"The teachers and students wanted to do something," said sixth-grade teacher Joseph Miele, who helped organize the Mass.

Since the funeral was held in Puerto Rico, the Mercados' friends felt they had no chance to say goodbye, he said.

"We knew they were Catholic, so we came up with the idea of a Mass," he continued. "I think everybody felt like they took part, that they did something."

The loss has been a difficult thing for the students to cope with. The children — Ruth, 13; Dennise, 12; Walter, 10; and Kenneth, 9 — all were students at Wallace.

In addition to the children, their parents, Ana and Godovin, and grandfather, Manuel Velez, also perished in the fire.

"When it first happened, the students knew that a seat was empty and they knew why," said Miele, who was Walter's teacher.

"There were a lot of tears the day we got back (to school Monday) .... We didn't talk that much about it, we bowed our heads for a little silent prayer. But the students started getting upset, so we got back to work to get their minds off it."

Yesterday's Mass was the first religious service at the church for the family, whom the Rev. George Ligos described as "very religious." It also was the first time Ligos presided over a service involving multiple deaths.

"It was so senseless," Ligos said after yesterday's service. "Especially as it (the fire) seems to have been deliberate. In something like this, our faith is put to the test."

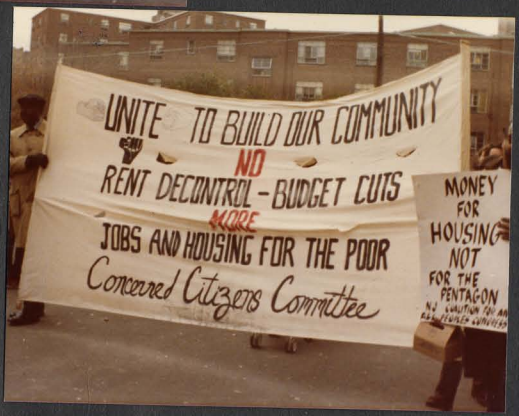
He said it probably was difficult for the children because it was the first time they had to deal with death so directly.

Fires, however, have been on the students' minds for the last two weeks.

Shortly after the Oct. 12 tenement fire on Park Avenue, Miele said a fire drill held at the school was greeted a little differently than usual.

"They were just a bit more serious," he said. "They realized it could happen to them because the last fire wasn't very far away."


STOP THE ARSON!
STOP THE CUTBACKS!
STOP THE WAR AGAINST THE POOR
NEW JERSEY ALL-PEOPLES CONGRESS
In Memory of Ana Merca
Her Hu and. Father, Fou
Childr and Other Victim
on for Prom.
A.M.O.P.


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Unending pain dogs fire victim

By LENA H. SUN
Staff Writer

Paulie Rodriguez lies on the green cot, his four limbs outstretched, his entire body rolled in yards of protective white gauze. Thick eyelashes fringing his wide-open black eyes, the 6-year-old watches as the bandages are removed.

And waits for the pain to begin.

"Aaaiii, aaaiii," he cries, his stomach heaving, his open mouth showing the gap of his missing front teeth, as the first bandage is slowly peeled off. "Jeanne, Jeanne, take it easy," he pleads.

With soothing words and quick gentle moves, Jeanne Hackett and Kathe Conlon, the burn technicians, as they are known, hurry to unwrap the layers. Underneath, Paulie's skin is a mass of pink, red, purple and black splotches where the boy had been severely burned in a Columbus Day Hoboken tenement fire that police say was deliberately set.

Paulie and his 4-year-old brother, Frankie, are being treated at the burn unit of St. Barnabas Medical Center in Livingston.

The only state-certified burn treatment center, the unit has been receiving a steady stream of burn victims from recent fires in Hudson County. The most seriously injured have been from Hoboken, where three major fires, all of them termed arson by police, have ravaged the city in the last two months, killing 15, injuring dozens and leaving numerous families homeless.

The common denominator linking all the victims brought to St. Barnabas is the physical and psychological pain of a burn — a pain which Dr. Frederick Fuller, head of the unit, describes as "the worst illness that can happen to a human being while retaining some hope of survival."

The physical pain can last for a long time, and the psychological wounds may last for a lifetime. In the most severe cases, such as that of Paulie Rodriguez, the physical pain will endure for another few months only to be followed by intense itching for at least a year, Fuller said.

The scope of the pain is also seldom fully realized by families and friends of the victims and by the victims themselves



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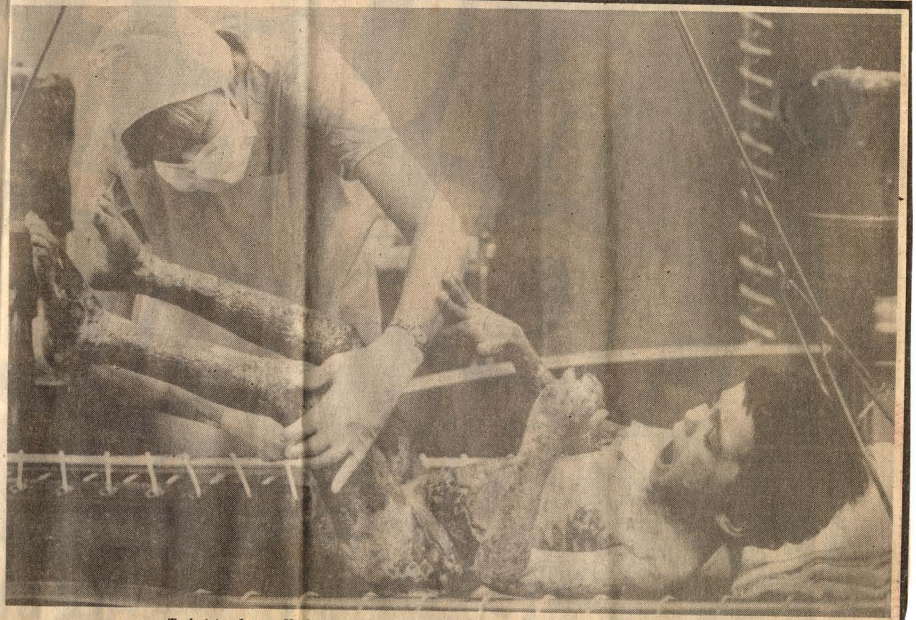
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Technician Jeanne Hackett removes old dressings from Paul Rodriguez' painful burns.





"People don't understand what a burn is," explains Pat Schidid, the even-tempered administrative assistant of the 12-bed unit.

"When someone comes in here and they're completely charred, with leathery skin, and you have to tell that person's wife, 'That's your husband,' they can't accept that," she said. "They say, 'That's not my husband.' That's what's hard."

The 43 staff members do their utmost to ease the physical agony by keeping the burned areas clean with washing and dressings, and by grafting skin from another part of the body to the wounds.

But short of massive doses of drugs, a practice the hospital does not follow, there is not much that can be done to stop the pain.

And there is also the psychological pain that must be dealt with — the grief for loved ones who may have died in the fire, guilt for their inability to save them, and fears of disfigurement, disablement and rejection by the world. The hospital offers psychological support, as does the private non-profit National Burn Victims Foundation in Orange.

But as Harry Gaynor, president of the foundation, describes it, "that is a pain that can last a lifetime."

After 12 years of heading the unit, Fuller has particularly strong feelings about those situations where the patients are victims of a deliberately set fire.

"Capital punishment for arsonists. You get that kind of feeling as a reaction to all the suffering to perfectly innocent people who had this murderous thing done to them," he said recently, as Paulie's screams rose and fell in the background.

"If someone hadn't set that fire, you wouldn't have this problem. Someone that would do that does not have the capacity to be rehabilitated."

Paulie suffered smoke inhalation and serious burns over 60 percent of his body.

His condition is listed as critical but stable, but because of the trauma and shock associated with the burns, the staffers here say his emotional condition has regressed.

"The other day, he stretched out his left arm where two of his fingers had been burned off and said to me, 'Kathe, can you put my fingers back?' I told him the fire took his fingers away and that we couldn't put them back," Conlon said.

In time, the youngster's skin will heal. But doctors say it will not be as smooth as it was before, and it will not be the same color. Where it has been grafted, there will be red and purple spots.

Back in the "tank room," Paulie is ready to have his wounds washed and dressed, a procedure that has become part of his daily regimen since he entered the hospital on Oct. 12. It is a procedure that he has come to dread.

As the water touches his crinkled and marked body, raw and pink in places where the grafts have not yet taken, he alternates between howls and whimpers.

But after more gentle words and endearments, he is ready for the last step, the dressing. Hackett and Conlon get out the jars of silver sulfadiazine and rolls of gauze. Occupational therapist Linda Thornton tries to persuade the boy to stretch his limbs straight — limbs which have bent and contracted as a result of the burns.

"Children don't understand when you tell them your arm is contracted. They don't care," Conlon said.

"All they know is you just put him through the torture of the day with the tank, and you're coming over to stretch their arm and enough is enough."

