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Hoboken 'getting sites checked' on detectors

1-5-88

Hoboken's chief building inspector says his department is "moving right along" in checking the almost 3,000 multi-unit dwellings in the city for compliance with the state smoke alarm mandate — with a full one-third of the buildings in the city having been inspected already.

"We're doing the best we can," said Michael Curcio, chief building inspector in the city, who added that he is patiently sifting through the piles of paperwork on his desk on the city's multiple dwellings to gauge the smoke alarm compliance rate.

Although he did not have a percentage on the number of buildings in the city which are in compliance with the law, he said it was "substantial."

According to the year-old mandate, landlords in dwellings of four or more units must place battery-operated alarms in all apartments and electrically-operated alarms in all access areas such as hallways and basements.

Meanwhile, Mayor Steve Cappiello added that plans to have a city ordinance mandating smoke alarms in multi-dwellings to back up the state ordiance, is still "status quo."

He added that the city mandate is being held up since Hoboken might be held responsible if there was a fire in a building that was supposed to have smoke alarms but did not.

He stressed however, that it was a "big question which we are concerned about and are all doing our best to expedite."

Bado assails changing job requirements

1-5-88

The director of Hoboken's Community Development Agency blamed "constantly changing job requirements and duties" as the reason the job of tenant-advocate — approved by Mayor Steve Cappiello almost two months ago — has yet to be filled.

However, Fred Bado, head of the CDA, said he hopes to meet with Cappiello and members of the city council following tomorrow's 7 p.m. council meeting to further discuss the situation.

Bado said that every time the job description is finalized, tenants' group spokesmen demanded changes.

Repeated attempts to contact spokesmen for any of the city's tenants' groups were unsuccessful yesterday.

At the time the $15,000-a-year full-time job was approved by the mayor almost two months ago the job description called for a person to act as a liaison between the city and tenants experiencing housing problems in the city.

While Bado added that "six or seven people" have applied for the job since its inception, he said that interviews have yet to be completed.

He said that while the applicant is not required to live in Hoboken, that was preferable, as was a bi-lingual person to fill the job.

Two more arket arson

By ROY KAHN
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—Two more persons, including the owner of a Met Foods supermarket which was destroyed by arson, were arrested yesterday as city police brought to four the number of suspects allegedly involved in burning down the building Dec. 7.

Julio Vargas, 27, of Brooklyn, N.Y., identified by police as the owner of the

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Sanchez, 18, of 300 Marshall St., a former employee of the store, and charged him with accepting $250 for the crime of arson. The same day, Thomas Santos, 22, of 618 Park Ave., was picked up by police and charged with aggravated arson. According to police, however, only one of those two men was involved in setting the fire and neither was the mastermind behind the blaze.

The police investigation involved both the detective division and the vice squad.

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That's the response from Hobokenk Mayor Steve Cappiello regarding why the position of tenant-activist — okayed by him almost two months ago — has yet to be filled.

Earlier, Fred Bado, director of the Community Development Agency, (CDA) who is responsibile for filling the position, blamed the two-month wait on "constantly changing job requirements and duties."

Bado has said that every time the job description was finalized, tenants' group spokesmen demanded changes.

Whatever the reason for the delay, Cappiello was scheduled to meet with Bado to discuss the empty $15,000-a-year post.

The mayor announced that it would be filled as soon as possible.

1-6-82 S.S.

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Two more men nabbed in supermarket arson

1/21/82

By ROY KAHN
Staff Writer

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Julio Vargas, 27, of Brooklyn, N.Y., identified by police as the owner of the store at 303 Jackson St., was arrested yesterday afternoon. The second man, Robert Romero, 22, who police said has no known address, was arrested yesterday morning. Both were charged with arson.

Police officials would not say who had actually set the fire. According to Detective Joseph Petrillo, who has been involved in the investigation, Romero is also wanted by New York City police for an arson there. At least one more arrest is expected to be made within the next few days, police said.

Detective Capt. Patrick Donatacci confirmed last night that the small market had been having financial troubles. Vargas, he said, had owned the store for about a year, but ownership of the building was in his uncle's name. That name, however, has not been released and Donatacci said there was no connection between the uncle and the arson.

On Monday, police arrested Robert Sanchez, 18, of 300 Marshall St., a former employee of the store, and charged him with accepting $250 for the crime of arson. The same day, Thomas Santos, 22, of 618 Park Ave., was picked up by police and charged with aggravated arson. According to police, however, only one of those two men was involved in setting the fire and neither was the mastermind behind the blaze.

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Council to act NA funding

1-6-83 JJ

Members of Hoboken's City Council are expected to take action on continuing the funding for the Citizens United for New Action organization at tonight's 7 o'clock meeting.

CUNA receives funds annually to run the Hoboken youth counseling service. The city's Community Development Agency's contributions total $23,000, while the state Division of Youth and Family Services, (DYFS) provides the other $54,000.

Funding for the organization had been "on hold" until state, federal and CUNA officials met last week to clear up misunderstandings on the scope of the organization.

According to Fred Bado, head of the CDA, funding had been held up because the organization had be itself from a couns for community tenants' rights orga

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"I will take my lunch hour exactly at 7 p.m.," vowed Vezzetti today. "They can't keep me away."

Vezzetti had previously worked the midnight to 8 a.m. shift. He currently works the 4 p.m. to midnight shift.

Hoboken hires tenant activist after 2 months

Fri Jan 8 JJ 198

Hoboken now has a tenant activist at long last.

Fred Bado, head of the Community Development Agency, announced that he has hired Robert Schachter, a Hoboken resident, for the job, which had been unfilled since the position was approved by Mayor Steve Cappiello almost two months ago.

He will begin his duties Monday, Bado said.

Bado further added that Schachter, in his early 20s, is no stranger to this type of work, having served as a volunteer for the New York Environmental Protection Agency for a short time.

The tenants activist, who will earn $15,000 per yera, is supposed to act in a liaison capacity between tenants and landlords to solve housing problems, Bado had explained earlier.

Schachter, according to the CDA head, most recently worked as a salesman for The New York Times and attended classes at New York's New School. He is also bi-lingual, and a graduate of Glen Rock High School.

The position of tenant activist had been unfilled for almost eight weeks for a variety of related reasons, according to both the mayor and Bado.

The mayor blamed a lack of specifications set up at the beginning of the job's creation for the delay, while Bado blamed tenant activist group members who continually wanted the job description changed for hampering the hiring process.

At most, seven people applied for the job, explained Bado.

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According to Fred Bado, head of the CDA, funding had been held up because the organization had been expanding itself from a counseling service for community youth to a tenants' rights organization.

Mayor Steve Cappiello had recommended to City Council members that they approve the funding with the agreement that all funds be used for youth counseling and no other purpose.

In other business at tonight's meeting, City Council members are expected to act on resolutions to ratify cash payments of over $59,000 to welfare recipients for the jan. 1 pay period, according to the agenda.

They are also expected to act on resolutions paying almost $5,000 to Police Officer George Piscopo in accordance with a workman's compensation award.

Leaves of absenses for two police officers are also expected to be passed at tonight's meeting.

They are a three-month leave for Patrolman John Gilbarty and a six-month leave to Lt. James Giordano, who also serves as the city's public safety director.

Regina Kranz and James Suarez will also be appointed as members of the Hoboken Recreation commission.

Vezzetti to make council meeting on lunch hour

Thomas Vezzetti, a long-time city administration critic, has vowed to make tonight's Hoboken city council mkeeting at 7 o'clock a lifely one.

Vezzetti has complained that his job hours had been changed by the city so that he would miss city council meetings.

Vezzetti works as a security guard in one of the city's municipal garages.

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Council wants to know why (

Jan 7 1982

By James Kopchains

The Hoboken City Council wants to know why a funded organization meant to help youths get jobs has decided to give most of its staff positions to out-of-towners.

The council had been expected to vote last night on supplying funding for CUNA to run the city's youth counselling service. However, the members decided at Monday's caucus to pull the resolution until it conducts an investigation.

Meanwhile, at last night's meeting, tempers flared as Council President Walter Cramer and Councilman Robert Ranieri got into a shouting match over a proposed plan for a Pathmark supermarket on 14th and Washington streets.

In calling for the CUNA measure pulling both Cramer and Councilman Anthony Romano said they were surprised to learn that its staff was largely made up of out-of-towners.

"That's the first time we heard about it," Cramer said last night.

According to Cramer, the top four officials o the CUNA staff are reported as living in Unio City and Jersey City. The lowest-paid sta member at $6,500 per year is from Hoboken.

This especially angered Romano. "I can un derstand if there were no qualified persons i Hoboken for the job. Then they could scout th nation for someone qualified," Romano said.

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Arson pattern seen in Hoboken

9-26-82 JS

By James Kopchains

A Hoboken tenants group has charged that a "strong correlation" exists between recent suspicious fires and increased interest in condominium and cooperative apartment conversions in the city.

A study by the group also reportedly showed that the same developers and realtors are continually cropping up as being involved in the ownership and management of fire-ravaged buildings.

As a result, the group decided last night to consider steps to warn tenats of buildings that are either owned or managed by these people and corporations and apprising them of their findings.

The study was presented at a meeting last night in Hoboken. According to Ronald Hine, who chaired the committee, a pattern had emerged that suggests that the fires may have been set in order to vacate the apartments faster than regulations would allow.

Hine pointed out that neither the study nor anyone in the group was claiming that the fires were set by building owners. The purpose of the study, he said, was to find some pattern, some determination toward a reason for all the fires.

The committee that prepared the report worked for over three months studying major fires that had occurred in the city over the past four years, Hine said.

In eight recent multiple-alarm fires, Hine said a pattern had emerged.

In seven of the buildings, condominium or cooperative apartment conversion plans were submitted within a short period of time after the fire had forced tenants out of the building.

It was in studying these particular fires that the names of owners and developers kept "popping up," according to Hine. However, he added that the persons were also involved in property ownership and management throughout the city and may have only coincidentally come up because of their frequent dealings with property.

These patterns suggested a "strong correlation that may lead to the conclusion" that the buildings may have been set on fire to force the tenants to vacate the apartments.

After discussion on the report, the group members agreed to consider ways on alerting tenants in buildings owned or managed by them of the study's findings.

The members also agreed to seek legal advice on what judicial steps would be taken to place a stay on conversions in the city until further investigation into the arson problem.

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Concerning the Pathmark supermarket, Ranieri said the supermarket chain has been trying to gain a variance for property owned by the Hoboken Manufacturing Railroad Corp. at the site. That variance request has recently been rejected by the city's board of adjustment, a decision that the chain has said they would appeal to the council.

The two men apologized after the meeting for the outburst. Cramer explained that he did not want Ranieri to make statements on the matter since it was about to come before the council for a decision.

In other business last night, the council approved tax abatements to renovators of apartment buildings at Eighth Street and Willow Avenue and to the Universal Folding Box Corp.

Regarding the tax abatements, Ranieri explained the houses on 800-812 Willow Ave. had been granted an abatement of paying property taxes in favor of payments the renovators agreed to make in lieu of taxes.

Current taxes on the property are about $14,000 per year, Ranieri said, but with the renovations being planned for it the taxes could rise to more than $100,000 per year. Instead, the developers agreed to pay a sum based on a percentage of their rental income, he said, which would come to about $29,000 per year.

Regarding Universal, Ranieri said the company had just finished putting a $3 million addition to their plant. In exchange the city agreed to a tax abatement for five years with decreases of 20 percent each year from the 100 percent abatement the first year, he said.

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Seniors Protected by New Condo Law

2/82 NJTO

New Jersey landlords are now converting many apartments to high-priced condominiums. At least half of the tenants in these buildings won't be able to afford to buy their apartment and will face eviction. But if you're a senior citizen (62 or older) with a low or medium family income you can't be forced to move for 40 years.

A new state law grants this protection to senior citizens and disabled persons in New Jersey. *All other tenants who don't buy their converted apartment face eviction after four years.* If you're a senior and you are eligible under the income limit you won't have to worry until you're at least 102 years of age.

On July 27, 1981 Governor Brendan Byrne signed Senate Bill 3028, the Senior Citizen and Disabled Protected Tenancy Act. The law protects senior citizens from eviction if they meet the following requirements.

1. They have an income no higher than the average (see table). This figure will change each year and it is different for each county.
2. They have resided in the building for two years.
3. They are 62 years of age.
4. The apartment contains at least five rental units.

The law protects a disabled person who is totally and permanently unable to work because of a physical or mental impairment or blindness. Disabled persons must also meet the income and residency requirements.

Before a landlord is allowed to convert any apartment to a condominium, the Town must send an application to every tenant in the building. The tenant must fill out the form and send or hand deliver it to the Town. The tenant must also sign a statement stating his income and that he or she has lived in the apartment for more than two years. Within 30 days the Town must decide whether the tenant qualifies for the 40-year protected tenancy. If you receive an application form, be sure to complete it within 60 days and return it to the Town or you may not be eligible for protected tenancy.

If your building was approved for conversion before July 27, 1981 then you must go to court to be protected under the law. If there are any questions about whether or not your building has been approved for conversion, contact the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs at (609) 292-6418.

Tenants not eligible for the protected tenancy are entitled to stay in their apartment at least three years before they can be evicted. Within 18 months of receiving an eviction notice these tenants can ask the landlord for help in finding a similar apartment. If the landlord cannot find this for the tenant, the tenant cannot be evicted after three years. Instead the tenant can get an additional extension up to five years, though landlords are allowed to evict tenants after the fourth year by giving the tenant five months free rent. Tenants in converted buildings are protected by local rent control, providing there is a rent control law in the town in which they live.