Almost finished, the three urge the boy to sit up, then touch his toes with his hand to stretch the stiff muscles.

"Come on, peanut, sit up so I can get the other side," Hackett says gently.

His left arm trembling, his lips pursed and eyebrows drawn together, he leans forward. Several long seconds pass. He touches.



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST Linda Thornton, left, encourages Paulie to stretch his arm toward burn technician Kathey Conlon while his dressings are being changed.



BURN TECHNICIAN Jeanne Hackett takes a breather after changing Paulie's dressings.



FRANKIE RODRIGUEZ strikes a pensive pose while relaxing in hospital's play area.



LITTLE FRANKIE RODRIGUEZ walks along hospital hallway with aid of assistant chief burn techician Paul Kassner.

Photos by Bill Bayer

"Paulie, Paulie, don't forget to breathe," they say. Everyone laughs and applauds.

But the relief is only temporary, because they know that the pain will continue the next day.

"You get over the terrible looks of the burn, but you never get over the screaming," says Jerry Connell, another burn technician.

Paulie does not remember the fire that tore through the five-story tenement building where he lived with his three brothers, mother and stepfather.

"I was sleeping, and the fire burned my legs, and it burned my stomach," he said, as he lay on the cot waiting for the dressing to be completed.

He does, however, remember the Hoboken firefigher, rookie Hayward Blakely, who rescued him from the burning building.

"He picked me up right here," he said, pointing to his stomach. "They took me to the ambulance. Frankie was crying, but I didn't cry. I was shaking, like this, because it was a little bit cold."

Thirty-three-year-old Hao Lee of Dover was also badly burned in a fire Nov. 12 when a kerosene burner apparently exploded.

He managed to escape along with his 66-year-old mother, wife and 5-year-old daughter. But his 7-year-old daughter, Phuong, perished in the blaze.

Although Lee has been transferred out of the burn unit, the memories of that night will continue to haunt him long after he recovers from his burns.

"I tried to get into the other room, there was smoke in the whole house, so I broke the window," he said recently, covered from head to foot in white bandages.

"I tried to get her, but she was under the bed. Maybe she was choked already by the smoke. I could not do anything better to save my family," he said, his voice trembling.

Van, his 5-year-old daughter, has few memories of the fire. Doctors here say she is making a rapid recovery and, on a recent visit, the nickel- and dime-sized burns on her face had almost all healed.

Sitting by an artificial Christmas tree donated by one of the volunteers, she and Frankie were busy drawing pictures as Paulie left the tank room and came slowly shuffling down the hall, his hand clutching Thornton's for support.

As she watched the three children together, Marie Schilling, who donated the tree and has a lot of experience with fires because her husband is the Livingston fire chief, shook her head and sighed.

"If people could come in here so they could see what happens to these kids, I don't think these things (cases of arson) would happen."

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2/13/83

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1981

HOBOKEN PICTORIAL

the city's landlords haven't registered their rents. But,

how many landlords have been taken to court? None. That's right, none. Its business as usual in Hoboken. The city should get off its behind and do something. For if it doesn't, what is the point of the rent leveling ordinance? The ordinance now is being violated by numerous landlords and real estate brokers who want to change whatever they can get. So when someone moves out of an apartment they don't just raise the rent the 25percent allowed in the new ordinance, they triple the rent. Why? Because the New Yorkers coming in are willing to pay it. Some of the New Yorkers think $500 for a one bedroom apartment in Hoboken is a bargain because they would have to pay $1,000 for it in Manhattan. But the average Hobokenite can't afford $500 a month.

Since many of the New Yorkers think they are getting a bargain they don't complain about the rents. And since the landlords can get away with not registering them, this whole situation is being allowed to continue.

THE OUT-OF-TOWNERS

The heart of Hoboken's whole rent leveling ordinance was supposed to be the enforcement and registration of rents.

In otherwords the city of Hoboken was going to get after the landlords who didn't register their rents as required by the rent leveling ordinance. The new ordinance calls for fines ranging from $100 to $500 for landlords who don't register their rents. As it turns out over half of

A number of persons are interested in purchasng Duke's House, the historic Hoboken tavern right by the train station. At last count, Duke had 14 offers. Only a year ago the owner couldn't get rid of the place for $50,000. Now he has offers in he hundreds of thousands. Why? The movie studio that will be opening across the way. By the way, one of those making an offer we unerstand is a top political figure in town. He already owns about half the town. Need we say more.

Hoboken keeps

By Peter LaVilla

Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello and
ficials met with state and federal represe
on Hispanic affairs to try and resolve the
delay for Citizens United for New Action,
munity group which provides counseling an
services to Hispanic youths and families.

Cappiello met for two hours behind
doors in City Hall with David Matos of th
Department of Hispanic Affairs for Gov. B
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CUNA receives $77,000 annually to r
Hoboken service. The city's Community De
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Matos. He said represen-
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and all questions concern-
g program.

N—Page 10.

12/3/81

Hoboken keeps funds for Hispanics on hold

Page 10
12/3/81

Continued from Page 1

"The city, I'm told, wants to evaluate the contract with CUNA," said Matos. "We're all working toward trying to resolve the problem. The city's share to CUNA is vital to the existence of the program."

The state official ruled out political interference as the reason for the delay of funding by the city.

CUNA officials have accused the mayor and council of playing politics.

"The city has raised several questions concerning the activity of CUNA and as a funding agent we have the right to evaluate the contract with CUNA," said Cappiello.

CUNA has been very vocal over the recent rash of fires, the rent vacancy decontrol ordinance, the smoke detector regulation, and jobs and housing for the poor.

Eighty landlords to get summonses

12/8/81

By Peter LaVilla

Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello today ordered summonses be issued to 80 landlords "as a start" who failed to register with the city on how much rent is charged to tenants in compliance with the recently approved rent control ordinance.

According to Cappiello, the regulation is to prevent landlords from kicking tenants out of their apartments in order to take advantage of the vacancy decontrol clause which is part of the ordinance.

Under vacancy decontrol, landlords can jack up the rent by 25 percent before the new tenant moves in.

Community groups in Hoboken urged city officials not to pass the rent ordinance for fear that landlords would oust poor people in order to get higher rents.

"That's why we put the registration clause in the rent ordinance," said Cappiello. "We want to make sure that landlords don't push poor people out in order to raise the rents. We gave landlords 30 days to register with us. Those who failed to comply are now facing court appearances."

See 80 LANDLORDS — Page 4.

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Hoboken keeps Hispanic unit funds on hold

By Peter LaVilla

Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello and city officials met with state and federal representatives on Hispanic affairs to try and resolve the funding delay for Citizens United for New Action, a community group which provides counseling and other services to Hispanic youths and families.

Cappiello met for two hours behind closed doors in City Hall with David Matos of the state Department of Hispanic Affairs for Gov. Brendan Byrne and Ada Santiago Montare, community relations service conciliator for the U.S. Department of Justice, to iron out the problem.

CUNA receives $77,000 annually to run the Hoboken service. The city's Community Development Agency gives $23,000 toward the program, the state Youth and Family Services provides $54,000.

It's the city's share that is being challenged and questioned by CUNA and the state.

According to Fred Bado, director of the CDA, his agency is holding up the funds because the city has several questions it would like answered with the youth counseling program. He declined to reveal what those questions are.

City, state and federal officials agreed to meet again before the new year to try and resolve the problem, according to Matos. He said representatives of CUNA will be asked to attend that meeting to answer any and all questions concerning the youth counseling program.

See HOBOKEN—Page 10. 12/3/81

Hoboken keeps funds for Hispanics on hold

Page 10 12/3/81

Continued from Page 1

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See 80 LANDLORDS — Page 4.

Monroe St. building termed a 'time bomb' by angry residents

Hoboken residents living at Fourth and Monroe Streets say they are living next door to "a time bomb that's about to explode at any moment."

That's what residents told Mayor Steve Cappiello and a group of city officials about the conditions at 401-03 Monroe St.

"We fear for our lives," one irate resident said. "There are fires there, tenants fighting, and thousands of health and safety code violations. We want something done."

The two buildings are occupied by 16 families, according to the mayor. The property is under a tax title lien for delinquent taxes, he said. The owner died and the rents are being paid directly to the city, he added.

"I don't know what can be done but I know the city will do everything within its power to allay the fears of the residents," said Cappiello.

Cappiello said he will meet with James Giordano, director of public safety, and Fire Chief James Houn, to setup a plan to deal with the problem

He said efforts are being taken to abate the code violations.

Meanwhile, police are investigating a fire at 401 Monroe St., which is being termed "suspicious."

According to police records, there were two separate fires in the building when the fire department responded to an alarm Friday.

A baby car seat was on fire in one section of the four-story wood frame building, and a cardboard box in another section, they said. No injuries were reported.

HOME REMEDIES

Buying a home smoke detector

By EARNI YOUNG

BEFORE BUYING A smoke alarm, there are three important questions to ask: Which type should I buy? How many do I need? Where should I install them?

Two basic types of smoke detectors are sold for the home: ionization and photoelectric. Ionization detectors use a minute amount of radioactive material to make the air between two interior electrodes conduct a small elec- [illegible] Smoke particles that enter [illegible] the flow of cur- [illegible] alarm. Ionization [illegible] that homeown- [illegible] each type of smoke [illegible] detector that com- [illegible]atures. These are [illegible]n single-feature de- [illegible]ut $30 to $55. [illegible]le-feature detector [illegible]umer Reports pre- [illegible]ic model. [illegible]hotoelectric detec- [illegible]30 seconds slower than ionization detectors in responding to the flaming, so-called "hot" fires, the magazine said. But ionization models were 22 *minutes* slower than photoelectric detectors in sensing the more common smoky-type fires.

More than 70 companies make home smoke detectors. All must meet Underwriters Laboratory (UL) standards.

Both kinds of detectors come in battery-powered models or models that operate on household current. There are also models that operate on house current with a nine-volt battery backup in case power is cut off. Without this backup, an electrically powered detector could be inoperative for long periods, or could become unplugged [illegible]

Knight-Ridder Newspapers

If you have a question about a hard-to-find product or service for the home, we will try to find an answer. We regret we cannot respond to letters individually, but will answer those of greatest general interest in this column. Write: Home Remedies, Daily News, 220 E. 42d St., N.Y., NY 10017.

80 landlords who failed to register to get tickets

Page 1 12/81

Continued from Page 1.

Cappiello said violators face between $100 and $500 fine in municipal court if proved guilty.

Under the rent bill, landlords cannot raise the rents higher than what the Rent Control Leveling Board allows annually. Vacancy decontrol can be implemented only when a tenant voluntarily moves or ordered by a magistrate, he said.

"A landlord cannot chase a tenant [illegible]t for no valid reason," Cappiello said. "And the landlord cannot expect to raise the rent by 25 percent in order to get the higher rate. If anyone tries, we'll stop him. And if anyone is experiencing that, he should come into the City Clerk's office and register a complaint."

The mayor said the 80 landlords facing summonses are those who own more than five units. Owners with lesser units are next, he said.

THE JERSEY JOURNAL, MONDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1981

Monroe St. building termed a 'time bomb' by angry residents

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That's what residents told Mayor Steve Cappiello and a group of city officials about the conditions at 401-03 Monroe St.

"We fear for our lives," one irate resident said. "There are fires there, tenants fighting, and thousands of health and safety code violations. We want something done."

The two buildings are occupied by 16 families, according to the mayor. The property is under a tax title lien for delinquent taxes, he said. The owner died and the rents are being paid directly to the city, he added.

"I don't know what can be done but I know the city will do everything within its power to allay the fears of the residents," said Cappiello.

Cappiello said he will meet with James Giordano, director of public safety, and Fire Chief James Houn, to setup a plan to deal with the problem

He said efforts are being taken to abate the code violations.

Meanwhile, police are investigating a fire at 401 Monroe St., which is being termed "suspicious."

According to police records, there were two separate fires in the building when the fire department responded to an alarm Friday.

A baby car seat was on fire in one section of the four-story wood frame building, and a cardboard box in another section, they said. No injuries were reported.

80 landlords who failed to register to get tickets

Paged 12/81

Continued from Page 1.

Cappiello said violators face between $100 and $500 fine in municipal court if proved guilty.

Under the rent bill, landlords cannot raise the rents higher than what the Rent Control Leveling Board allows annually. Vacancy decontrol can be implemented only when a tenant voluntarily moves or ordered by a magistrate, he said.

"A landlord cannot chase a tenant out for no valid reason," Cappiello said. "And the landlord cannot expect to raise the rent by 25 percent in order to get the higher rate. If anyone tries, we'll stop him. And if anyone is experiencing that, he should come into the City Clerk's office and register a complaint."

The mayor said the 80 landlords facing summonses are those who own more than five units. Owners with lesser units are next, he said.

HOME REMEDIES

Buying a home smoke detector

By EARNI YOUNG

BEFORE BUYING A smoke alarm, there are three important questions to ask: Which type should I buy? How many do I need? Where should I install them?

Two basic types of smoke detectors are sold for the home: ionization and photoelectric. Ionization detectors use a minute amount of radioactive material to make the air between two interior electrodes conduct a small electric current. Smoke particles that enter the detector reduce the flow of current, setting off an alarm. Ionization detectors respond more rapidly to the wispy smoke of fast, flaming fires associated with paper and wood blazes.

Photoelectric detectors beam light into a chamber containing a light-sensitive photocell. The cell senses the light only when smoke enters the chamber and scatters the beam. When enough light reaches the cell, the alarm goes off.

A photoelectric detector is quicker to sense slow, smoldering fires, such as cigaret fires in bedding or upholstery.

Consumer Reports, the monthly magazine, recommends that homeowners install one of each type of smoke detector, or a single detector that combines the both features. These are more expensive than single-feature detectors—usually about $30 to $55.

If only one single-feature detector can be bought, Consumer Reports prefers the photoelectric model.

Tests show that photoelectric detectors were only 20 to 30 seconds slower than ionization detectors in responding to the flaming, so-called "hot" fires, the magazine said. But ionization models were 22 *minutes* slower than photoelectric detectors in sensing the more common smoky-type fires.

More than 70 companies make home smoke detectors. All must meet Underwriters Laboratory (UL) standards.

Both kinds of detectors come in battery-powered models or models that operate on household current. There are also models that operate on house current with a nine-volt battery backup in case power is cut off. Without this backup, an electrically powered detector could be inoperative for long periods, or could become unplugged without the owner's knowledge.

The battery-operated models require periodic checking to ensure the battery is working. The nine-volt battery commonly lasts a year.

For a two-detector system, Consumer Reports recommends an ionization detector in a hallway just outside the bedroom where it can be readily heard by sleepers, and a photoelectric model installed in a general living area, not too close to the kitchen area or fireplace.

Knight-Ridder Newspapers

If you have a question about a hard-to-find product or service for the home, we will try to find an answer. We regret we cannot respond to letters individually, but will answer those of greatest general interest in this column. Write: Home Remedies, Daily News, 220 E. 42d St., N.Y., NY 10017.

Protection

When Hoboken passed its rent decontrol ordinance, tenants representatives were assured there would be protection for tenants against landlord gouging.

Tenants quickly pointed out that under the old rent control law landlords were required to post their rents with city hall so that there could be an official record of the basic rent, but most landlords didn't file their rents at city hall and the city did virtually nothing about it.

There were assurances that that would not happen under the new ordinance. Landlords were given a deadline for filing. The deadline was extended and then summonses were issued to some of those who did not file.

The first of those warrants were returnable to court yesterday, today and the following Monday. The fine for failing to file is between $100 and $500. City officials are on record they want the ordinance enforced.

There can be no protection of the law without enforcement of the law. That thought should be in the mind of the judge when the landlords face him.

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ady, low in 30s.
snow, high in 40s.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3

12/3/81



Photo by Steve Golecki

Get out!

Police eject demonstrators from Hoboken City Hall at the order of Council President Walter Cramer who said they were disrupting last night's council meeting. (Story and more pictures on Page 8.)

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HOBOKEN
FINAL EDITION

and Jersey Obs

Tonight: Cloudy, low in 30s.
Tomorrow: Rain, snow, high in 40s.

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Demonstrators ejected, 2 arrested at Hoboken City Council meeting

By Earl Morgan

Angry shouts, chanting demonstrators, arrests and accusations that the mayor and City Council are the "tools of the real estate interests" marked last night's council meeting in Hoboken.

Tenant groups showed up at the meeting to protest what they termed the council's inaction in passing a smoke detector ordinance or preventing arsons, or providing housing for tenants who have been burned out of their homes.

A Brooklyn attorney and a member of one of the tenants' groups were arrested because, according to police, they were yelling and disrupting the meeting after they and approximately 100 demonstrators were ordered out of the session at City Hall.

The tenants' groups included the All Peoples Congress, the Emergency Coalition to Save Rent Control and Por La Gente.

That the demonstrators planned to attend the council meeting was no secret and a contingent of police, both in plainclothes and in uniforms, ringed the chamber to watch the standing-room-only crowd.

The trouble began when Tom Soto, of the All Peoples Congress, attempted to address the council while another man was speaking.

When Council President Walter Cramer told him that he would have to wait until the items on the regular agenda were disposed of the crowd began to chant, "Let him speak."

Shortly after that, Cramer ordered the room cleared of the demonstrators. The police moved the people outside.

Inside, Sister Norberta, [illegible] Por La Gente and a

have swept through the city leaving 15 dead and scores of others homeless.

Cramer heatedly replied that he did not attend any of the prayer vigils held after the deaths because Sister Norberta and others in Por La Gente, had accused the council of "murder."

After the agenda was completed, the demonstrators were allowed to return to the meeting. Several of them were on a speakers' list.