Any tenants who want further information about what to do when faced with a condo conversion can call the New Jersey Public Advocate at (800) 792-8600 or the New Jersey Bureau of Landlord Tenant Affairs in the N.J. Department of Community Affairs at (609) 292-6418.

Pending Bills Threaten Tenants

2/82 NJTO

There are currently two bills that tenants should be aware of pending in the New Jersey State Senate. Both bills will make it easier to evict tenants without going through the normal steps.

S685 eliminates the need for a Warrant of Removal to be certified by the Post Office. This means that a landlord who claims to have sent a warrant does not need proof of its delivery. S686 eliminates the need for notice to be given when a tenant is being evicted for endangerment of another tenant.

Tenants are urged to contact their State Senators to oppose these bills. In the next issue of NJTOnews, there will be a complete report on all pending legislation that affects tenants.

THE JERSEY JOURNAL, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1982



Hoboken workers sweep Washington Street as part of the "Operation Clean Sweep" cleanup campaign. From left they are Romano Jagamo, Public Works Director William Van Wie, John Hutchens and Steve Scerbo.

Hoboken seen nearing a smoke detector law

Superior Court Judge Thomas O'Brien's ruling that Hoboken is not legally liable for damages suffered in a tenement fire three years ago may clear the way for the city to pass a long-awaited municipal smoke detector law.

O'Brien ruled that Hoboken is not liable for damages that resulted from a Jan. 20, 1979, fire at 131 Clinton St. in which 21 persons were killed and others injured and left homeless.

Families of the fire victims had sued Hoboken and the state of New Jersey, claiming that there were as many as 190 "life-threatening" violations in the building that the city should have corrected when it inspected the tenement on behalf of the state.

The pending legal action had prevented Hoboken from passing a municipal smoke detector ordinance, because city attorneys were unsure about whether the city could be held liable for damages if smoke detectors weren't installed due to faulty inspections.

But now, O'Brien's decision in favor of Hoboken and the state clears the way for the city to pass a local smoke detector ordinance, provided the decision is not appealed within 45 days.

"I think it was a very fair and just decision," said Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello. "It recognizes that the city can't be held responsible for everything having to do with housing. Now we have to wait until the 45-day appeal time has lagged before making another move."

Councilman Robert Ranieri, who had introduced a local smoke detector ordinance last November, only to see the law voted down after the city's legal department advised against it, said that he would re-introduce the ordinance as soon as possible.

In the wake of about 15 fire-related deaths in recent months, Hoboken citizens' groups have demanded a local smoke detector ordinance, which would strengthen the state law requiring smoke detectors in multiple-dwelling units with three families or more.

See MUSIC — Page 28.

It's who you know that counts

J.J 2/15/82

TRENTON — Among those named this year as aides to Hudson legislators are a school board president and a city commissioner in Union City, a Hoboken councilman, a former Weehawken township committeeman, the wife of the Hoboken mayor, the son of the Guttenberg mayor and an assemblyman's son.

Each legislator may appoint aides with a total maximum salary of $25,000. The $225,000 annual total for the nine Hudson legislators — in the Senate and Assembly — will represent one of the few sources of state patronage available to them during a Republican administration.

So far only four of the nine Hudson legislators have filed their lists of aides.

Of those four, only Assemblyman Thomas Gallo of Hoboken reached the $25,000 maximum in total payroll for aides.

The payroll for aides of Sen. William V. Musto of Union City, who is also Union City mayor, was $16,000; for Assemblyman Christopher Jackman of West New York, $16,000 and for Assemblyman Thomas Cowan Sr. of Jersey City, $12,500.

Jerry Molloy, the popular Hoboken toastmaster, was on the payroll of both Gallo and Jackman at $1,500 each.

Musto's payroll included Genieve "Jeanne" Ghignone, school board president, at $5,000; C. Harrison Hultman, a member of the city commission, $3,500; Rosemarie Novembre, $1,500; Jude Fitzgibbons, president of the Hoboken Municipal

See IT'S WHO — Page 33.

he asserted, after deductions and is Hudson County CETA chief of security.

Included also on Gallo's payroll are his son Dominic Altomare, $1,500.

On Jackman's payroll ... Steven Weil, $1,000; Thomas Klein, son of Guttenberg Mayor

their aides will be paid ...thly, quarterly or semi-annually.

Hoboken may cut council members

J.J 3/17/82

By Thomas Rojas

A reduction in the number of city council members and department directors is expected to be recommended as a way of reducing the 1982 Hoboken municipal budget, which will be introduced at tonight's 7 p.m. council meeting at City Hall.

Mayor Steve Cappiello says that he would consider reducing the number of directors and councilmen on the city's payroll in order to trim the budget.

Related story on Page CN.

"Things have gotten to the point where we have to consider any method of reducing the budget," the mayor said.

Cappiello is expected to present the council with a budget that projects an increase of about $25 per $1,000 assessed valuation in the tax rate. The mayor has said he wants to work with the council to cut the budget by "at least $1 million," adding that he would like to hold any increase in the tax rate to no more than $10.

In other business, the council is expected to consider a resolution awarding a three-year $4-million garbage contract to the La Pera contracting Co.

After the council receives and introduces the budget, it will schedule a meeting in April for a public hearing and final vote on the budget.

In order to reduce the number of city council members — which is currently nine — Hoboken would have to change its form of government by modifying the state Faulkner Act. Council members currently earn $9,200-a-year with a $500-a-year stipend for expenses.

The mayor made his comment in response to suggestions by several municipal employees that directors and concilmen be included in any attempt to bridge the huge budget gap anticipated by the city.

Cappiello has already announced that as many as "100-plus" city workers may face the ax when the city attempts to trim a 1982 budget.

See HOBOKEN — Page 10.

It's who you know

Continued from Page 1

Employees Association, $2,000; Concetta Wichert, wife of Union City commissioner Arthur Wichert, $2,500, and Thomas Kennedy, $1,500.

Kennedy is a Hoboken councilman, for which he receives $10,000 a year — only $105 a week, he asserted, after deductions — and is Hudson County CETA chief of security.

Included also on Gallo's payroll are his son Dominic Gallo, $3,000; Dorothy J. Cappiello, wife of Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello, $2,000; Charles J. Pizzuta, a former township committeeman in Weehawken, $1,000; Elizabeth LaBook, $1,500; Paul Lanzo, $3,000; Marilyn Garrick, $3,500; Joan D'Agostino, $2,000; Anthony D. Sacci, $2,500; Steven DeBari, $1,500; Sergio Germinario, $1,000, and John Altomare, $1,500.

On Jackman's payroll are Steven Weil, $1,000; Thomas Klein, son of Guttenberg Mayor Herman G. Klein, $1,500; Madelyn Tholer, $1,000; Carol Bronsky, $2,000; Francis Montione, $1,000; Evelyn Ferry, $1,000; Carmela Escudero, $1,000; Mario Malavasia $1,000 and Marion Warns, $5,000.

On Cowan's payroll are Estelle Lorraine, $2,000; Maryjane Badach, $5,000; Earl T. Brady, $3,000 and Mary Alice Polities, $2,500.

Legislators decide whether their aides will be paid monthly, quarterly or semi-annually.

Hoboken may cut council members

Continued from Page 1.

Councilman Robert Ranieri said that he would support any attempt to reduce the number of councilmen and directors.

"All you need to run a city this size is a mayor, a council with about five members, a city clerk and a business administrator," he said. "I would support reducing the number of directors and modifying the Faulkner Act to reduce the number of councilman."

[illegible] would further hire a private consulting firm to do a three-month study of the feasbility of municipal garbage collection for Hoboken.

The contract has already been tabled twice and Ranieri has consistently attempted to persuade his colleagues to reject the bid and begin the municipal collection of garbage.

It is believed that Ranieri has the support of only two of the eight other councilmen — E. Norman Wilson and Nunzio Malfetti — in his bid for municipal garbage service, but yesterday Mayor Cappiello said he would support municipal garbage collection if the council voted in favor of it.

"Personally, I don't like the idea of the city going into the garbage business, but I would go along with the decision of the council," he said. "However, I would prefer that they award the one-year contract to La Fera and hire a private firm to study the plan."



HOBOKEN PIERS A, B, C, AND D AS THEY LOOK TODAY

FAVORABLE VOTE SEEN ON PIER TRANSFERS

Hoboken Reporter 3/18/82

Rep. Frank J. Guarini, (D 14th New Jersey) has announced that legislation allowing for the transfer of Hoboken Piers A, B, and C from ownership by the federal government to the city of Hoboken, is scheduled to be voted on by the House of Representatives Thursday.

Guarini's Bill H.R. 3620, has been unanimously approved by the House Merchant Marine Committee, whose chairman is Rep. Mario Biaggi (D, New York). Guarini said he "expects no serious opposition to the measure in next week's vote by the full House where passage is predicted."

"The bill, which has the approval of Hoboken's Mayor Steve Cappiello, and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, will allow the transferring of ownership from federal supervision on terms favorable to the Mile Square City," he added.

Guarini praised Cappiello's "perseverence and determination over the years in this matter, which included going to Washington and testifying before the House Merchant Marine Subcommittee."

"Local control of these piers is essential not only to Hoboken but to all of Hudson County as it represents the spirit of chage and the renewed spirit of a community that is willing to revitalize itself keeping pace with the many new middle income residents to the area. It is a challenge that faces us and bodes well for Hudson County and indeed the State of New Jersey," Guarini said.

The piers, once known as the Third and Fourth Street piers was once part of Hoboken's thriving waterfront which has been victimized by changing America's trends and new technology.

In the 1950's and 1960's Hoboken lost its three major waterfront tenants, namely the railroad, the passenger ferry ships and the ocean liners. In 1970 an important cargo shipping company was lost to a new container port facility located in the Greenville Section of Jersey City.

The piers saw their high point of usefullness during World War I when they were used by the Hamburg-American and Lloyd Lines, two German steamship companies after their seizure by the United States government in 1917 and were used for troop movements.

Since 1917 the only revenue rceived by the city of Hoboken has been from the Port Authority in a tripartite agreement which they had fully complied with and paid about $2.5 million. However, since 1971 Hoboken has lost an estimated $68,637 in real estate tax revenue.

The piers have seen a gradual decline from employment of over 3,000 persons in 1930 to virtual abandonment today. Hoboken's current unemployment stands at 16.1 percent, one of the highest in New Jersey.

According to Mayor Cappiello and Guarini the city hopes to rehabilitate the area with added revenues manifested by possible industrial marina, and recreational or housng investments.

Guarini said that "after favorable consideration in the House next week, his bill will go to the United States Senate where it has been introduced by U. S. Senator Bill Bradley.

Dn THE JERSEY JOURNAL, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3, 1982

Local focus

Tenants may get heating

An ordinance that would allow Hoboken to supply heating oil to freezing tenants at the landlord's expense may be passed at tonight's meeting of the City Council.

Under the proposed ordinance, which was introduced at the last council meeting, Health Officer Patricia Mitten would be allowed to make emergency heating oil purchases for tenants left heatless by delinquent

The city would be reimbursed for the fuel oil purchased by collecting rents directly from the tenants or by placing a tax lien against the property involved.

Ms. Mitten and Health and Welfare Director James Farina have urged the council to pass the ordinance. Ms. Mitten said at the last council meeting that there were 25 cases this winter where the ordinance would have helped freezing tenants, who had to wait

the city took negligent landlo to court.

Councilman Robert Ran said that the number of tena who lost heat was too few warrant the proposed ordinan But Farina said "even if only person were helped, it would worth it."

Cappiello calls veto ludicr

SJ 3/5/82

Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello says that it would be "ludicrous" for him to veto an ordinance—passed by an 8-to-1 vote by the city council Wednesday night—which allows the city to supply heating oil to freezing tenants at the expense of landlords.

Councilman Robert Ranieri, who cast the only dissenting vote, said that he will recommend that the mayor veto the bill, which he believes is too severs.

"It would be ludicrous for me to override an ordinance that was passed 8-to-1, unless Ranieri can prove that he has the support of other councilmen," said Cappiello. "If they voted in favor of the bill 8-to-1, there must have been a reason for it."

The ordinance empowers Health Officer Patricia Mitten to make emergency heating oil purchases for tenants left heatless by negligent landlords.

The city will be able totake action after a building has been without heat for six hours. The city will be reimbursed for the fuel oil purchased by collecting rents directly from the tenants, or by placing a tax lien against the property involved.

Ranieri said that he objects to three main points in the ordinance: the provision preventing landlords from converting to gas heat during the winter, the provision requiring landlords to supply space heaters when furnaces break down, and the six-hour deadline for correcting heating problems before the city steps in.

"I don't disagree with the philosophy of the ordinance, but I believe that it should be revised," he said. "However, if the mayor and the council want to go into the fuel oil business, that's their prerogative."

But Councilman Thomas Kennedy, who introduced the bill, said that he is behind the or-

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But the police are still at a dead end on two other suspicious tenement fires in early October and late November that, together, killed four persons, injured 30 and displaced more than 150.

"We have a suspect in the 102 12th Street fire, and we're hoping that there will be an arrest shortly," said Capt. Patrick Donatacci, Hoboken's detective commander. He said that information gathered by detectives concerning the Oct. 24 fire had been turned over to the Hudson County Prosecutor, Harold Ruvoldt.

Captain Donatacci declined to say why the police were not making an arrest without consulting the Prosecu-

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...was definitely arson for profit," he said.