The speakers hammered away at the arsons and what they termed "renaissance" of Hoboken, which, they said, is a plot to "increase the profits of big landlords, real estate companies and banks on the backs of the poor."

"The only way you can vindicate yourselves is to repeal vacancy decontrol." Soto said

Local

The Dispatch, Hudson/Bergen Cour

200 angry demonstrators re

By CHUCK SUTTON
and ROY KAHN
Staff Writers

HOBOKEN—City Council President Walter Cramer ordered police to remove more than 200 angry demonstrators from last night's City Council meeting. The demonstrators had vowed "there'd be no more business as usual until arson is stopped."

Several members of the audience questioned whether Cramer violated the state's Open Public Meetings Act by having all but 16 members of the audience expelled from the room while the council completed its agenda.

Police arrested two persons on charges of disrupting a meeting: John Zirinsky, 31, a legal observer from Brooklyn, and Keith Pavlik, 24, of Hoboken, both later released on $50 cash bail.

Also in the stormy meeting, Cramer challenged Sister Norberta's right to speak on behalf of tenant rights and oppose the present 25 percent decontrol ordinance while she is a member of the rent leveling board.

Prior to the meeting, a group of 30 demonstrators gathered outside City Hall chanting, "Bring back rent control, stop the arson now!" The demonstrators have demanded that the council pass a local ordinance adopting the state smoke detector ordinance for swift prosecution in local courts, and that the council rescind the rent decontrol ordinance.

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A Brooklyn attorney and a member of one of the tenants' groups were arrested because, according to police, they were yelling and disrupting the meeting after they and approximately 100 demonstrators were ordered out of the session at City Hall.

Tenant leaders claimed that when the lawyer, John Zorinsky, asked a plaintclothes police officer for his identification, the cop placed him under arrest.

The second man arrested was Kieth Pavlick of Hoboken.

The tenants' groups included the All Peoples Congress, the Emergency Coalition to Save Rent Control and Por La Gente.

That the demonstrators planned to attend the council meeting was no secret and a contingent of police, both in plainclothes and in uniforms, ringed the chamber to watch the standing-room-only crowd.

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Shortly after that, Cramer ordered the room cleared of the demonstrators. The police moved the people outside.

Inside, Sister Norberta, leader of Por La Gente and a member of the city's rent board, sparked a debate when she claimed that neither the council members nor the mayor made any statement about the victims of a recent spate of arsons that have swept through the city leaving 15 dead and scores of others homeless.

Cramer heatedly replied that he did not attend any of the prayer vigils held after the deaths because Sister Norberta and others in Por La Gente, had accused the council of "murder."

After the agenda was completed, the demonstrators were allowed to return to the meeting. Several of them were on a speakers' list.

The speakers hammered away at the arsons and what they termed "renaissance" of Hoboken, which, they said, is a plot to "increase the profits of big landlords, real estate companies and banks on the backs of the poor."

"The only way you can vindicate yourselves is to repeal vacancy decontrol," Soto said. He was referring to an ordinance passed several months ago that allowed a landlord to give a 25 percent rent increase to new tenants.

Elizabeth Copeland read an open letter to the mayor and city council enumerating 12 questions of tenants groups, ranging from how many suspicious fires have occurred in Hoboken in the last five years to whether councilmembers, the mayor or other public officials have ties with banks, developers or real estate interests in the city.

Cramer adjourned the meeting when David Axlerod refused to take his hat off before addressing the council. "We have a rule that anyone addressing the council must take his hat off." Women are not bound by the rule, Cramer said.



Tenant organizer Tom Soto, with microphone, addresses an impromptu tenant rally held by some 100 demonstrators outside Hoboken City Hall after they were ejected from last night's Council meeting . . .



. . . meanwhile, the City Council conducts a relatively quiet meeting with few persons left in the audience.

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200 angry demonstrators removed from council meeting

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Also in the stormy meeting, Cramer challenged Sister Norberta's right to speak on behalf of tenant rights and oppose the present 25 percent decontrol ordinance while she is a member of the rent leveling board.

Prior to the meeting, a group of 30 demonstrators gathered outside City Hall chanting, "Bring back rent control, stop the arson now!" The demonstrators have demanded that the council pass a local ordinance adopting the state smoke detector ordinance for swift prosecution in local courts, and that the council rescind the rent decontrol ordinance.

The demonstrators, including representatives from Por La Gente, Concerned Citizens Committee of Jersey City and All People's Congress, then filed into the City Hall chambers.

As the council rushed through its agenda, Tom Vezzetti rose to speak on the agenda item of garbage cans, and behind him stood tenant advocate Tom Soto.

Anticipating a disruption, Cramer threatened to order police to empty the chambers if Soto did not sit down until the public portion of the meeting.

The crowd reacted angrily, and Cramer ordered the police into action. With the exception of some minor incidents, the room was virtually cleared in 20 minutes with only 16 people remaining.

"They're fools. If they'd just shut up and waited 10 minutes, the meeting would have been over and they could have talked," City Clerk Anthony Amoruso said.

But outside, the crowd milled around discussing the reasoning behind the disruption.

"They (the council) have an agenda as if it is business as usual, but the tenants feel that this is a state of emergency. The fires have created a state of crisis for tenants," said Raquell Deull, statewide coordinator for the APC.

"We want to replace the regular agenda with an agenda of the tenants, we want to discuss what is going on," she added. About that time, the group returned to the council chambers where about eight speakers were allowed to address the council.

Hugh Hothem, president of the Hoboken Home Owner Association was the only speaker who expressed satisfaction with the present laws and their enforcement.

Cramer brought the meeting to an abrupt end when the last speaker, David Axlerod, refused to remove his hat while addressing the council. Cramer said there was a standing rule that anyone addressing the council must remove his hat.

Cramer denied that the council had violated the state law when he cleared the council chambers of all but 16 of the 200 who had spilled into the City Hall foyer.

However, Sister Norberta said following the meeting that Cramer's actions at the meeting violated more than the Open Public Meetings Act. She said he "treats the meetings as if they were a joke."

School board jobs a 'family affair' in Hoboken

Dec. 9-81

By John Watson

Despite complaints and accusations of nepotism and undue political influence, the Hoboken Board of Education last night voted to provide jobs for the wives of two city officials and the mother of the board president.

The board passed a resolution creating a pool of clerical workers and named Evelyn Giordano, the wife of Public Safety Director James Giordano, and Maryanne Kennedy, the wife of Councilman Thomas Kennedy, to the pool.

Phylis Wendelken, the mother of school board President Robert Wendelken, was appointed school matron by another resolution. None of the board members voted against hiring Mrs. Wendelken. Steve Block abstained and Wendelken answered "present" during the roll call vote.

Joseph DellaFave, a Hoboken parent, criticized the three appointments as "political." "For all the good this board has done, the old-time practice of political appointments still prevails."

See SCHOOL — Page 44.

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Hoboken Pictorial 12/10/81

HOBOKEN PICTORIAL

Guiseppe McNamara



He says he can tell us why the rent-leveling ordinance can't be enforced. The registration forms, mailed out with the new tax bills had no return date or explanation about failing to file such a form.

The landlord says further that he lives in a less desirable part of town, runs a "clean and decent house and can't get half of the rent people get uptown, but I pay the same taxes for less service.

"We don't even see sweepers downtown and when our tax rate went up $26.10, not one tenant organization said a word. Now that its been announced that because of a civil suit against Hoboken our taxes are going up another $3 next year, I still don't hear a word.

"Just the other day we heard that new bonds will be sold to repair the schools and that will add another $.60 to next years taxes, still no word from any group.

to your paper and the other two papers to tell the full story. The mental midgets must be told to budget and not spend above this budget. Not all landlords are making a killing in spite of what you and City Hall say."

School board jobs a 'family affair' in Hoboken

Continued from Page 1.

In response, Wendelken said: "To a point we have come a long way. People who have political connections should not be denied their constitutional rights to a job if they are qualified for them."

At the end of the board meeting, Block, the trustee who abstained, said he agreed with DellaFave's assessment of the appointments. "It's widely known that the board continues to favor family and political associates over other applicants," he said.

"It's a great source of frustration to me," he continued, "there's a continued propensity on the board to view its responsibilities in terms of patronage more highly than being fair to all applicants."

Wendelken said the clerical pool jobs were posted and everyone interested had an opportunity to apply.

He said the matron's job also had been posted. When questioned about how his mother was selected, he referred to her "prior good standing" last year before she was laid off from her job as a teachers aide. He forestalled further questions about the hiring by determining it to be a personnel matter whose "rationale is not to be discussed publicly."

The board also hired nine teachers aides and stirred more criticism from former aides who were not rehired. Gloria Olmo, an aide who was laid off in June, said the rehiring was not done by seniority. Some of the rehired aides had more than Ms. Olmo's two-years of experience, but others had none. She said the new people had "godfathers" to ensure they were hired.

Wendelken said "seniority is considered" when aides are hired, "but it is not binding on us."

Thomas Vezzetti, a Hoboken resident, also criticized the hiring of city and board officials' relatives and claimed it constituted a conflict of interest. As a result of last night's action, four council members are either employed by or have relatives employed by the board.

Walter Kramer, city council president, is the board's business manager. Councilman Anthony Romano is assistant to the board secretary and Councilman Louis Francone is head custodian, according to Vezzetti. Now that Councilman Kennedy's wife is a school employee, a total of four council members would be in conflict of interest if they voted on issues affecting the school board.

Vezzetti took his complaints yesterday afternoon to Hudson County Prosecutor Harold Ruvoldt Jr., who asked that they be submitted in writing.

In other business, the board granted permission for Citizens United for New Action (CUNA) to hold a meeting Sunday at Hoboken High School. The Elks were permitted to use the Wallace School gym Dec. 19.

The Board approved the soliciting of bids for a firm to remove asbestos from schools and changed its scheduled Jan. 12 meeting to Jan. 13. A special Dec. 22 meeting was authorized to award a contract for custodial work at the high school.

Hoboken Pictorial 12/10/81

HOBOKEN PICTORIAL

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out their households. We know of several unemployed aides who suppoted their families on that small time job.

It is an unfortunate situation that the taxpayers of Hoboken have to support the Board's Family Employment Agency. Well the people will only put up with so much. Hoboken is on the path for an elected board again.

One landlord who calls himself "Old Salt", tells us he is sick and tired of reading about the New Yorkers, high rents and smoke alarms.

He says he can tell us why the rent-leveling ordinance can't be enforced. The registration forms, mailed out with the new tax bills had no return date or explanation about failing to file such a form.

The landlord says further that he lives in a less desirable part of town, runs a "clean and decent house and can't get half of the rent people get uptown, but I pay the same taxes for less service.

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"Just the other day we heard that new bonds will be sold to repair the schools and that will add another $.60 to next years taxes, still no word from any group.

"Where do these people think this money will come from? It has to be from rent increases. I now pay myself more rent than any tenant in my house. How long can I do this? It's up to your paper and the other two papers to tell the full story. The mental midgets must be told to budget and not spend above this budget. Not all landlords are making a killing in spite of what you and City Hall say."

30-day grace requested for delinquent landlords

Dec 12

By Peter LaVilla

Hoboken Judge Rudolph Naddeo asked Mayor Steve Cappiello to give delinquent landlords, who failed to notify the city on the amount of rent they are charging tenants, an additional 30 days to comply with the rent control ordinance.

However, Naddeo stressed that if the landlords who have not complied to date fail to respond after the 30-day grace period, he is going to assess the penalty in accordance with the ordinance.

The penalty is a fine of between $100 to $500 if proved guilty.

The judge suggested the city send out notices by mail advising the landlords of the 30-day grace period. He said he has received complaints from new landlords in town who claim they never were informed of the regulation.

Cappiello said he would go along with Naddeo's request just this once.

Meanwhile, the 30 to 80 landlords who have received summonses to appear in court next week for non-compliance of the ordinance, can expect a break from the judge in light of the new edict.

Naddeo said he will request the landlords pay the $10 registration fee to be on file with the city as far as rentals are concerned, and fill out the application right there in court before dismissal.

He also said he will decide how much to charge the violators on court costs — if at all. The maximum is $25, he said.

To date some 1,500 landlords have complied with the city's request to register. About 800 are delinquent, according to the city clerk's office.

However, only those buildings that fall under rent control are governed by the regulation.

The ordinance prevents landlords from evicting tenants in order to take advantage of the vacancy decontrol clause which permits the landlord to increase the rent by 25 percent before a new tenant moves in, Cappiello said.

Hoboken Gentrification And the City's Poor

The Nov. 8 article on Hoboken minimized the reality of gentrification's wholesale displacement of the poor, the elderly and the minorities. The recent acceleration of the "Hoboken renaissance" has resulted in a wave of the ultimate tactic of tenant harassment: Acquiring vacant buildings through arson.

Until several years ago, Hoboken was a stable, ethnically diverse working-class city. The original influx of more-affluent people from outside Hoboken led to the renovation of many small buildings in certain areas of the city, usually for the purchaser's own residence.

More recently, however, large real-estate interests and developers seem to have taken over gentrification; wholesale renovations and condominium conversions are occurring. Apparently not satisfied with the pace of evicting the poor, there has been a recent major increase in tenant harassment and arson.

Hoboken's arson rate over the last few years has been staggering for a small city. In the last month and a half

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so far, the city has seemed suc-
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owners that gentrification is
for them. The city has persuaded
of them that the tenant activists
blaming them for the arsons,
is certainly not true.

I, and many people like me, have a great deal of sympathy for small homeowners. But there are active landlord groups — one member of which was quoted in the article regarding his acquisition of several tenements as part of his "retirement portfolio" — who are trying to divide one group of people struggling to make ends meet from other groups with similar problems.

Local authorities have not even attempted to try to protect the homes and lives of Hoboken's tenants. Some may even be benefiting from gentrification. For example, the Mayor is, by his own admission, one of the larger landlords in town.

Walking through Hoboken is revealing. Vacant or burned-out buildings, real-estate developers' "For Sale" and "Sold" signs and condominium conversions are widespread. That all these tenants moved voluntarily stretches the limits of credibility.

The emotional and physical distress of the displaced tenants and the present and future arson victims needs to be connected in the minds of everyone with the phony Hoboken renaissance. In this town, gentrification is for profit, not for people.

DIANE M. CAMILLERI
Doctor of Veterinary Medicine
Hoboken

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Dec 12

By Peter LaVilla

Hoboken Judge Rudolph Naddeo asked Mayor Steve Cappiello to give delinquent landlords, who failed to notify the city on the amount of rent they are charging tenants, an additional 30 days to comply with the rent control ordinance.

However, Naddeo stressed that if the landlords who have not complied to date fail to respond after the 30-day grace period, he is going to assess the penalty in accordance with the ordinance.

The penalty is a fine of between $100 to $500 if proved guilty.

The judge suggested the city send out notices by mail advising the landlords of the 30-day grace period. He said he has received complaints from new landlords in town who claim they never were informed of the regulation.

Cappiello said he would go along with Naddeo's request just this once.

Meanwhile, the 30 to 80 landlords who have received summonses to appear in court next week for non-compliance of the ordinance, can expect a break from the judge in light of the new edict.

Naddeo said he will request the landlords pay the $10 registration fee to be on file with the city as far as rentals are concerned, and fill out the application right there in court before dismissal.

He also said he will decide how much to charge the violators on court costs — if at all. The maximum is $25, he said.

To date some 1,500 landlords have complied with the city's request to register. About 800 are delinquent, according to the city clerk's office.

However, only those buildings that fall under rent control are governed by the regulation.

The ordinance prevents landlords from evicting tenants in order to take advantage of the vacancy decontrol clause which permits the landlord to increase the rent by 25 percent before a new tenant moves in, Cappiello said.

Hoboken Gentrification And the City's Poor

The Nov. 8 article on Hoboken minimized the reality of gentrification's wholesale displacement of the poor, the elderly and the minorities. The recent acceleration of the "Hoboken renaissance" has resulted in a wave of the ultimate tactic of tenant harassment: Acquiring vacant buildings through arson.

Until several years ago, Hoboken was a stable, ethnically diverse working-class city. The original influx of more-affluent people from outside Hoboken led to the renovation of many small buildings in certain areas of the city, usually for the purchaser's own residence.

More recently, however, large real-estate interests and developers seem to have taken over gentrification; wholesale renovations and condominium conversions are occurring. Apparently not satisfied with the pace of evicting the poor, there has been a recent major increase in tenant harassment and arson.

Hoboken's arson rate over the last few years has been staggering for a small city. In the last month and a half alone, there have been 13 deaths in two arson fires. One building, in which 11 people, mostly Hispanic, died as a result of arson, is next to a group of buildings soon to be offered for sale as condominiums. This burned-out building was bought by the same developer who owns the adjacent condominiums.

The arson on Nov. 21 killed two people and displaced more than 60 others, who were then moved out of Hoboken. Among those 60 were some victims of the previous recent arsons who were being "temporarily" housed there. That building was bought in October by a real-estate developer.

The coincidence between these buildings being targeted for renovation or condominium conversion and the arsons is suspicious. Arson appears to be a convenient way to acquire a building with no tenants to force out by less-drastic, and therefore slower, methods.

Arson is only the most tragic and dramatic method of displacement. Tenant harassment has been occurring for some time: Phony eviction notices, applications for enormous hardship and capital-improvement rent increases, illegal raising of rents, delaying needed repairs, etc.

This was exacerbated by the enactment of vacancy decontrol last July.

N.Y. Times

LETTER TO THE NEW JERSEY EDITOR

N.Y. Times Sunday 12/13/81

By offering landlords rewards for empty apartments and empty buildings, by creating an atmosphere of "anything goes," the Mayor and City Council bear a moral responsibility for the deaths, fear and displacement of tenants by neglecting their duty to enforce the existing laws or to pass stronger ones against harassment.