Mr. Ruvoldt would not comment on his investigation, and Captain Donatacci would not name the suspect.

After the Oct. 24 fire, the police extensively questioned the owner of the building, Olga Ramos, and her friend Reinaldo Negron. After searching Miss Ramos's apartment, they confiscated clothing belonging to Mr. Negron and sent it to the State Police for analysis.

Investigators at that time determined that a flammable liquid had been poured in the first-floor hallway of the building.

After the fire, some tenants told the police that Miss Ramos had been trying to get them out for more than a year. It had been disclosed after the fire that the building had been scheduled to be sold Oct. 26 to a Ronald Fisher of Hoboken.

That sale was never consummated. The building was subsequently sold to a Hoboken developer, Joseph Fox, who is now turning it into condominiums.

Both Miss Ramos and Mr. Negron have refused to talk to the press since the October fire, except for an initial statement in which she denied that she had anything to do with the fire or that she had harassed tenants.

Detective Donatacci said that arson for profit had been ruled out in an Oct. 11 fire at 67 Park Avenue in which a 2-year-old and a 7-year-old were killed. He said it was believed that children had set a fire in a couch on the second-floor hallway.

"It wasn't a professional arson job," he said. "The whole building was destroyed."

The third fatal fire occurred on Nov. 21 at the American Hotel, and Detective Donatacci said that "it could be arson, but also could be accidental." ■

THE JERSEY JOURNAL, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3, 1982

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Councilman Robert Ranieri said that the number of tenants who lost heat was too few to warrant the proposed ordinance. But Farina said "even if only one person were helped, it would be worth it."

The ordinance is scheduled for a public hearing and final vote at tonight's council meeting, at 7 at City Hall.

Also at the meeting, the council is expected to make several appointments to the Hoboken Recreation Commission.

Cappiello calls veto ludicrous

JJ 3/5/82

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"I don't disagree with the philosophy of the ordinance, but I believe that it should be revised," he said. "However, if the mayor and the council want to go into the fuel oil business, that's their prerogative."

But Councilman Thomas Kennedy, who introduced the bill, said that he is behind the ordinance "100 percent," adding that it will serve as a warning to delinquent landlords.

"If a landlord has any ideas about conveniently running out of heating oil over the weekend, this ordinance will make him think twice," he said. "Human beings should not have to wait two or three weeks for heat."

Capt. Patrick Donatacci, Hoboken's detective commander. He said that information gathered by detectives concerning the Oct. 24 fire had been turned over to the Hudson County Prosecutor, Harold Ruvoldt.

Captain Donatacci declined to say why the police were not making an arrest without consulting the Prosecu-

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SJ 3/15/82

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Fatal Hoboken Fire Linked to Arson

TIMES, SUNDAY, APRIL 11, 1982

HOBOKEN

AFTER more than five months of investigation, the Hoboken Police Department believes that it has a suspect in a tenement fire here in which 11 persons died. The fire occurred last Oct. 24.

But the police are still at a dead end on two other suspicious tenement fires in early October and late November that, together, killed four persons, injured 30 and displaced more than 150.

"We have a suspect in the 102 12th Street fire, and we're hoping that there will be an arrest shortly," said Capt. Patrick Donatacci, Hoboken's detective commander. He said that information gathered by detectives concerning the Oct. 24 fire had been turned over to the Hudson County Prosecutor, Harold Ruvoldt.

Captain Donatacci declined to say why the police were not making an arrest without consulting the Prosecutor's office, other than that the Police Department felt that the Prosecutor's office should be involved because the crime was a major one and the police wanted all evidence checked by that office.

"We have determined that the fire was definitely arson for profit," he said.

Mr. Ruvoldt would not comment on his investigation, and Captain Donatacci would not name the suspect.

After the Oct. 24 fire, the police extensively questioned the owner of the building, Olga Ramos, and her friend Reinaldo Negron. After searching Miss Ramos's apartment, they confiscated clothing belonging to Mr. Negron and sent it to the State Police for analysis.

Investigators at that time determined that a flammable liquid had been poured in the first-floor hallway of the building.

After the fire, some tenants told the police that Miss Ramos had been trying to get them out for more than a year. It had been disclosed after the fire that the building had been scheduled to be sold Oct. 26 to a Ronald Fisher of Hoboken.

That sale was never consummated. The building was subsequently sold to a Hoboken developer, Joseph Fox, who is now turning it into condominiums.

Both Miss Ramos and Mr. Negron have refused to talk to the press since the October fire, except for an initial statement in which she denied that she had anything to do with the fire or that she had harassed tenants.

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"It wasn't a professional arson job," he said. "The whole building was destroyed."

The third fatal fire occurred on Nov. 21 at the American Hotel, and Detective Donatacci said that "it could be arson, but also could be accidental." ■

Hoboken rate to rise $28

JJ 3/18/82 Thurs

By ROY KAHN
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—Mayor Steve Cappiello dropped into the lap of the City Council last night his proposed 1982 municipal budget — complete with a $28 hike in the city tax rate and provisions for firing most temporary and provisional employees.

To make his budget work, Cappiello has called for the freezing of the school tax levy, a municipal hiring freeze, a salary freeze, a ban on city-paid travel to conventions and the elimination of most of the city's overtime payroll. The document was released just before the City Council meeting.

According to the mayor's message included in the document, the $25 million budget falls just within the state-mandated 5 percent cap for annual budget growth. It will push the tax rate up to $166 per $1,000 of assessed valuation.

That figure indicates the amount to be raised by local property taxes is jumping $1.57 million over last year to $8,020,037.86. That amount does not include any increases in the county tax rate, which though not yet announced are expected. Nor does it include the raises that city employees might get through contract negotiations.

Cappiello's message indicated, ment approved, the public would dump not only the mayor but the City Council as well.

The council, however, was not swayed by his arguments.

Councilman Thomas Kenned challenged Ranieri's comparis however, that he will fund any negotiated wage increases by cutting back on city personnel.

But the most pressing issue before the council was neither the budget nor the proposed layoffs. It was a proposal by Councilman Robert Ranieri that the city embark on an immediate takeover of municipal garbage collection.

After more than two hours of debate, the council refused to side with him but did table a resolution that would have given the $4.2 million garbage contract to LaFera Contracting Co. Instead, they decided to solicit bids on a cost-saving

See HOBOKEN, Page 10

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don reliance on the private sector completely and follow a route taken by New Brunswick when, on March 1, it took over garbage collection services.

Challenging the council to adopt his plan and save between $600,000

3/82
S.S.

Rent Control Weapon

Housing and Urban Development Secretary Pierce was quick in responding to a recommendation by a presidential advisory board that the government deny most forms of housing assistance to cities that practice rent controls. We wish the Secretary had paused to give it a little more thought before rejecting the idea out of hand.

We ourselves have had some ambivalence on this issue. As Mr. Pierce says, it is hardly within the spirit of federalism, which the Reagan administration is seeking to promote, when Washington uses its financial power to influence local policies. On the other hand, the case for not granting aid to rent control cities is one that we find persuasive.

Bernard Siegan, a member of the advisory panel which will make its full report on housing policy by April 30, insists that the recommendation is not in conflict with the new federalism. It is not an attempt to punish cities for their policies or inflict Washington's will but merely to protect the federal government against unnecessary investment losses.

Rent controls, as with all price controls, are counterproductive. They discourage adjustments of supply to demand and accelerate deterioration of the housing stock. Moreover, they are grossly unfair, forcing some people to pay very high rents to offset the cheap ride that others are getting. They lock people into housing when they should be moving to suit their changing needs.

A case could be made for federal arm-twisting just on the grounds that local politicians need someone to blame for doing what they find difficult politically to do, but which would offer broad benefits to the people of their cities. That, however, would indeed be federal interference.

The best case is the one the advisory board makes. If we have to have federal housing at all, why should the federal government spend vast amounts of money on public housing to replace the housing stock of those cities which have destroyed the existing stock with rent controls? And why should it invest in housing in areas where the return on investment is made artificially low by the broad application of rent controls? The answer is that the federal government has a right and responsibility to protect federal taxpayers.

Dispatch, Hudson/Bergen Counties, N.J. Thursday, March, 18, 1982

HOBOKEN

Continued from Page 1

option to the LaFera proposal which would reduce the number of city garbage collection days from three to two.

Adopted unanimously by the council, the move was Ranieri's "second choice," he said.

He began the meeting by attempting to convince the council to abandon reliance on the private sector completely and follow a route taken by New Brunswick when, on March 1, it took over garbage collection services.

Challenging the council to adopt his plan and save between $600,000 and $1.1 million more than the current arrangement, he charged that refusing to follow his lead would indicate the council is afraid to take on responsibility and doomed the body to political disaster.

"This document dictates a taxpayer revolt," he claimed, holding up his copy of the proposed budget.

He predicted that, were the document approved, the public would dump not only the mayor but the City Council as well.

The council, however, was not swayed by his arguments.

Councilman Thomas Kenned challenged Ranieri's comparis between Hoboken and New Brunswick, arguing that New Brunswick was different because it probably has one and two-family homes instead of tenements. He further charged that two weeks of a successful experiment in New Brunswick was not a good measure of the success of a "risky undertaking."

According to Kennedy's research, the city would not be able to service the trucks. He predicted any Hoboken garbage collection would be plagued by the kinds of cost overruns that have other marked city projects in the past.

3/82
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JS 4/4/82

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Board of Education and the Planning Board. He referred to himself and to Cappiello as the last of the line of political bosses in Hudson County and compared the administration he ran with those of such bosses as the "Hagues" and the "Kennys".

Cappiello referred to the difficulties of dealing with "the mob" stating:

That's your headache, you know. And usually those guys connected and when they're connected, ah, when they deal with us in the unions, ya know, it's open, it's everything's in the fuckin' newspapers. When ya deal with mob, hey, take it easy, ya know you're dealing away from the scene. They don't give a shit about public reaction, where we have to.

It's getting to be more and more that way, because we're trying to get rid of it. It's better for us to hire a contractor where we don't have to deal with the union, ya know.

As Musto made clear in his Abscam recording of December 7, 1979, he and Cappiello both recognized the importance and value of Musto's influence in Trenton and discussed such influence as if it were a saleable commodity. The transcript reflects, in pertinent part, a discussion of how Musto regarded political influence:

Musto: . . . .Because-ya never know the kind of pressures you're gonna need to meet the executive branch and that casino or legislature. Ya need all of that, I don't say you should all get in on the whole thing. The point I'm making here is I would not be fair if I didn't tell you that front man out there, the guy that's gonna be making that contact legally, get my point, can't be a F. Lee Bailey, in other words, as good a lawyer as he is, a genius let's say, or bring Clarence Darrow back from the dead, they don't have what you really need. There's nothing so spectacular about the legal work that has to be done here.

Weinberg: Well, legal work . . .

Musto: Get my point?

Weinberg: What I'm trying . . .

Musto: That's not what's needed here. It's just like buying and selling a house. Ya can get any lawyer to handle that.



William V. Musto, right, and Steve Cappiello are pictured at a North Hudson meeting last September.

Weinberg: Our main . . .

Musto: It isn't that difficult, the legal work. What's difficult here is the . . .

Weinberg: The contacts, contacts.

Cappiello: The influence, influence.

Musto: That's the whole ball game.

Weinberg: Right. Right now, there's only

See MUSTO — Page 25.

'Musto —the arrogance of power'

JS 4/4/82

The proofs at trial showed that Musto was ready and willing to sell the influence he was able to exert on various public bodies, that he would rely on Scarafile and Powers to make the illegal arrangements, and that Scarafile would collect the cash. Proofs separate and apart from those at trial establish much more.

There are several allegations of considerable substance evidencing the corrupt sale of influence by Musto. Specifically, the United States Attorney's office is prepared to prove that Musto conspired with David Friedland and other public officials to illegally profit from a secretly-held interest in a Jai Alai fronton in Hudson County had the State Jai Alai referendum passed.

Additionally, Musto's influence over the appointment of officials to public jobs and positions in Hudson County made him privy to kickback arrangements. His close relationship to Powers may well have made him privy to Powers' illegal relationship and corrupt administration of the Hudson County Vocational School, discussed below.

Certainly, Musto and his organization wielded iron-clad control over the activities in Union City and its environs. In the Abscam tape-recording of December 8, 1979 between Musto, Mayor Steve Cappiello of Hoboken, Mel Weinberg and FBI undercover agent Anthony Amoroso, Musto proclaimed himself as "the leader" in Union City.

If a private businessman came to Union City, and wanted a zoning variance or planning board action or anything else, he had to see Musto first, according to Musto.

Musto announced how closely he controlled, among other public bodies, the City Council, the Board of Education and the Planning Board. He referred to himself and to Cappiello as the last of the line of political bosses in Hudson County and compared the administration he ran with those of such bosses as the "Hagues" and the "Kennys".

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Weinberg: The contacts, contacts.

Cappiello: The influence, influence.

Musto: That's the whole ball game.

Weinberg: Right. Right now, there's only

See MUSTO — Page 25.



William V. Musto, right, and Steve Cappiello are pictured at a North Hudson meeting last September.

Musto — arrogance of power'

Continued from Page 17.

three, three on our side that we have to look for. Steve, you and Joe. That's the three involved so far. With the people you know, Joe knows and Steve knows, we should be able to (unintelligible) . . . Now we'll take care of the paying. We're laying all the expenses out.

Musto: I don't say . . .

Weinberg: Ya follow me?

Musto: No, I'm only trying to be . . .