The Mayor and City Council have refused to pass a municipal smoke-detector requirement, even though, *by their own admission*, significantly more than 50 percent of the city's multiple-dwelling buildings are not in compliance with the state smoke-detector law.

The Mayor and City Council have not forced landlords to comply with the rent registration law. The owners of at least 40 percent of Hoboken's multiple-dwelling housing have failed to register current rents with the city. This makes it difficult for a tenant to prove what his or her legal rent should be, as the burden of proof is on the renter to discover what former tenants paid.

The vacancy decontrol law was passed despite hundreds of residents opposing the weakening of the rent-control law at the City Council meeting, and despite 9,000 signatures on petitions to reconsider the measure.

The Mayor and Council have refused to initiate a referendum on vacancy decontrol, forcing community groups to spend a great deal of time, money and energy in a tedious legal process to force a referendum.

Many people in Hoboken — social workers trying to help the elderly who are being displaced, tenant groups, a sympathetic member of the Rent Leveling Board and other concerned people — can cite specific horror stories of the elderly and poor being harassed to get out of the apartments they have lived in for years to make room for the real-estate speculators.

One tactic that the city and local press have used is to talk about the poor small homeowner who lives in his or her house and rents one or two apartments to help pay the mortgage, the rapidly rising property taxes and energy bills. They would like us to believe that all these changes are being done for the small homeowner.

Small homeowners have a stake in the community. They benefit from a stable tenant population, they try to maintain their property well, since they live in their buildings, and they certainly do not burn their own homes to drive out unwanted tenants.

In fact, small homeowners will suffer from gentrification in many ways, not the least of which is a continuous rise in property taxes to provide for the necessarily increased demand for municipal services caused by an expanding population of expensive apartment and condominium dwellers.

Real-estate speculation by large developers and landlords encourages rapid tenant turnover to increase rental rates and often the shoddiest renovation and maintenance to hold down costs and maximize profits.

The small homeowner lives in Hoboken and is concerned with the quality of life here. Most of the large landlords and developers live elsewhere and regard Hoboken as just another source for quick profits.

But so far, the city has seemed successful in convincing many small homeowners that gentrification is good for them. The city has persuaded many of them that the tenant activists are blaming them for the arsons, which is certainly not true.

I, and many people like me, have a great deal of sympathy for small homeowners. But there are active landlord groups — one member of which was quoted in the article regarding his acquisition of several tenements as part of his "retirement portfolio" — who are trying to divide one group of people struggling to make ends meet from other groups with similar problems.

Local authorities have not even attempted to try to protect the homes and lives of Hoboken's tenants. Some may even be benefiting from gentrification. For example, the Mayor is, by his own admission, one of the larger landlords in town.

Walking through Hoboken is revealing. Vacant or burned-out buildings, real-estate developers' "For Sale" and "Sold" signs and condominium conversions are widespread. That all these tenants moved voluntarily stretches the limits of credibility.

The emotional and physical distress of the displaced tenants and the present and future arson victims needs to be connected in the minds of everyone with the phony Hoboken renaissance. In this town, gentrification is for profit, not for people.

DIANE M. CAMILLERI
Doctor of Veterinary Medicine
Hoboken

Tenant group organizing fight against their fears

Hudson Dispatch 12/15/81

By CHUCK SUTTON
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—"Overcoming the fear" is how Juan Garcia described the meeting Sunday that brought 130 people together to formally organize the Ana Mercado Organization of Renters.

"People had fears of the welfare department, fears of the police, fear that whenever we do something there might be violence. But people have overcome those fears," Garcia said.

Garcia said yesterday that two major factors have led to the organization of the group: The 15 suspected arson-related deaths and the vacancy decontrol law, which he says "is evident in the number of evictions going on in the courts."

Tenant advocates have charged that the vacancy decontrol law, allowing landlords to increase the rent on an apartment by 25 percent once it becomes vacant, has stepped up harassment of tenants.

At the meeting on Sunday, about 35 people signed up for the ongoing "working committee" that will be divided according to wards.

Garcia insisted that the group is not political. He also explained that the association is not a duplication of Citizens United for New Action, a community organization.

"We're looking for something out of the community that we (CUNA) can belong to," Garcia explained.

The Dispatch,
Hudson/Bergen Counties, N.J., Tuesday, December 15, 1981

Hoboken landlord crackdown gets nowhere in courtroom

By CHUCK SUTTON
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—What city officials vowed would be a crackdown on landlords who failed to register their apartments under the new rent leveling law, fizzled yesterday in Municipal Court.

After charging landlords who appeared in court yesterday with $20 in court fees and reprimanding each of them for failing to pay the $10 registration fee, Judge Rudolph Naddeo said he was granting the landlords a 30-day moratorium in registering their apartments.

Naddeo did not impose fines yesterday despite warnings last week from city officials that this was the week the city was going to get tough with violators.

The judge's action was a far cry from the $100 fine Mayor Steve Capiello promised last week to impose on landlords who failed to register their apartments.

After landlords started to receive the summonses, many told him they were unaware of the law, Naddeo said. Many, he added, can't read English.

Landlords were originally given an Aug. 30 deadline to register, which was then extended an additional 30 days.

Naddeo also pointed out that the rent registration forms sent to the city's landlords did not specify a deadline nor did they say where the forms were to be returned.

City Clerk Anthony Amaruso, who has been issuing the summons said yesterday that despite these bureaucratic errors, the controversy of the rent leveling ordinance had generated "a million dollars of publicity" on rent registration.

Amaruso said yesterday that his office will continue to issue summons at the rate of 40 citations per day.

5 fined for failing

Hoboken Municipal Court Judge Rudolph Naddeo fined five landlords $20 each in court cost for failing to register with the city the amount of rent they charge their tenants.

The regulation is in compliance with the city's rent control ordinance. Five other landlords who faced court action yesterday sought and received an extension on their hearing.

Naddeo said last week he would assess the court cost to some 80 landlords who were issued summonses for failing to comply with the ordinance.

See Editorial: PROTECTION On Page 16.

He also requested that an additional 30 days be given to some 800 landlords who have not responded to the order to register.

He said he will ask the court to issue bench warrants for those landlords who have not appeared in court by next week. After that, he said, violators will be fined $100 by Naddeo and could be jailed for up to 90 days. Naddeo will decide whether to jail violators on a case-by-case basis between now and next Monday. Those found guilty, the judge said, will be fined $100 each week.

The

Landlord exemption

Hoboken's rent control ordinance, which grants landlords a 13-month exemption from the law provided the owners spend 100 percent of the total property assessment value on repairs, will be tested at 8 p.m. Thursday.

Bernardine Van Carpels, administrator of the Rent Leveling and Stabilization Board, said the owner of 816 Willow Ave. has made application for the exemption.

If granted, the owner can raise rents on the 10 tenants living there to whatever he wants during the 13-month period, according to Mrs. Van Carpels.

"Under the new rent control ordinance, if a landlord's property is assessed at a certain amount and he decides to make repairs on the property equal to what the property is assessed at, then he is entitled to an exemption application," she said.

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He also requested that an additional 30 days be given to some 800 landlords who have not responded to the city's request to register.

He asked that letters of notice be sent out to those who have not registered with the city. After the 30-day extension, violators who come before Naddeo will be hit with a fine of between $100 and $500 if proved guilty, the judge announced last week.

The judge said he has received complaints from new landlords about not being notified of the ordinance.

Meanwhile, landlords are mounting a move to force the city to charge the $10 registration fee to the tenants, and making the tenants responsible with letting the city know what rent the landlord is chargin them.

A landlord, who asked not to be identified, said it is just as easy for the tenant to notify the city as well as the owner. He said the landlords feel their rights are being violated because they are being forced to do something that is not entirely their fault.

Hearings will be held today and next Monday for those landlords who were issued summonses.

Landlord exemption to face test

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If granted, the owner can raise rents on the 10 tenants living there to whatever he wants during the 13-month period, according to Mrs. Van Carpels.

"Under the new rent control ordinance, if a landlord's property is assessed at a certain amount and he decides to make repairs on the property equal to what the property is assessed at, then he is entitled to an exemption application," she said. "That's the regulation."

The landlord must make the repairs in compliance with city regulations and do it before the application is sought, she noted.

Under the new regulation, every tenant must derive benefits from the renovations, otherwise the exemption grant is rejected, Mrs. Van Carpels pointed out.

The panel also will decide on whether to grant the owner of 823 Washington St. a 25 percent hardship increase.

According to the administrator, the owner requested the increase to meet expenses. Four families will be affected by the results.

Gerald McCann's ex-
wife left yesterday.

A bonding company will pick up tab for that Hoboken dinner

By Peter LaVilla

Hoboken taxpayers won't be footing the bill to wine and dine board of education trustees and members of the City Council next week at the Clam Broth House — a bonding agency that wants to help the city obtain $9 million for school renovations is reportedly picking up the tab.

However, while no one is saying who that New York bonding agency is, it was learned that there is a move afoot to reject the offer.

Councilman Robert Ranieri said he will urge the council not to accept the offer because he feels it is wrong to be hosted by an agency that is trying to sell the city on an idea.

The council is expected to vote on a resolution at 7 tonight that authorizes the scheduled closed-session meeting between the council, the board of education and the bonding agency.

Ranieri said he'd like to keep the meetings with all prospective agencies doing business with the city on a professional level. He said he favors the meeting either at the board of education office or City Hall.

James Farina, a board trustee, said he will recommend to the board president that a letter be sent to the bonding agency to advise it that the meeting be held in the board conference room.

The meeting has been set for 7:30 Tuesday. The board has a 7 p.m. special meeting that night to award a maintenance contract.

See BOND — Page 55.

Dec 16

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Pay cut

Dec 21

Hoboken city officials are reported to be contemplating taking a 5 percent pay cut to help trim the municipal budget.

That certainly would set an example for the other city employees . . . provided that the pay cut for the rank and file does not exceed 5 percent.

It might be more permanent — if less dramatic — for the city officials to pare operating expenses to the bone before cutting into executive salaries. It certainly would be more permanent if they cut some of the so-called executive positions completely, but that's asking too much.

However, it just might turn out that a director facing a 5 percent pay cut may be able to make a more or less miraculous reduction in his department budget so that the pay cuts by the brass will not be necessary.

There's more than one way to meet a budget crisis, isn't there, Mayor Cappiello?

On time

Dec 21 1981

Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello is installing time clocks for the 35 to 40 city employees who work from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in an attempt to cut down on tardiness and early departures.

The mayor is off on the right foot because he is making it a rule that everyone — including himself — must punch in and out each day.

The second step in the right direction is that supervisors are responsibile for employees under their direction. The third step is that employees who punch in late will have to make up the time or they will not be paid for a full day's work.

There are two additional steps. The rules must be strictly enforced for all and there must be careful supervision to avoid the inevitable wise guys who will devise systems to beat the system.

The Jersey Journal offices

30 Journal Square, Jersey City 07306 Phone 653-1000
549 Broadway, Bayonne 07002 Phone 436-6400
440 60th St., West New York 07093 Phone 854-1000
154 Fifth St., Hoboken 07030 Phone 656-0720

Gerald McCann's ...
A. Wolfe, left, yesterday.

Dec - 16

Bond agency will pick up dinner tab

Continued from Page 1.

Efforts to obtain the name and adress of the bonding firm for comment proved futile when Walter Cramer, president of the council and business manager and administrator to the board of education, refused to talk to reporters.

George Maier, superintendent of schools, and Thomas Gallo, board secretary and state assemblyman, were unavailable for comment.

According to Ranieri, the bonding agency that gets the award, is expected to receive $370,000 or 3 percent discount for underwriting the $9 million proposal.

"I feel doubly-strong that we should not be influenced by this firm or anyone else who wants to do business with the city," said Ranieri. "I would prefer the meetings be held in a professional manner, open to questions, answers and discussions."

The board has not awarded a contract to any specific bonding agency, although it has had preliminary meetings with representatives of several firms.

The $9 million is expected to be used to major renovations to most of the schools. Some 18 months ago the board sought $32 million for renovations.

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There's more than one way to meet a budget crisis, isn't there, Mayor Cappiello?

Crampe childless society

Sunday Journal 12/7/81

Families with children are finding it increasingly difficult to secure housing that suits their needs, because they are often priced out of the housing market or unwelcome in rental housing.

"We're becoming an increasingly childless society," says the Rev. Steven Preister, director of the National Center for Family Studies at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., explaining the underlying causes of these housing trends for families with children.

"Forty percent of all households in the Washington metropolitan area have no children today," he says, "and it is predicted that by the year 1990, 60 percent of all households in the United States will be childless."

These trends are being reflected nationally in the market for both rental and purchased housing, Preister explains.

In rental housing, it is often a matter of economics. "It's more cost effective," says Preister, "to cater to childless households, and landlords can make more
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into it to gradually expand. Select a house with an eye for what is adaptable to expansion, he advises.

"You can break down a wall to enlarge a room," he says, "but first find out if the wall is structural or not" (i.e., whether or not it is holding up the building).

Levine adds that if you bug a house with the idea of expanding it, first check into zoning restrictions. Next, consider where the expansion space is located. For example, he explains, it is easier to build an extension behind a living room than behind a bathroom.

When finding a home, "a family always has to make trade-offs," says Levine. For example, a family may be able to get more house for their money in a "less desirable" neighborhood or less house for their money in a more desirable neighborhood. Or a family may have to settle for any apartment they can find, regardless of the location, because of their limited budget and the limited choice of rental units that permit children.

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HOBOKEN PICTORIAL

Guiseppe McNamara



People have different thoughts as to what Hoboken's future holds. Some will tell you its going down the drain, others that it will be taken over by well-to-do invaders on the other side of the Hudson. Others will tell you, with enthusiasm in their voices, that the city is presently in a state of rebirth-a renaissance so to speak.

Perhaps painting as feasible picture as any of the city's Christmas past, Christmas present and Christmas future, are the combined thoughts of the tenant and the landlord - usually at opposite poles for obvious reasons.

In the column last week, we heard from a landlord who called himself "Old Salt" who shook his finger at the tenants for the development of the housing crisis in the city.

He charged that not one tenant's organization said a word about the tax rate when it went up $26.10.

"Now that it has been announced that because of a civil suit against Hoboken our taxes are going up another $3.00 next year, I

and in a few years, they may have to close a few schools for the lack of pupils."

The one thing that "Old Salt" and the salty old tenant agree on, however, is on the matter of street sweepers.

"Old Salt" says he never sees them down town, and the tenant suggests, "It would save a lot of money if they would just scrap them and put a few good men out on the streets where it is needed most."

On top of all of this, a resident writes that there is a veterinarian with an office in Union City, "who would

Cramped quarters and the childless society

Sunday Journal 10/7/61

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These trends are being reflected nationally in the market for both rental and purchased housing, Preister explains.

In rental housing, it is often a matter of economics. "It's more cost effective," says Preister, "to cater to childless households, and landlords can make more money with specialized housing."

Still though, families with children are no extinct. So how are they coping with the obstacles that face them, and what options do they have?

For the family that is forced to live in a house or an apartment that has inadequate space, the following ways to use available space more efficiently are suggested by Julius Levine, professor of city and regional planning in the university's Department of Architecture and Planning:

- When furnishing a room provide as much open area as possible, so as not to have everything underfoot.
- Whenever possible, stack or store furniture not in use.
- Make rooms multi-functional with furniture than can be used for more than one purpose (e.g. — a sofa that doubles as a bed at night, a dining table that can be used as desk space, or a living room coffee table that can be used for dining).

To Levine's list of space-savers, Preister adds that, in the not too distant future, the home computer will be an affordable and accessible item. Use of the home computer to store all kinds of information and family records will eliminate a lot of cluttered space in the home.

"Overcrowding in either an apartment or a house is one of the worst things to have to live with," continues Preister. "It's difficult to adjust, but the solution is for the family to discuss what rules they will make about privacy. There should be a time and place for every individual in the family to be alone when he or she needs to be," he says.

One way some families with children are finding it possible to break into the tight housing market today is by sharing a large house with another family, according to Levine. Some houses are being designed today with two master bedrooms, and the two families share a living room, kitchen and other rooms in common.

Another idea Levine offers is for a family to buy a small house that is affordable and invest "time and sweat" into it to gradually expand. Select a house with an eye for what is adaptable to expansion, he advises.

"You can break down a wall to enlarge a room," he says, "but first find out if the wall is structural or not" (i.e., whether or not it is holding up the building).

Levine adds that if you bug a house with the idea of expanding it, first check into zoning restrictions. Next, consider where the expansion space is located. For example, he explains, it is easier to build an extension behind a living room than behind a bathroom.

When finding a home, "a family always has to make trade-offs," says Levine. For example, a family may be able to get more house for their money in a "less desirable" neighborhood or less house for their money in a more desirable neighborhood. Or a family may have to settle for any apartment they can find, regardless of the location, because of their limited budget and the limited choice of rental units that permit children.

What can parents do to offset some of the problems they and their children might have to contend with when moving to an area that does not measure up to their values and standards?

"An individual family is powerless to do anything," says Preister. "But something new is happening in the United States — people are beginning to understand that banding together to advocate particular causes is very effective."

With younger children, Preister advises that families should join together to form cooperative arrangements for supervision of their children. For teenagers parents should collectively advocate some alternatives to "hanging around" on the street and in the shopping centers — such as organized youth programs.

In many apartment complexes and high-rises today, he concludes, owners are finding it worthwhile to invest in providing youth programs, because it diminishes the amount of losses in incidents of vandalism and malicious destruction.