Weinberg: Not that I'm a hog, I don't mind giving a piece of the pie away if the guy's worth it. If I can pay a guy oh, 25 or 15 or 10 thousand dollars to get the same thing I've gotta pay him now to give a peice of the pie away. I'm a bit of a hog that way. Ya know it's easy to give away. After a while, ya can't get it back. Ya wanna get rid of a guy, he wants too much money then. And the least amount of people know about it the better off we are.

Musto: I agree there.

Weinberg: Alright. Let's be a little cautious.

Cappiello: Always.

Weinberg: Alright. Let's be a little cautious. See you know what you have to do, we know what we have to do, when it comes to getting the piece we know what we have to do, we can handle that part of it. We're coming to you, we're paving the way to open the doors. Now, you remember with me . . .

Musto: You see (unintelligible) that's true. You see, but as I talk to you, I wanna be fair to you too . . .

Weinberg: They, we gonna be partners?

Musto: No, you follow (unintelligible)

Weinberg: Hey, Bill, if we're gonna go to bed together, let's be honest.

Musto: At the stage I'm in . . . At my stage I can't complain about anything. I happen to like Steve Cappiello. I like being part of things. I enjoy it. Ah, but, ah, I have a feeling there's (unintelligible) out there too. And if I thought for one moment, as I'm thinking at this moment, that it's worthwhile for you people, and could ensure something, that I know you want, you'll be living with it long after I'm around, it wouldn't bother me at all to say look I'm willing to say ya need this, ya need this guy even (unintelligible) Bill Musto, get my point?

Weinberg: No ya don't hafta do anything.

Musto: No, that's no problem with me at all.

And that he himself would purchase corruption as well as permitting himself and his office to be purchased is confirmed by the corruption investigation surrounding David Friedland, briefly referred to (elsewhere in the memo.)

Wally Lindsley, the Mayor of Weehawken, during the course of a tape-recorded conversation with Friedland, raised and discussed ways of influencing a potential federal witness, Richard Kaplan.

In the context of discussing murdering, bribing or otherwise "taking care of" Kaplan, Lindsley related that some time ago he had been offered "close to a quarter of a million to find Orlandini." The offerer was Musto.

Thus, whether advertising his influence as being for sale and, in fact, selling that influence or offering to pay whatever had to be paid and threatening to do whatever had to be done to enable that influence to continue, Musto violated his sworn oath at every opportunity.

He must be removed from the milieu which had made, and will continue to make, that possible.



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Fre 4/8/82

Hoboken City council President Walter Cramer, seated center, is accompanied by other council members as he looks over a petition calling for a change in the local form of government. From left are council members Lewis Francone, E. Norman Wilson, Nunzi Malfetti, Anthony Romano, Helen Macri and Sal Cemelli.

Officials would end own jobs

By Thomas Rojas

Five members of the Hoboken City Council, including

budget that projects an increase in the tax rate of $28 per $1,000 as

Tenants' grou receives gran for detectors

"Por La Gente" (For the People), the Hoboken tenants' group, has received a $400 grant for the purchase of smoke detectors for tenants whose landlords have not provided them.

Sister Norberta of St. Francis Church, leader of "Por La Gente," announced that the group has received a $400 check from Leo Genese, director of the Camp Tomaqua Alumni Association.

She said that the funds will be used to buy smoke detectors for tenants' apartments, "where the landlord is reluctant to provide them."

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Offer Hoboken aid on housing job

Fre 4/8/82

A group of concerned citizens, calling themselves the Hoboken Housing Coalition made their presence felt at a meeting of the city's Housing Authority last night, offering to assist the agency in finding a replacement for its retiring executive director.

The Rev. Geoffrey Curtiss made a presentation at the authority's headquarters on Harrison Street, offering the help of two coalition members he said are experienced in housing matters — Michael Coleman and Ron Hine — to screen prospects for the directorship.

The current director, Joseph Caliguire, is retiring in June after 24 years on the job.

Rev. Curtiss asked the commissioners several specific questions concerning the qualifications for the positions, a copy of the job description, where and when the agency has advertised for the job, the number of current applicants, and when the selection of a new director will be made.

Authority Chairman Peter Fontana told the group he already has several names and assured them that the agency will advertise in newspapers for resumes. He also said by April 29 the authority will begin reviewing the applicants and will most likely name the new director in May. He also gave the group a copy of the job description for the position.



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Hoboken City council President Walter Cramer, seated center, is accompanied by other council members as he looks over a petition calling for a change in the local form of government. From left are council members Lewis Francone, E. Norman Wilson, Nunzi Malfetti, Anthony Romano, Helen Macri and Sal Cemelli.

Officials would end own jobs

By Thomas Rojas

Five members of the Hoboken City Council, including Council President Walter Cramer, have begun circulating a petition calling for a change in the city's form of government to a five-member commission.

"We don't need nine councilmen to govern Hoboken," said Cramer. "By changing to a five-member commission, we can cut costs dramatically."

In addition to Cramer, the other council members who have called for a change in the form of government are Nunzio Malfetti, Louis Francone, Anthon Romano and Sal Cemelli.

Moreover, at least two other councilmen, Thomas Kennedy and E. Norman Wilson, have said that they would support a change in the form of government if it would mean improving the quality of government and cutting a proposed 1982 municipal budget that projects an increase in the tax rate of $28 per $1,000 assessed valuation.

In order to accomplish the change, Cramer's group plans to bring the matter to a vote by circulating a petition which will have to be signed by at least 20 percent of the registered voters in Hbooken.

Cramer said that he favors the change because it would not only cut costs, but also "place power in the hands of the elected officials."

"The way things stand now, the council doesn't do the hiring and firing, and we don't prepare the budget," he explained. "The commission form places the power in the elected officials."

Mayor Steve Cappiello has said that he would support a change in the form of government, if the public were to vote in favor of it.

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Fre 4/8/82

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JJ 4/7/82

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She said that the funds will be used to buy smoke detectors for tenants' apartments, "where the landlord is reluctant to provide them."

Although state law requires the installation of smoke detectors in every multi-dwelling unit with three families or more, Sister Norberta claims that many landlords ignore the statute.

She advises anyone needing a smoke alarm to contact "Por La Gente," which will inform the landlord to install the alarm within a reasonable amount of time. If the alarm isn't installed, "Por La Gente" will provide one, and the tenant has the right to deduct the cost of the device from the rent.

On a related matter, Sister Norberta is trying to raise funds to keep "Por La Gente" afloat. In addition, the organization needs volunteers for typing, translating, secretarial and clerical work. Anyone interested in helping should contact Sister Norberta at St. Francis Church.

Offer Hoboken aid housing job

FRe 4/8/82

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NY News 4/18/82

There's more to Hoboken than Sin



The spectacular view: At Stevens Institute lookout, youngsters admire Manhattan skyline.

3-month celebration

Photography will also be on view. There are more than 40 free exhibits planned.

There will be 25 dance events, ran-



The brownstone facade: High stoops with cast iron railings.

during the next general election

Sat 4/10/82

Cappiello backs foe as housing chief

Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello has recommended that Thomas Vezzetti, a frequent critic of the city administration, be named executive director of the city's Housing Authority.

In a letter to the Housing Authority, Cappiello says that Vezzetti, who has worked for the city as a security guard and management analyst, is "amply qualified" to succeed Joseph Caliguire, who is retiring as executive director in June after 24 years in the post.

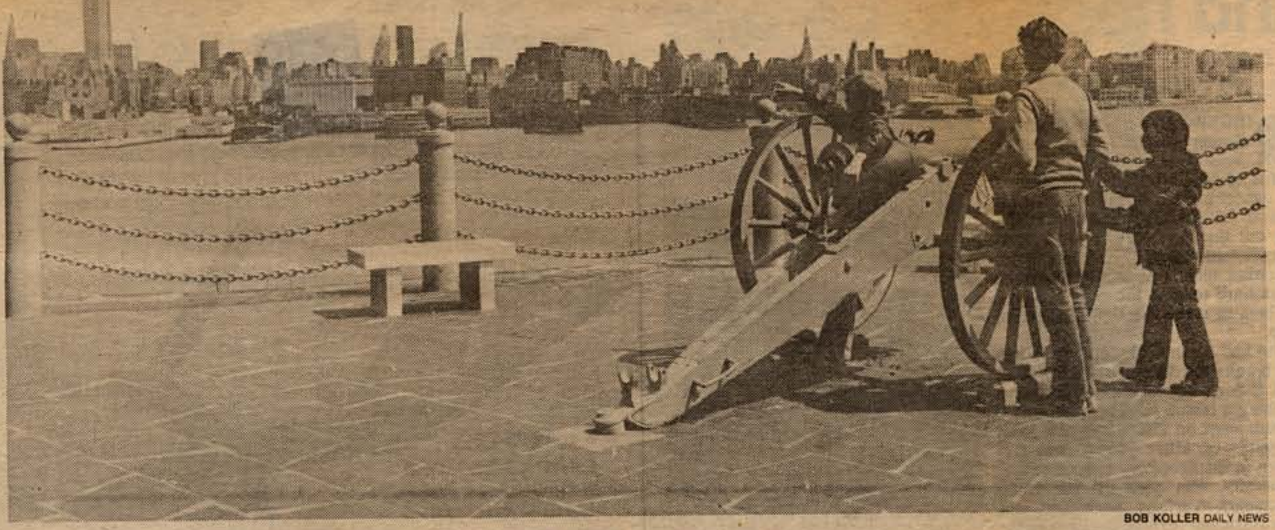
Vezzetti is a longtime critic of the mayor, the City Council, the Board of Education, and the Hudson County Freeholders. He frequently attends meetings of those groups.

At Thursday night's meeting of the Housing Authority, a group calling themselves the Hoboken Housing Coalition offered to assist the agency in finding a replacement for the retiring Caiguire.

Peter Fontana, chairman of the Housing Authority, told the group that the Authority will begin reviewing applicants by April 29, and will name the new director sometime in May.

NY News 4/18/82

There's more to Hoboken than Sinatra



BOB KOLLER DAILY NEWS

The spectacular view: At Stevens Institute lookout, youngsters admire Manhattan skyline.

3-month celebration is on

By PATRICE O'SHAUGHNESSY

ALMOST THIRTY YEARS ago, the grit and gusto of Hoboken was captured on film in "On the Waterfront."

The film documented the tough, working class community of bars and brick row houses and the corruption of waterfront life.

Frank Sinatra, the saloon singer, had been the mile-square city's most famous native son and, in decades gone by, residents took much ribbing when they spoke of home. There wasn't much to brag about.

THAT IMAGE HAS faded and the jokes are ending.

The colorful history of "old" Hoboken as a bustling port and the revitalization of the city into a trendy spot for "expatriate" Manhattanites will be realized in a three-month "Celebration '82." It is enough to make anyone proud to be from Hoboken.

The celebration—which began on April 3—includes visual arts displays of all media; music and dance performances; films, plays, lectures, poetry readings, community tours and historical exhibitions.

Featured in these events are the diversified settings which give Hoboken its "then-now" appeal: the piers which greeted the many ethnic groups immigrating to America; the refurbished Erie-Lackawanna Terminal, once the center of a powerful, privately owned rail line; the many old churches and libraries as well as the new stores and restaurants.

SUCH DIVERSITY produced a city rich in talented, skilled people, and these are the focus of the celebration.

Works of Hoboken artists will be displayed along with those of nationally and internationally known painters, sculptors, and stained glass workers. Photography will also be on view. There are more than 40 free exhibits planned.

There will be 25 dance events, ranging from ballet to interpretive, taking place all around the city.





The brownstone facade: High stoops with cast iron railings.

What would a celebration be without music? Saxophones, harpsichords and electric guitars will sound throughout the churches in 20 concerts featuring every style of music.

The industries and architecture of Hoboken will be discussed in a 10-part lecture series detailing the many changes the port city has gone through, from the time of Indian trails to the present brownstone-lined streets.

THEATRICAL WORKS about Hoboken by residents of Hoboken can be seen throughout the springtime soiree. Drama and comedy have been scheduled; many of the 20 plays are premieres.

Poetry and film have not been overlooked, either. Feature films, home movies and historic newsreels can be seen, and of course, "On the Waterfront," which put Hoboken on the map, will be screened.

Events hot line: 420-2017

On June 19 and 20, a festival will take place on Pier Five, and in the Port Authority's enclosed Pier C. A large, comprehensive exhibition of continuous music and dance will end the three-month festival.

Sponsored by the Hoboken Cultural Council, a nonprofit organization established to initiate historical and cultural activities, the celebration will be supported by hundreds of volunteers, as well as the city government and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

THE CELEBRATION adds up to a proud tribute to the once-scarred city, a city that has managed to retain its working class roots while inviting new trends.

While the revitalization is welcomed, the old-timers don't want to forget Hoboken's past. The city is finally receiving the recognition it rightly deserves, and that is certainly cause enough to celebrate. ■

ARSON

Continued fro

Of the six families evacuated
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Holiday Inn in Jersey City, v
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The only items salvageable f
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Those injured in fighting
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SALVAGED FURNITURE clutter
a fire gutted three buildings an

Hoboken arson suspected

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4/19/82

By BARBARA DEMICK
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—The ugly glare of arson may have made its presence known here again during the weekend as a general-alarm fire swept through three buildings, leaving nine firefighters injured and 23 residents homeless, fire officials said.

The fire broke out Saturday night at 10:30 in a vacant building at 109 Clinton St. and rapidly spread to two adjacent occupied buildings, according to fire officials.

Neighborhood residents said the fire was the fourth at the same address, a four-story frame building, within the past two months.

The fire department quickly called a general alarm on the fire. Ten off-duty firefighters, two Jersey City fire companies and one Union City fire company were called in for assistance.

Deputy Fire Chief Raymond Sheehan yesterday said the fire took about two hours to bring under control, but that firefighters did not leave the scene until 1:30 yesterday afternoon.

Because of the speed with which the fire spread, fire investigators believe some type of flammable liquid may have been used as an accelerant.

Since the fire started in the vacant building, all the residents in the adjoining buildings' apartments — a total of six families — were able to escape unassisted.

Outside the burned-out buildings, residents expressed their anger — not with shock, but with the more frightening resignation of people who are too familiar with this kind of event.

Angel Moyeno, whose said his mother owns 107 Clinton St., one of the fire-damaged buildings, was sitting across the street with a few of her belongings waiting for relatives to transport them.

"We don't know what is going on here, but it is definately something fishy," he said.

Moyeno said 109 Clinton St., where the fire started, had been occupied until three weeks ago, when a mattress fire forced the last two families out.

"There were two famlies there. Every time there was a fire, they kept on moving between apartments until the fire department closed them down," he said.

Moyeno said the first fire two months ago was accidentally caused by a woman who was cooking. "I don't think the others were accidental," he added.

His wife, Nellie Moyeno, said she was suspicious because she saw a man and a woman moving "junk out of the building" earlier Saturday afternoon.

It was not immediately known who owns 109 Clinton St. The building yesterday had two "For Sale" signs attached — one from Uptown Realty and the other from Severino Realty.

The other fire-damaged building, 111 Clinton St., also had a sign attached from Gottlieb-De La Torre Real Estate.

See ARSON, Page 5

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See ARSON, Page 5

ARSON

Continued from Page 1

Of the six families evacuated, two are being sheltered by the Red Cross at the Holiday Inn in Jersey City, while the others are staying with relatives.

The only items salvageable from their apartments were items on the ground floors, because the upper floors and their contents were almostly entirely gutted.

Those injured in fighting the blaze were Capt. Peter Calandra, with smoke inhalation; firefighters Frank Aligo with a concussion; Vincent Guinta, with an injury to the left eye; Robert Mazzo with a contusion to the left shoulder; Salvadore Dorso with a back contusion; Antonio Rodriquez with conjunctivitis; Gerald Castante, Joseph Kennedy, and Rudolf Trincellita with smoke inhalation. The firefighters were treated at St. Mary Hospital, released and placed off-duty, according to Sheehan.

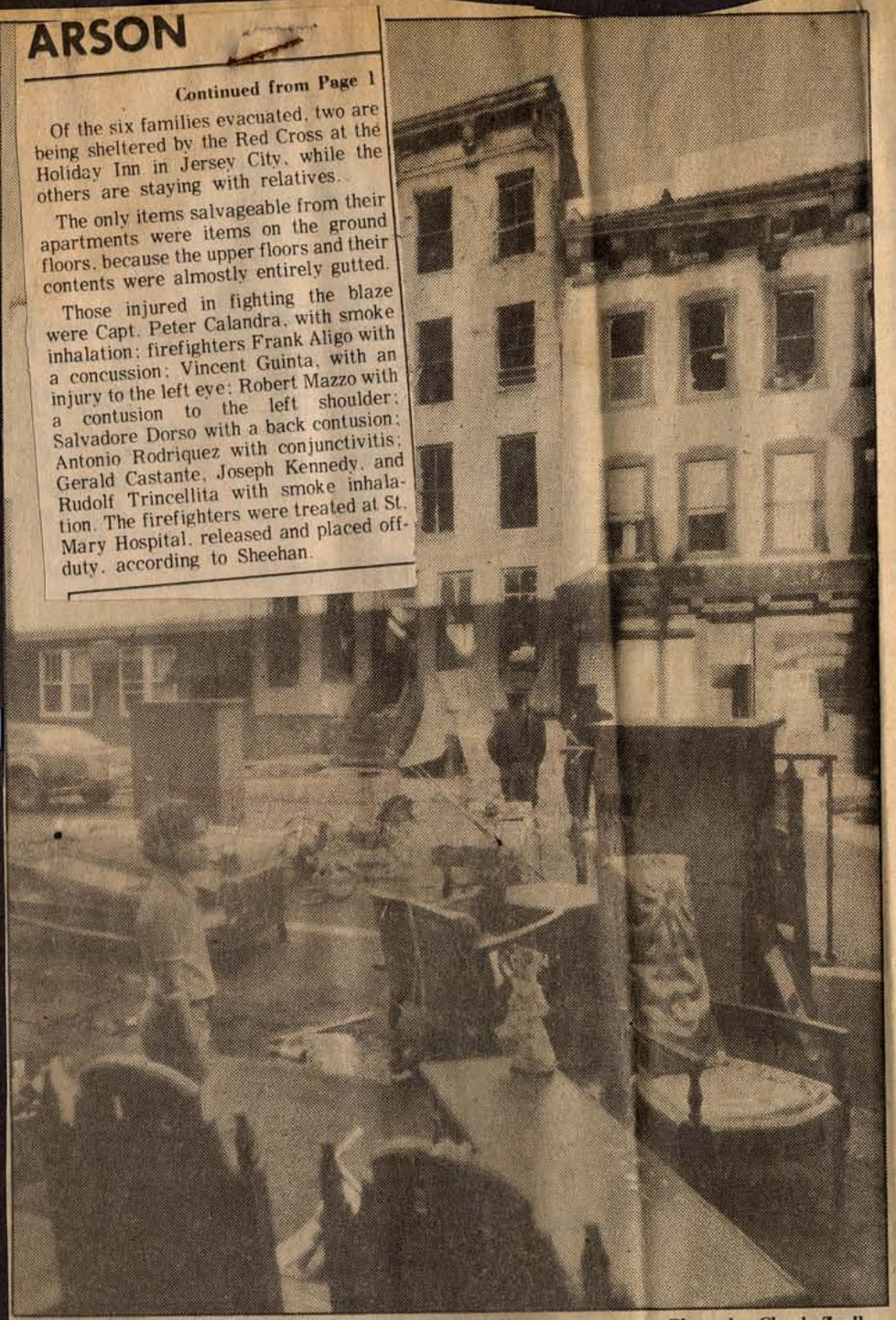


Photo by Chuck Zoeller

SALVAGED FURNITURE clutters Clinton Street in Hoboken yesterday after a fire gutted three buildings and left 23 residents homeless.

photos for this page to Don
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Hoboken arson suspected

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4/9/82

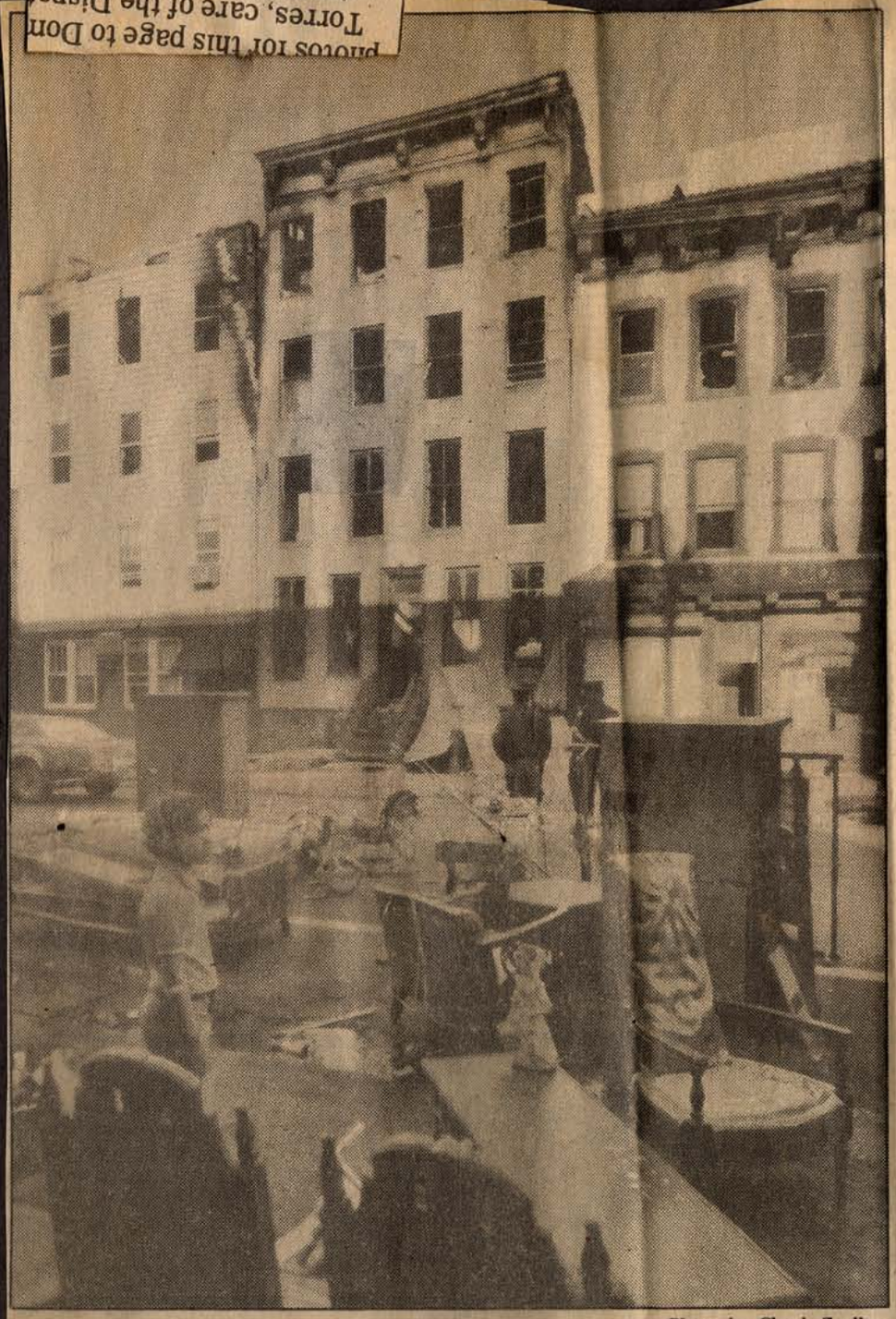


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See ARSON, Page 5

buildings were totally cleared of tenants. According to Sister Norberta Hunnewinkel, a Franciscan sister who has spearheaded the anti-arson and displacement actions, the group is frustratingly short of having built a closed case. Their sleuthing has revealed a handful of names which reappear, apparently interchangeably, as seller, buyer, developer or lawyer for deals. Many are present or former business partners, frequently each other's managing agent. The signs of one realty outfit can be seen on many of these properties and almost three-quarters of the buildings in Hoboken slated for condo conversion.

But while law enforcement agencies appear to be waiting to find a hired "torch" with gasoline-soaked rags in hand, Por La Gente has taken a more direct path as well.

The group has led the response to the



Mayor and City Council. They have continued to call for rental protections, strict code enforcement, in-depth arson investigations, increased police surveillance, mandatory smoke detectors and delayed insurance pay-offs. The official city response has been meager. A fire safety program was introduced into the schools and some beefed-up building inspections made. But, as Por La Gente has found to be the pattern in Hoboken, no real commitments have been made to redress grievances and protect lives and homes.

The Hoboken residents are determined to continue their fight. Already their actions have cooled the heat. The weekly winter fire wave slowed, and then stopped, although it is likely not in permanent remission. As one resident observed, "The fire pattern is connected to the housing market and sales are slow now. When they pick up again, someone may again strike the

NY

City Limits Focus May 1982

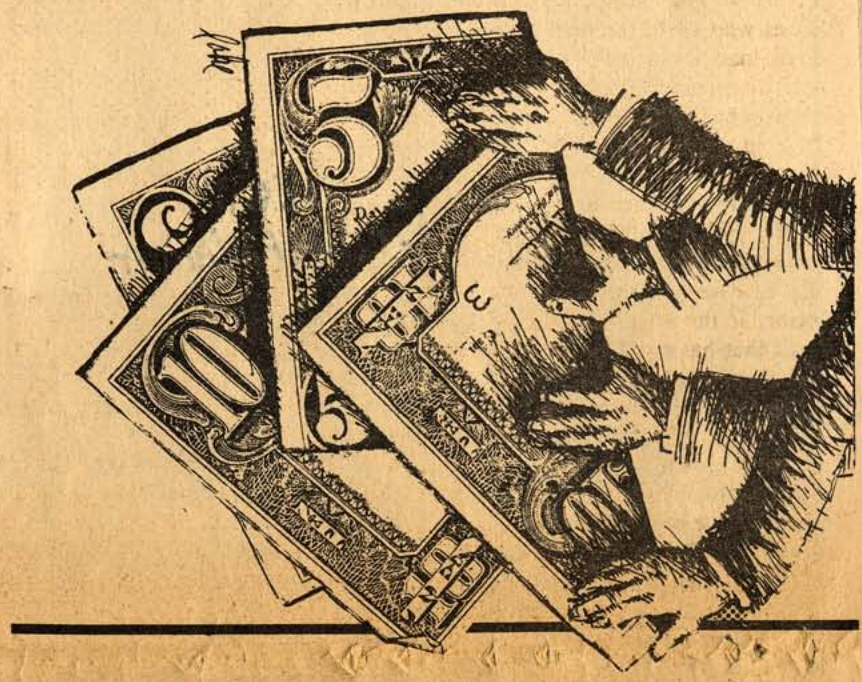
ARSON ON THE HUDSON

By HARRIET COHEN



Readying the Savings Bail-Out

By MICHAEL POWELL



TRADITIONALLY THE FINANcial backbone of moderate income communities, the savings and loan industry is in trouble. Buffeted by high interest rates and banking deregulation, literally hundreds of savings and loan institutions collapsed or were absorbed through mergers during the past two years. The implications of this collapse for potential homebuyers and landlords are especially severe; the thrift industry is historically the principle mortgage lenders for their communities, rather than the more diversified commercial banks.