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HOBOKEN PICTORIAL

10/26/61

Guiseppe McNamara



People have different thoughts as to what Hoboken's future holds. Some will tell you its going down the drain, others that it will be taken over by well-to-do invaders on the other side of the Hudson. Others will tell you, with enthusiasm in their voices, that the city is presently in a state of rebirth-a renaissance so to speak.

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"Now that it has been announced that because of a civil suit against Hoboken our taxes are going up another $3.00 next year, I still don't hear a word," 'Old Salt' claimed.

Humbug, replies a tenant reader this week, pulling his chestnuts from the fire.

"The tenant groups have spoken many times at city council metings and during demonstrations in front of the city hall protesting high taxes and defending the small home owner's problems. Evidentally, "Old Salt" was never there to listen," the tenant rebuffs.

Adding more salt to "Old Salt's" remarks the tenant says, "We never hear any complaints by the landlords at city council meetings because they just pass them on to tenants at an even higher cost to the tenants than the actual tax increase."

Focusing on the future, the tenant says, "What is taking place in Hoboken is what is happening in the New York Village.

"Family life is vanishing because they can't afford to pay the rents. The churches, the schools, the elderly will see the disastrous results of gentrification in only a few short years.

"The so-called 'less desirable' sections of the city will be declared blighted zones before long.

"The waterfront area will get luxury condos. Many people are of the opinion," the tenant says, "that this is not the time to spend millions to modernize schools. The interest rates are too high, and in a few years, they may have to close a few schools for the lack of pupils."

The one thing that "Old Salt" and the salty old tenant agree on, however, is on the matter of street sweepers.

"Old Salt" says he never sees them down town, and the tenant suggests, "It would save a lot of money if they would just scrap them and put a few good men out on the streets where it is needed most."

On top of all of this, a resident writes that there is a veterinarian with an office in Union City, "who would likely open an office in Hoboken if he could find one," he said.

In the last paragraph, the writer says, "The point of this whole letter is that there are a lot of dogs in Hoboken."

Gad!! is this resident implying that the city is going to the dogs?

The F.B.I. is reportedly looking into a report that a Hoboken police superior karate-chopped a resident while engaged in an argument.

The resident has not filed a complaint as yet and is still hospitalized after the blow by the martial arts expert.

Historic Grand Hotel conversion OKed

12/30/81

By James Kopchains

Site plans for a $1 million renovation of the old Grand Hotel in Hoboken have been approved by the city's planning board, clearing the way for construction to begin with its completion slated for autumn of next year.

The board also voted last night against declaring residential property along Second Street, Willow Avenue and Clinton Street blighted. In doing so the board accepted a review prepared by consultant Harvey Moskowitz that said the properties did not meet official blight definition of a blighted area.

With the hotel plan's approval, construction at the site is expected to begin within the month, according to attorney Harvey Gerber Jr., who represents the developer, Carmine Lemme. Gerber and architect Joseph T. Vitullo represented the concern last night before the board.

The hotel, which is presently unoccupied, is located at 232-234 Hudson St. According to the plans, the building will be converted into 26 apartment units, according to Gerber.

Twelve of these units will be located on the ground floor of the building, Gerber said. A restaurant presently located there would be converted into apartments to do this, he said.

The estimated $1 million cost for the renovations was arrived at by multiplying the estimated cost of renovation for each unit (about $40,000 each) by the number of units, according to Gerber.

When completed, Gerber said the units will be rentals and luxury rentals, though he said deci-

See HISTORIC—Page 25.

Hoboken seeks grant for park at terminal

Dec 19, 1981

By Peter LaVilla

The Hoboken Community Development Agency has asked the state for a $425,000 grant for the development of an outdoor recreation park and conservation area at the proposed Erie-Lackawanna Pedestrian Plaza.

A spokesman for the CDA said the funds are part of an $850,000 project which is to be shared equally by the state and federal governments.

The project is part of an overall development of the Erie-Lackawanna Terminal. Millions of state and federal dollars are expected to be pumped into the plaza development.

Among the tenants will be Hoboken Stages, an $8 million project, privately-operated, with a modern studio for movie and video production.

The City Council voted its approval for the application of the grant.

The CDA spokesman said the plaza will include a passive park, trees, shrubs, benches and the retention of the exterior in its original form, if possible.

"Since the Erie-Lackawanna site has been designated a historic property, we have to come as close to the original form as possible when restoring it," the spokesman said.

Hoboken blight plans stir controversy

Dec 29 1981

The Hoboken Planning Board is expected to vote at 8 tonight in City Hall on whether to blight properties at Second Street, Willow Avenue and Clinton Street.

Landlords of those properties have registered strong opposition to the plan. They have claimed that the planning board has been trying to blight their property and turn the buildings over to a local developer.

If the properties are blighted some 35 tenants will be affected, the landlords stated.

The board also is expected to issue a site plan review to the Grand Hotel, and review subdivision certification appeals for 630 Hudson St. and 423 Adams St.

Historic Grand Hotel conversion OKd

Continued from Page 1

sions could be made in the future in changing the apartments to condominiums or co-op status. "That'll all depend on how the market is in a few years," Gerber said.

Concerning the residential properties declared not blighted, the members voted unanimously after reviewing the consultant's report. The areas that were being considered for blighted were 200-212 Willow Ave.; 300-316 Second St., and 205-209 Clinton St.

The decision had been the subject of great controversy among landlords and residents in the area. The planning board had ordered the investigation into whether the area should be declared blighted because they border on other officially-declared blighted areas.

Landlords of the properties had claimed the board was just trying to blight the property and turn the buildings over to a local developer.

According to Edwin Chius, a member of the board, the Moscowitz report had recommended the properties not be declared blighted because there was evidence the owners were making repairs to the properties.

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1981

Not a year to treasure in North Hudson

By Mary Fitzgibbons

To put it mildly, 1981 was a year few in North Hudson and Hoboken will soon forget.

There was drama — federal, state and county probes on many levels.

There was intrigue — indictments and the subsequent trial of well-known political and local leaders.

There was mystery — unsolved shootings in North Bergen and West New York and continued arson investigations in Hoboken.

There was outrage — the public outcry against the planned razing of St. Michael's Monastary Church, a landmark in Union City.

There were stalemates, such as in the area of garbage collection.

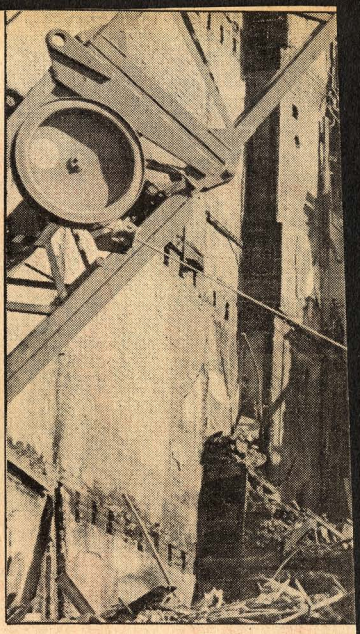
The year began with a federal probe into the area purchasing practices of Eastern Supply Co. of Hoboken, which led to the eventual indictment of Martin Reid, its owner, accused of mail fraud and conspiracy. But a former Kearny councilman involved won acquittal.

Union City Commissioner Robert C. Botti also came under heavy criticism during the probe since he worked as a salesman for that firm, which sold supplies to area towns. However, Botti said he did not handle any Union City orders.

North Bergen was also the scene of many probes — one by the Hudson County prosecutor into the school board's purchasing practices; another by the state attorney general's office into the township's garbage collection contract and another — on the request of Mayor Anthony DiVincent—by the state Police Training Commission asking for a re-evaluation of the police department.

And who can forget Weehawken's foray into the chicken business which brought on a federal probe into the background of the developer—Hudson Poultry, Inc.?

While Richard Kaplan, the packager of the plant which would have developed Weehawken's [illegible] waterfront property [illegible] on alleged business partner of



The charred shell of a
after the bodies of two
Later that month, 11 p
in Hoboken.

Weehawken Committeeman Michael Tabat followed the lead and was indicted on gambling charges. No date has been set for Tabat's trial.

The 1981 chapter in the Musto story will be continued into the new year as Musto's trial with his eight co-defendants continues in Newark Federal Court.

Besides Musto and Powers, other indicted and currently on trial are, school architect Anthony Genovese; retired Union City Deputy Police Chief Frank Scarafile; John Bertoli, chairman of the North Bergen housing authority; Gildo Aimone, director of the Union City housing authority; developers Dominick D'Agostino and Lawrence Dentico.

Mystery reared its ugly head when a series of shootings occurred in North Hudson.

A Jersey City patrolman was shot and wounded by his alleged girl friend in a North Bergen trailer park in February, beginning a year of many violent deaths in North Hudson.

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THE JERSEY JOURNAL, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1981

The charred shell of a house at 67 Park Ave. in Hoboken is demolished in October after the bodies of two children who died in a fire there were found in the rubble. Later that month, 11 persons were killed in a blaze at 12th and Washington streets in Hoboken.

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