Responding to this downward trend, the housing sub-committee of the Congressional House Banking Committee is formulating a federal bail-out of the savings and loan industry. Larger than either the Chrysler or Lockheed bail-outs, bill H.R. 5568 would authorize $7.5 billion of federal capital assistance for all savings and loans institutions, or "thrifts," with a net worth of less than 2 percent of total assets and certifiable losses for two consecutive quarters.

While the bill proposes that institutions receiving capital assistance must use 50 percent of their net new deposits to make mortgage loans at rates 1 percent below the Federal Reserve rate, a coalition of labor, consumer and housing groups advocate for more stringent conditions. The coalition is proposing that 30 percent of each institution's mortgages must consist of carefully regulated adjustable rate or fixed-rate mortgages.

"This will be the largest bail-out of private industry in the history of the country," commented Alan Fishbein of the Center for Community Change and a member of the coalition. "The one-percent loans are a fig-leaf that means nothing in the real market." As defined in the bill, few, if any, savings and loan institutions will realize a net increase in savings accounts for several years. However, the bill's sponsor, Congressman Fernand St. Germain, Democrat of Rhode Island, opposes too stringent conditions. Says Fishbein, "St. Germain fears that too many restrictions on the savings and loans institutions will indirectly play into the hands of the deregulators on the Senate side who wish to lift all restrictions on investment. However, we believe that some changes are acceptable and must be instituted."

One reason for this insistence is the permanent nature of the proposed bail-out. The bill would establish a standing fund to aid financially-ailing savings and loan institutions; it does not contain a termination date, known as a "sunset provision." The thrifts would be aided through capital guarantees insuring all transactions, rather than by more costly direct-cash infusions. The coalition takes the position that unless savings and loan institutions are forced to offer a sizeable percentage of loans pegged to socially stable indicators such as two-thirds the average wage rate, these institutions will increasingly abandon the moderate income mortgage market.

A further shift away from home mortgages by the savings and loans would only exacerbate an already dangerous trend. While low and moderate income communities have historically maintained a stormy relationship with the thrifts, their mortgage activity is a key indication of neighborhood stability. Indeed, the last ten-to-fifteen years have witnessed an increasing take-over of the mortgage lending field by completely unregulated mortgage-lending companies leaving homeowners much more susceptible to fraud. Yet, ironically, as Fishbein notes, "The chairman of the Home Loan Bank Board said that had adjustable rate mortgages been around ten years ago, savings and loans could be showing a steady profit in the long-term mortgage field. Our coalition supports this view and wants to establish parameters for the adjustable rate and fixed mortgages before they hurt, rather than help, the moderate and low-income homeowner."□

ARSON ON THE HUDSON

By HARRIET COHEN



Hoboken's long-abandoned ferry terminal, where the east coast's largest film studio is to be built.

Photos by AL SACCO/PHOTONEWS

HOBOKEN IS A STONE'S throw from Lower Manhattan and a cheap, fast train ride from Midtown. That city's uncontested, four-term Mayor has openly declared his intention to make the city safe for real estate development—in his own words, the only growth industry that has a fighting chance in a town that has watched its factory jobs disappear south. If New York City aims to become the international corporate capital, then Hoboken yearns to be its senior dormitory. The old row houses and brownstones provide the raw materials for this future, and the low income, primarily Hispanic residents, the grist for the gentrification mill that empties worn-out, multi-family buildings and turns them into duplex and floor-through condominiums.

The PATH train's first stop in New Jersey is downtown Hoboken, alongside the Old Lackawanna Terminal that once housed ferries running to New York. A conversion of this classic structure, assisted by federal grants, will house the biggest filmmaking studio on the East Coast. At a crowded public hearing before the City Council last Fall, the sponsoring entrepreneurs unabashedly announced that part of the price of their seduction was the guarantee of "better restaurants and apartments". Within days a fire broke out in the nearby American Hotel, an old, half-sagging building now propped up by scaffolding and awaiting renovation. Once a rooming house for merchant seamen, the American Hotel was most recently a single-room-occupancy (SRO) home for transients who could sign month-to-month leases and a temporary place for families relocated from burned-out or unsafe buildings in other parts of town. The fire—officially termed arson by the city—turned a fully occupied building into an empty shell, leaving two dead, 16 injured and all 67 tenants homeless. Interior demolition was started immediately; a new sign now proclaims its condominium future.

Washington Street is the main commercial strip in Hoboken, running from one end of town to the other. This thriving artery is a solid row of occupied goods and services stores with residential units above. While some of the pubs and fast food places are being converted to cafes and gourmet restaurants, it is

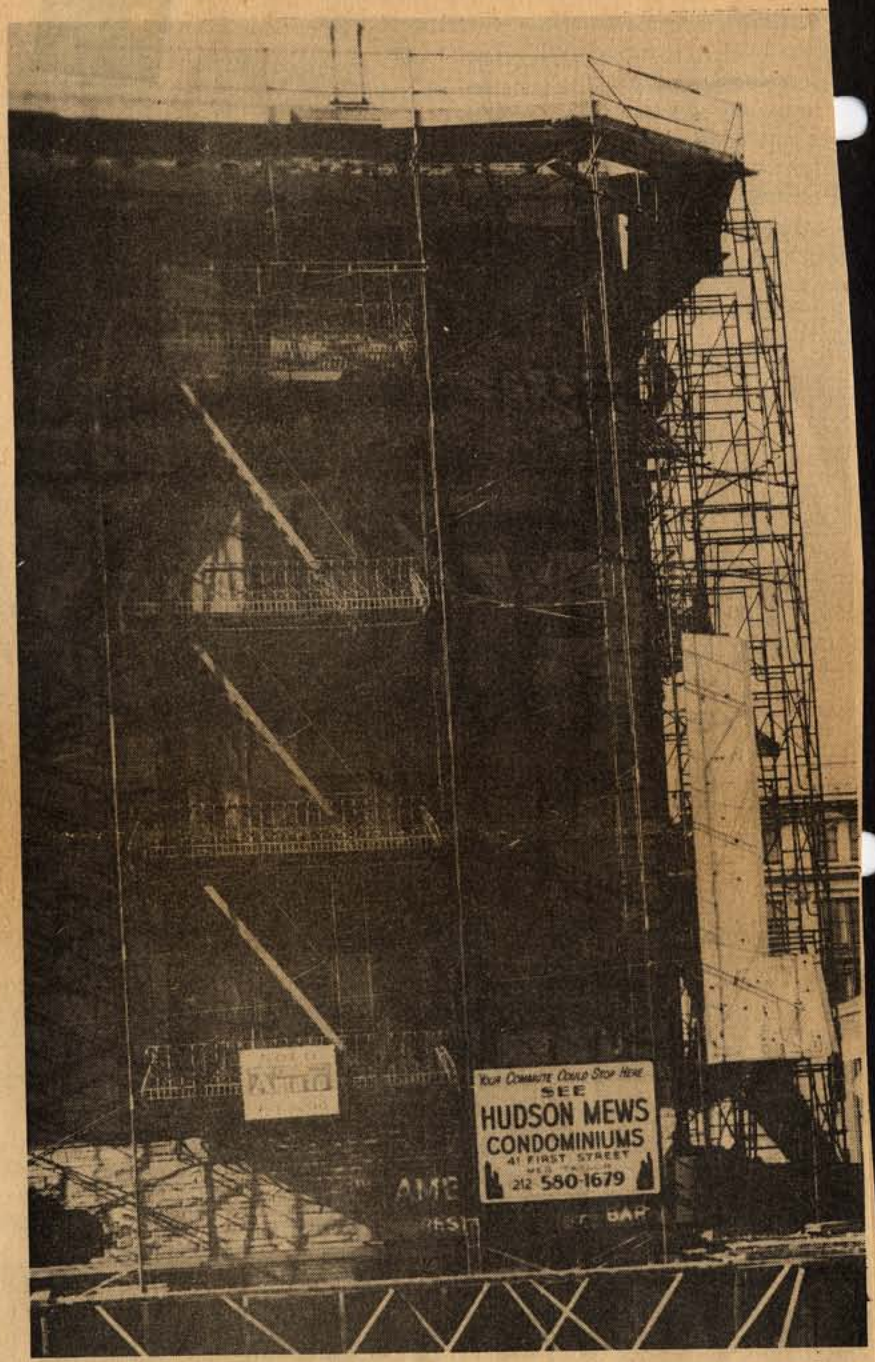
hardly the type of area one would expect to see charred roofs or burned-out shells.

1200 Washington Street is a big red brick building at the corner of 11th Street. In late October, a multiple alarm fire there killed 11 people and displaced the remaining nine tenants. Again, officials labeled the blaze arson. Five weeks later, the owner sold the building for $50,000 to real estate developers who already owned the vacant, soon-to-be-converted property next door.

•

Hoboken is a small city of 42,000 people, half of whom are Hispanic and one-third of whom are poor. All told, there are 1,352 units of public housing and 1,200 units with federal Section 8 subsidies. Whatever else is available for low and moderate income people is in the city's crumbling buildings where rents are too high and basic services, too low. Disinvestment crossed the river from New York some time ago, narrowing decent and affordable housing choices for the city's poor.

Five years ago, these dismal housing conditions gave birth to a grassroots organization called Por La Gente. Originally formed to protect tenants against displacement from buildings which, ironically, were being gutted for Section 8 development, Por La Gente received its first battle scars waging a losing campaign for the right of former tenants to return. Now, a new real estate dynamic is unfolding. This one, too, forces tenants out, and the struggle to return is foreclosed by a book of matches and a subsequent renovation process that results in expensive condominiums few can afford.



WHILE HOBOKEN SHUDdered in horror at the Washington Street and American Hotel fires, a small group of residents armed with pencils and pads sought to follow their hunches and ferret out the firebugs. Working along with Por La Gente, they researched the ownership and sales transactions of properties experiencing suspicious fires. They quickly discovered that the burned buildings already had telltale signs of arson risk, having been milked by successive owners who racked up long lists of code violations, tax arrears, smaller fires, and one too many title transfers in a short period of time.

Moreover, the research showed that an unusual number of buildings with suspicious fires were all slated for condo conversion. Some had legal sales agreements requiring buildings to be delivered empty; one gave $1,000 bonuses for vacant units and reimbursements for the lost rents.

In the American Hotel deal, a sales contract with a $625,000 price tag was signed in early October, 1981, with an agreement "to deliver the entire building in a vacant condition at the February 1, 1982 closing." The newly drafted mortgage indicated condominium conversion; the general alarm fire broke out on November 21, 1981.

The research group documented at least five other cases similar to the American Hotel; in all but one the

uildings were totally cleared of nants. According to Sister Norberta lunnewinkel, a Franciscan sister who as spearheaded the anti-arson and dis-lacement actions, the group is frustrat-ngly short of having built a closed case. Their sleuthing has revealed a handful of names which reappear, apparently nterchangeably, as seller, buyer, leveloper or lawyer for deals. Many are present or former business partners, frequently each other's managing agent. The signs of one realty outfit can be seen on many of these properties and almost three-quarters of the buildings in Hoboken slated for condo conversion.

But while law enforcement agencies appear to be waiting to find a hired "torch" with gasoline-soaked rags in hand, Por La Gente has taken a more direct path as well.

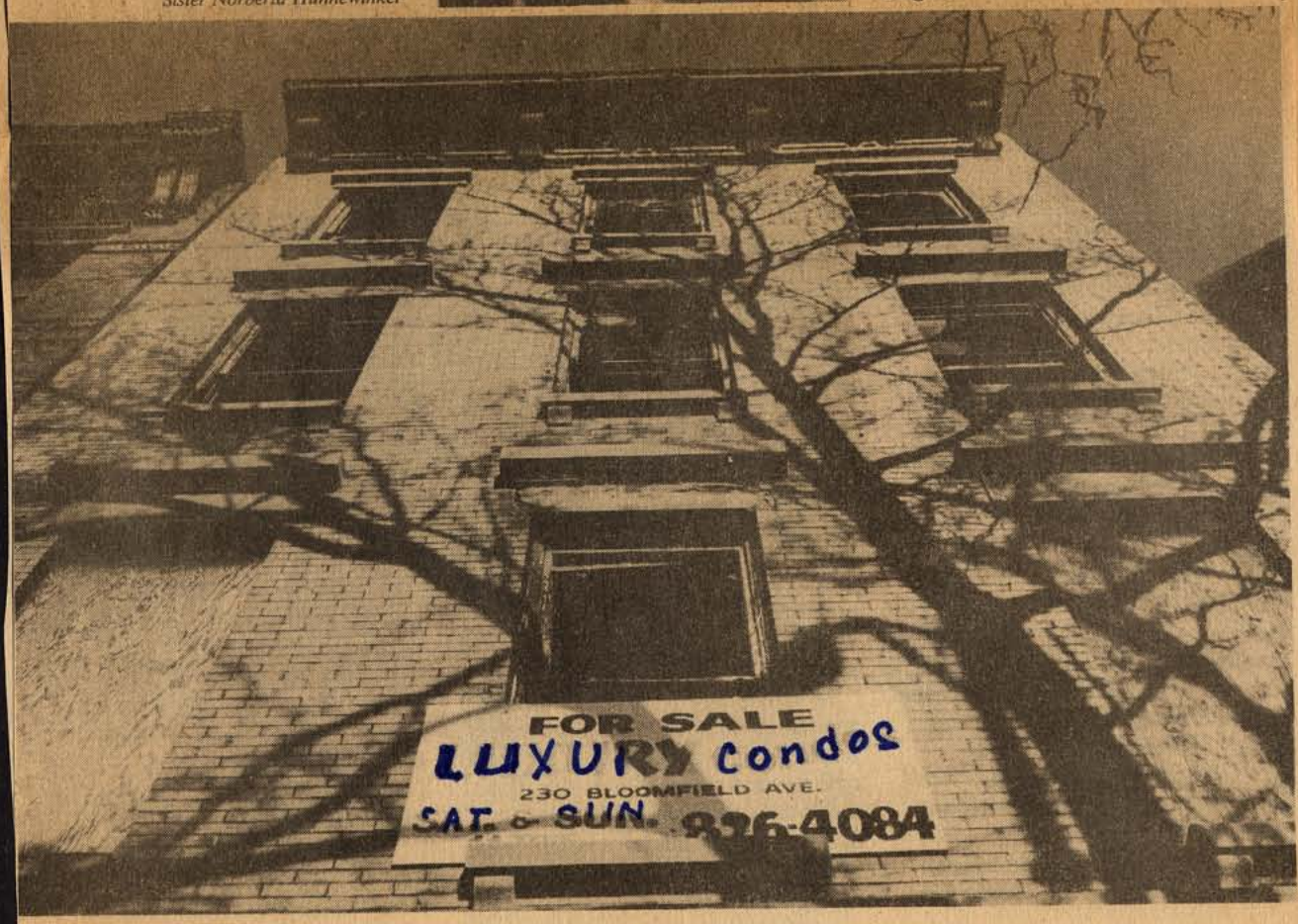
The group has led the response to the fires with street demonstrations and a series of demands addressed to the Mayor and City Council. They have continued to call for rental protections, strict code enforcement, in-depth arson investigations, increased police surveillance, mandatory smoke detectors and delayed insurance pay-offs. The official city response has been meager. A fire safety program was introduced into the schools and some beefed-up building inspections made. But, as Por La Gente has found to be the pattern in Hoboken, no real commitments have been made to redress grievances and protect lives and homes.



Sister Norberta Hunnewinkel

The Hoboken residents are determined to continue their fight. Already their actions have cooled the heat. The weekly winter fire wave slowed, and then stopped, although it is likely not in permanent remission. As one resident observed, "The fire pattern is connected to the housing market and sales are slow now. When they pick up again, someone may again strike the match."□

Harriet Cohen is director of the NY Neighborhood Anti-Arson Center.



NEW YORK POST, SATURDAY, MAY 1, 1982

and agony as relatives & mourn the inferno victims



In shock and in tears, women of the block react to the terrible news.



Post Photos by Robert Kalfus

A neighbor covers her mouth to mute the sobs as she hears names of victims.

down his face.

Mrs. Garcia was one of the two women who died on impact when they leaped to escape the flames.

Her daughter, Luzdelia Garcia, 17, and her two children, Erica Negron, 3 weeks, and year-old Jorge Negron also perished in the searing heat.

Torres, who was estranged from his wife and living elsewhere, said he had heard about the disaster after he arrived at work this morning and rushed to the scene of the blaze.

For him, too, it was already too late. There was nothing he could do to help.

Nothing but identifying the bodies of his loved ones

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Hudson Dispatch Sat 5/1/82

'I saw a woman on the second floor holding a baby in her arms. She let go and I grabbed it'

By CHUCK SUTTON
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—Patrolman James Mancuso stood across from the smoldering building at 15 14th St., where hours earlier children had fallen like rain to escape the early morning fire. At his feet on the sidewalk lay broken glass, ashes and two pillows — pillows desperate parents had used to cushion their children's fall to the sidewalk and save their lives.

"It's hard to remember how it happened, it happened so fast," Mancuso said. "I saw a woman on the second floor holding a baby in her arms. She let go and I grabbed it."

Moments later, he said, a second child dropped from the third floor. The boy bounced on the awning above the door, and then was caught by a bystander.

Mancuso said Patrolmen Ernest Mack and Robert Burns also worked with several unidentified bystanders to catch the children as they fell from windows.

"It was like nothing I'd ever experienced in my life," he said.



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threw her baby out, and I heard the baby cracked its head. Then she threw herself out. I saw her bleeding from the mouth. Later, I was told both died."

The waterfront town on the banks of the Hudson has had more than its share of tragedy — and most of it seems to come from arson, which has claimed 55 lives in just over two years.

Already this year the toll stands at 26. And the survivors will wear their scars forever.

Manuel Serrano and his wife, Janet, who climbed down a fire escape clutching their 3-month-old baby, recalled the fatal screams of their relatives — trapped in their third-floor apartment.

"Help me, help me!" they were yelling. "Quick!"

But it was already too late.

"I lost my wife and my daughter and my mother-in-law," sobbed Ramundo Torres.

His wife, Olga Garcia, 21, was pregnant when the flames caught her.

"My mother-in-law jumped from the window, but she died," he said as the unchecked tears streamed down his face.

Mrs. Garcia was one of the two women who died on impact when they leaped to escape the flames.

Her daughter, Luzdelia Garcia, 17, and her two children, Erica Negron, 3 weeks, and year-old Jorge Negron also perished in the searing heat.

Torres, who was estranged from his wife and living elsewhere, said he had heard about the disaster after he arrived at work this morning and rushed to the scene of the blaze.

For him, too, it was already too late. There was nothing he could do to help.

Nothing but identifying the bodies of his loved ones in the city morgue.

As bright sunshine covered the fire scene, crowds of onlookers and exhausted survivors watched the grim rescue work.

Relatives and neighbors sobbed as they stared at the burned-out shell.

"I feel like screaming," said Manuel Serrano, who lost four members of her family.

THE HOLOCAUST



Post Photo by Hal Goldenberg

The flame-scarred waterfront hotel in Hoboken were 12 women and children died in a roaring pre-dawn inferno.

the pre-dawn hours.

And then the unassuming cops quietly shrugged off all praise:

"That's what they pay us for," said James Mancuso. "We were only doing our jobs and earning our pay checks."

The roaring inferno at the four-story Pinter's Hotel left seven women and five children dead, and another 10 seriously injured — including two women and a man who were in critical condition with second-degree burns. The injured were in three New Jersey hospitals.

Seven of the dead were from one family. The hotel was totally gutted.

Officers Mancuso and Robert Burns arrived on the scene — responding to a routine call — shortly after the fire broke out at about 4 a.m., Donnelly said.

The cops immediately found themselves in the heart of the inferno.

Mancuso and Burns swiftly realized that panicky mothers had little choice but to drop their loved ones out of the windows before taking the plunge themselves, Donnelly said.

Eyewitnesses said Burns caught one infant boy, and Mancuso caught a 7-year-old girl and a baby girl.

They were among the five firemen and three policemen who suffered minor injuries battling the blaze and helping to rescue the Pinter's residents.

There were other spur-of-the-moment heroes, as well.

Robert Seickendick, who lives around the corner from the hotel on 14th Street, just two blocks west of the Hudson River, caught a baby tossed by its mother from a second-floor fire escape.

And a passing cabbie, who also lives in the neighborhood known as "uptown," caught another child.

There were some tragic paradoxes.

Maria Colon tossed her 2-year-old son, Willie, out a window, and one of the men caught him.

But then Maria tossed another son, Xavier, 3, out the window. Xavier died when he hit the ground.

Maria finally leaped to safety herself.

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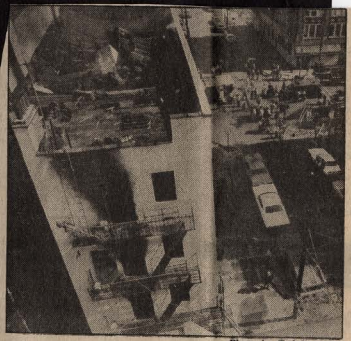


Photo by Ted Boswell

THE BURNED-OUT PINTER HOTEL, where a fire killed a dozen residents yesterday.



Photo by Bill Bayer

TWO HOBOKEN FIREFIGHTERS, one crying perhaps, or exhausted, or both.

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$1.15 Weekly Home Delivery

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The hotel:

Owner was fined $1,000 for not installing electrical smoke detectors

By DIANE CURCIO
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—One day before 12 people died during the 14th Street rooming house fire, the owner was fined $1,000 for not installing electrical smoke detectors in the building's hallways, a state official said yesterday.

The acting director of the state Division of Housing, William Connolly, said yesterday that in October, city inspectors found that the owner, Andrew Pinter of Jersey City, had violated state housing codes for multiple-family dwellings.

Connolly said that in February the building was reinspected and the violation had not been corrected. On Thursday, a notice was mailed from the housing division's Trenton office to Pinter, fining him $1,000, he said.

Under state housing codes, multiple-family units such as the five-story, brick structure at 151 14th St. that was destroyed yesterday by fire, must have electrically connected smoke alarms in its hallways. Battery-operated



A SNAPSHOT of three fire victims. Luis Xavier Colon, 4, center, died; his siblings Willie, 2, and Carmen, survived.



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the dispatch

24 PAGES Saturday, May 1, 1982 $1.15 Weekly Home Delivery

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Interviewed on the streets outside the up-own blaze, many tenants said they did not ear any alarms.

One tenant, Carmen Tirado, said the alarm ould be heard in the hallways but not inside he apartments.

Barbara Pinter, who said she is one of the owners of the rooming house, said the structure has been up for sale for about three years. She declined to comment further on the building, which also houses a restaurant on the ground floor and 13 dwelling units.

Andrew Pinter is listed on city tax rolls as the owner of the building. He could not be reached for comment yesterday.

Records show that Pinter has owned the building at least since 1965. The structure's assessed value is $30,000. The 1982 tax bill for the building is $4,141.20. Pinter's tax payments are up to date, according to a city tax office clerk.

The state law mandating electrical systems in hallways went into effect on Jan. 1. New Jersey is seeking full compliance with the law within five years.

Marzocca said Hoboken is "ahead of the state" in complying to smoke detector laws. He said that 1,400 smoke detectors have been installed in the city where 2,000 are required.

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Under state housing codes, multiple-family units such as the five-story, brick structure at 151 14th St. that was destroyed yesterday by fire, must have electrically connected smoke alarms in its hallways. Battery-operated smoke alarms are required in each apartment.

Pinter had battery-charged devices in the rooms and the hallways, Connolly said.

The building's superintendent, Miguel Zaccheus, said yesterday that the landlord was about to hire a contractor to install the electrical system.

But Connolly said: "Battery-operated smoke

See HOTEL, Page 13



A SNAPSHOT of three fire victims. Luis Xavier Colon, 4, center, died; his siblings Willie, 2, and Carmen, survived.



UPI Telephoto

The fire terrifies a young child.

HOTEL

HD 5.1.12 page 13

Continued from Page 1

detectors in the common areas had nothing to do with the number of dead in that fire." The "only way that many people could have died was arson. ... Smoke detectors ... interconnected or not ... it makes no difference when people decide to kill each other."

Connolly's remarks were contradicted by the city's electrical inspector, Paul Marzocca.

Marzocca said smoke detectors saved lives at a fire two weeks ago at 109 Clinton St. and another fire on 12th Street four months ago. Although there is no way to tell if smoke detectors at the Pinter rooming house would have saved the tenants, Marzocca said, the devices work, and "the proof is in the two other cases."

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The catcher:

NEW YORK POST, SATURDAY, MAY 1, 1982



Tears friends

By JEFF WEINGRAD and KIERAN CROWLEY

ON A crowded block in arson-plagued Hoboken, during a fiery nightmare that took 12 lives, the neighbors all seemed to have the same lament.

"I knew everybody," said Madelina Rosa between sobs. "The living and the dead . . . everybody."

For many, the death toll was just too much to believe — or accept — because each of them did know everybody — all of the victims.

Little Maritza Otero, her dark eyes glistening with tears that wouldn't roll



Post Photos by Robert Kaltus

Firemen who fought suspicious blaze for hours lower the body of a victim who was trapped on a flaming upper floor.

Two cops save tots hurled from fire

By DOUG FEIDEN

TWO Hoboken police officers — who modestly insisted, "We were only doing our jobs" — were the heroes of the fiery hotel holocaust that took the lives of 12 women and children yesterday.

As crackling flames from the racing fire swirled around them, the cops stood their ground on the sidewalk and caught infants and children hurled out windows by their desperate mothers.

"These are two of the bravest men I've ever seen in action," said Hoboken police Lt. Thomas Donnelly.

"They answered the call of duty and then they went way beyond it."

The veteran officers — joined by a taxi driver and another neighbor — were so busy catching children and saving lives they didn't even realize they themselves were burned and suffering from smoke inhalation, Donnelly said.

Together they saved at least six lives as firefighters battled the suspicious blaze which raged through a Hoboken waterfront hotel in

NEW YORK POST, SATURDAY, MAY 1, 1982



Little Xavier Colon, in his sailor suit, was among the dead. Baby Willie was tossed from a window by his mother, Maria.

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Little Maritza Otero, her dark eyes glistening with tears that wouldn't roll down her cheeks, looking much older than her 13 years, counted on her fingers.

"There was Lizzie, there was Maria, there was . . ." she counted as she ticked off the fingers, each finger a dead friend.

When she finished, she had used up all of her 10 little fingers.

"I knew 11 people in there," she said. "Ten were killed. I knew seven kids. Six are dead now.

"I knew one woman who

HEROES OF



Post Photos by Robert Kaltus

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The Dispatch, Hudson/Bergen Counties, N.J. Saturday, May 1, 1982

BLAZE KILLS

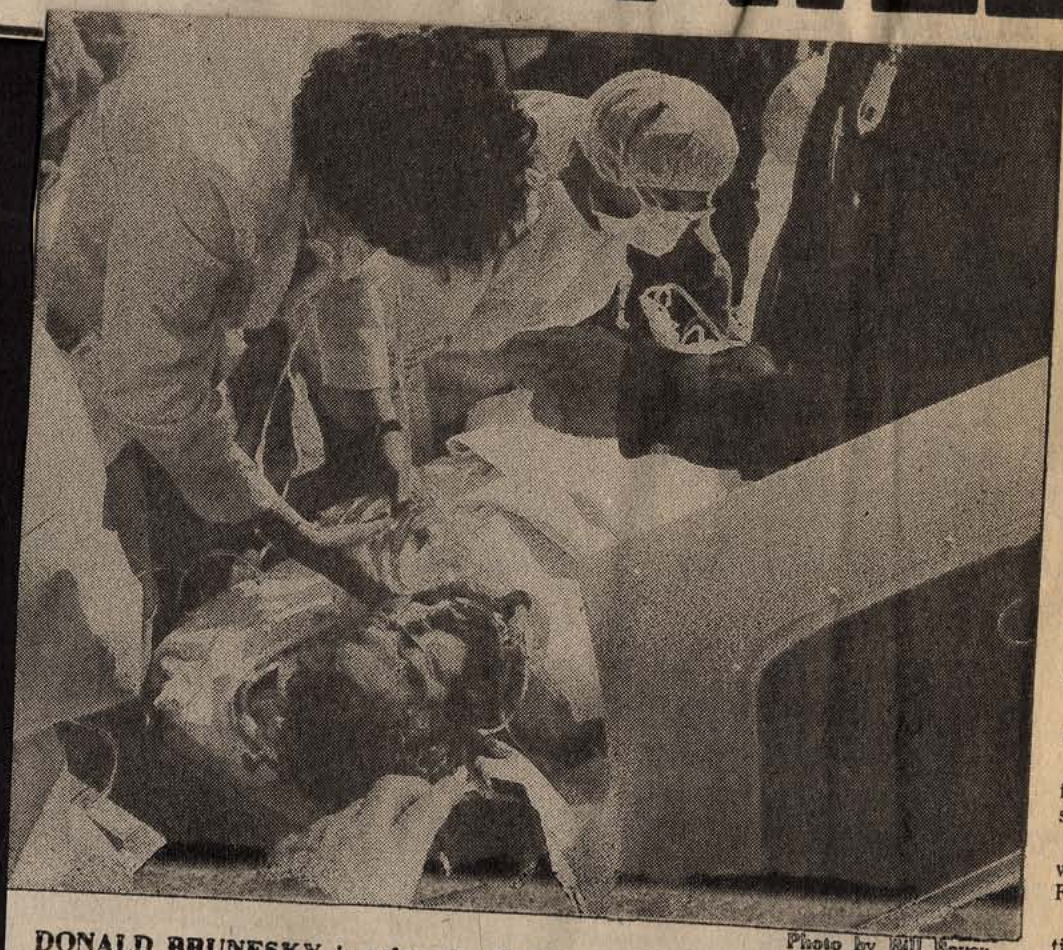


Photo by Bill Sayer

DONALD BRUNESKY is taken by Hoboken ambulance squad volunteers and medical personnel from St. Mary Hospital to a state police helicopter, in which he was flown to the burn unit of New York Hospital.

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The Dispatch, Hudson/Bergen Counties, N.J. Saturday, May 1, 1982

BLAZE KILLS 12

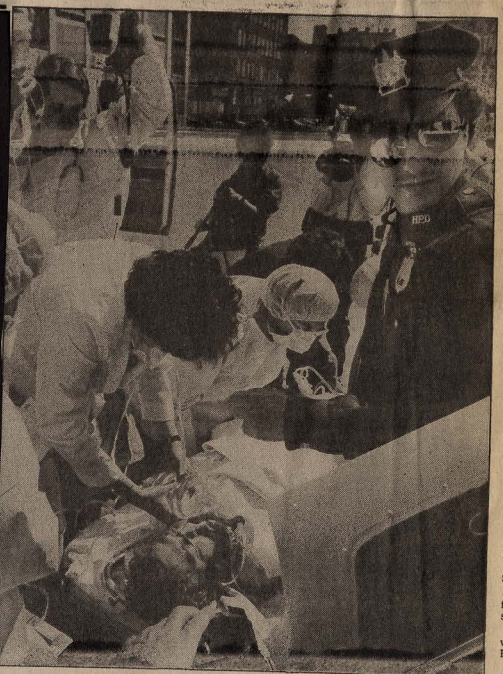


Photo by Bill Meyer

DONALD BRUNESKY is taken by Hoboken ambulance squad volunteers and medical personnel from St. Mary Hospital to a state police helicopter, in which he was flown to the burn unit of New York Hospital.

The injured:

HD 5/1/82
Page 13

Evacuation and care of victims was coordinated by the founder of the Orange-based National Burn Victim Foundation

By DIANE CURCIO
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—Three intravenous bottles and a unit of blood were being pumped into 30-year-old Donald Brunesky as a state police helicopter sped him across the Hudson River in three minutes for special treatment at New York Hospital's burn center.

Having breathed the intensely heated air inside the Pinter Hotel at 151 14th St., Brunesky suffered burns to the inside of his lungs. His lungs swelled from the intense burns, and a tracheotomy was performed at the scene to save him from choking to death.

Brunesky is listed in critical condition, a spokeswoman for the Manhattan hospital said yesterday.

The helicopter transported Brunesky from Kennedy Stadium here to the East 67th Street heliport, one block from the hospital, which is on 68th Street. Dr. Jaime Lara of St. Mary Hospital here accompanied the severely burned man.

Brunesky saved himself from the flames by jumping from an upper-floor of the building, suffered multiple fractures to his legs in the process.

Yesterday's three-alarm inferno killed 12 persons and injured six others, three of them, including Brunesky, required specialized burn care. One of injured was a city firefighter, who suffered smoke inhalation. Two other persons were treated at St. Mary Hospital here.

Ambulances rushed 29-year-old Maria Colon to Hackensack Hospital, and Elizabeth Garcia to St. Barnabas Hospital in Livingston. Both women are listed in serious condition. They are severly burned and suffering from trauma, officials said.

Firefighter Jerry Costante, 30, was being treated in the special care unit at St. Mary Hospital for smoke inhalation.

Two-year-old Willie Colon was admitted to the pediatric divison of St. Mary for minor burns. The child was reported in stable condition.

The sixth casualty was Santos Sepulveda, 29, who suffered multiple fractures when he leaped from the building to save himself. He also suffered smoke inhalation.

The evacuation and care of Brunesky and the other burn victims was coordinated by Harry Gaynor, founder of the National Burn Victim Foundation, which is based in Orange.

Through a network known as the Regional Emergency Communication System, the foundation provides 24-hour assistance in placing burn victims in hospitals equipped to provide specialized care.

The system, however, was not used to assist the first casualties of the early morning fire, Gaynor said. The doctor at the scene made arrangements to send victims to Hackensack and St. Barnabas hospitals.

Who torched Hoboken h

Continued from h

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Ms. Franklin sutures on her arm Hospital after the i

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Photo by Roy Groething

Hoboken firemen lower the body of one of the victims of yesterday's fatal fire to the street.

manager Pat Franklin)

Who torched Hoboken hotel?

Continued from

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Photo by Roy Groething

Hoboken firemen lower the body of one of the victims of yesterday's fatal fire to the street.

12 are dead, motive is unknown

5/1/82 JJ

By Randolph Diamond
and John J. Farrell Jr.

Arson is believed the cause of yesterday's fire in Hoboken in which 12 persons — all women and children — died in a roaring inferno that gutted Pinters' Hotel at 151 14th St. The building's owners had been fined just Thursday for failing to install an electronic remote detector system.

Another nine persons were injured, three of them seriously, in the fire that left 40 persons homeless from the hotel and an adjoining apartment house at 153 14th St.

It was the fourth suspicious fatal fire in Hoboken in seven months — fires that have killed a total of 27. None of the fires have been solved.

As word about the latest fire spread many residents spoke of the theory that there was a conspiracy to burn out poor tenants so buildings could be converted to luxury apartments.

The hotel has been for sale for two years.

"I didn't believe at first what these community groups were saying that these fires were all arson-for-profit but this is just too much of a coincidence," said Pierre Manieri, a Hoboken community development agency official. "This is very scary." Other residents throughout town voiced similiar concern.

"All indications are this fire is arson," said Hoboken Fire Chief James Houn at the fire scene yesterday afternoon. "The intensity and extent of the fire denote something must be amiss."

Houn also said the location of the fire — in the second story hallway instead of in an apartment — and the fact that it spread throughout the whole building within a matter of minutes also indicated arson.

See WHO — Page 4.

Who torched hotel, killing 12?

Continued from Page 1

Houn said a five gallon aluminum can was recovered from the second floor hall and said some residents reported the hotel had smelled of kerosene.

But by late yesterday afternoon, Detective Commander Capt. Patrick Donatacci said a state police laboratory test showed no signs of kerosene.

"It was probably a garbage can," said Donatacci.

Donatacci said that police had no suspects or possible motives.

Earlier in the day Hoboken police, along with investigators from the Hudson County Prosecutor's Office, were investigating the account of hotel manager Pat Franklin.

Ms. Franklin said she was trying to close the bottom floor bar, at 1:20 a.m. when a man threw a bottle at her and then slashed her arm with a knife because she refused to let him in for a drink.

Ms. Franklin received 12 sutures on her arm in St. Mary Hospital after the incident.

Mrs. Barbara Pinter, one of the hotel's owners, also said there was a "fight" between a woman, who had been asked to leave the hotel by Saturday and one of her neighbors earlier in the day. Authorities were investigating that angle too.

Donatacci said what was baffling was that the hotel front door locked automatically when someone entered the building, but there were no signs of forced entry.

Flames and thick smoke had trapped 10 of the dead in their single-room apartments and another two persons died when they leaped from upper floors, authorities said. Fire officials said flames were roaring out of the building when they arrived.

Chief Houn said residents were hanging out the windows when firemen arrived at the scene after pedestrians spotted flames coming out of the building and a number of children were tossed out windows into the arms of police and neighbors.

Police Officer James Mancuso, one of the first on the scene, ran to the front of the building and caught a two-year-old child who was dropped from the second floor.

"I didn't know what I did," said Mancuso. "I just held out my arms and caught the baby and that was it."

One baby thrown out the window was caught by a cabbie who lived across the street and another was caught by another neighbor. But authorities said at least one infant thrown out the window died.

Manuel Serrano and his wife, Janet who climbed down a fire escape clutching their 3-month-old baby, recalled the screams of Mrs. Serrano's relatives trapped in a room next to their third-floor apartment.

"They were screaming 'Help me, Help me!" she said. Dead were her mother, brother, stepfather and nephew.

Carman Tirado hugged her 8-year-old son as she recalled how narrowly she and her children had escaped death.

"My 12-year-old daughter had gotten up to get another blanket because she was cold," said Mrs. Tirado. A few seconds later she smelled smoke and woke me up. But we couldn't make it out through the front hallway because the flames were so intense. We managed to go down through the back fire escape. If my daughter hadn't woke up, we would probably be all dead."

Electrical Inspector Paul Marcozza said lives could have been saved if the hotel, which had 12 apartments, had electronic smoke detectors in the hallways as required by a state law, Marcozza said the hotel did have battery units in the rooms but said apparently some of them did not go off.

William Connolly, acting director of the state Division of Housing said the Pinters' had been fined $1,000 on Thursday for not installing the electronic detector system in the hallway.

Connolly disputed Marcozza's statement that the hallway detector system would have saved residents lives.

"I doubt any technology could have saved lives."

Mrs. Pinter claimed she had been trying to have an electronic detector system installed for months but she said electricians failed to show up for appointments to give price estimates.

"There were a lot of people who didn't like us (her and manager Pat Franklin) because we kicked th

She said she did not know what the charge was. She would not go into detail on the other charges.

The Pinter Hotel had a for sale sign from the DeRuggiero Real Estate Agency in Union City. Mrs. Pinter, however, said the sign had been on the hotel for two years and no one had been interested in meeting her purchase price of $200,000.

"I and my husband decided two years ago that we've had enough of the hotel business," she said. "But we haven't been able to sell it."

Mrs. Pinter said the hotel was insured for $125,000.

Red Cross officials said they were housing at least 30 displaced persons in area motels.

Meanwhile, Al Arezzo, Hoboken's chief building inspector, said the roof of the building had collapsed and the whole building except for the first floor must be torn down.

City building officials had said if the Pinters didn't hire a crane operator today they would hire a contractor to tear it down.

Arezzo said the adjacent building at 153 14th St. only suffered minor damage and should



Victor, left and Luz Virginia Lopez, right, and their children, from left, Ray, 12, Eileen, 15, Jacqueline, 13 and Jose 2, who were left homeless in the Hoboken fire with only the clothes on their backs, enter the Holiday Inn Jersey City, for temporary housing.

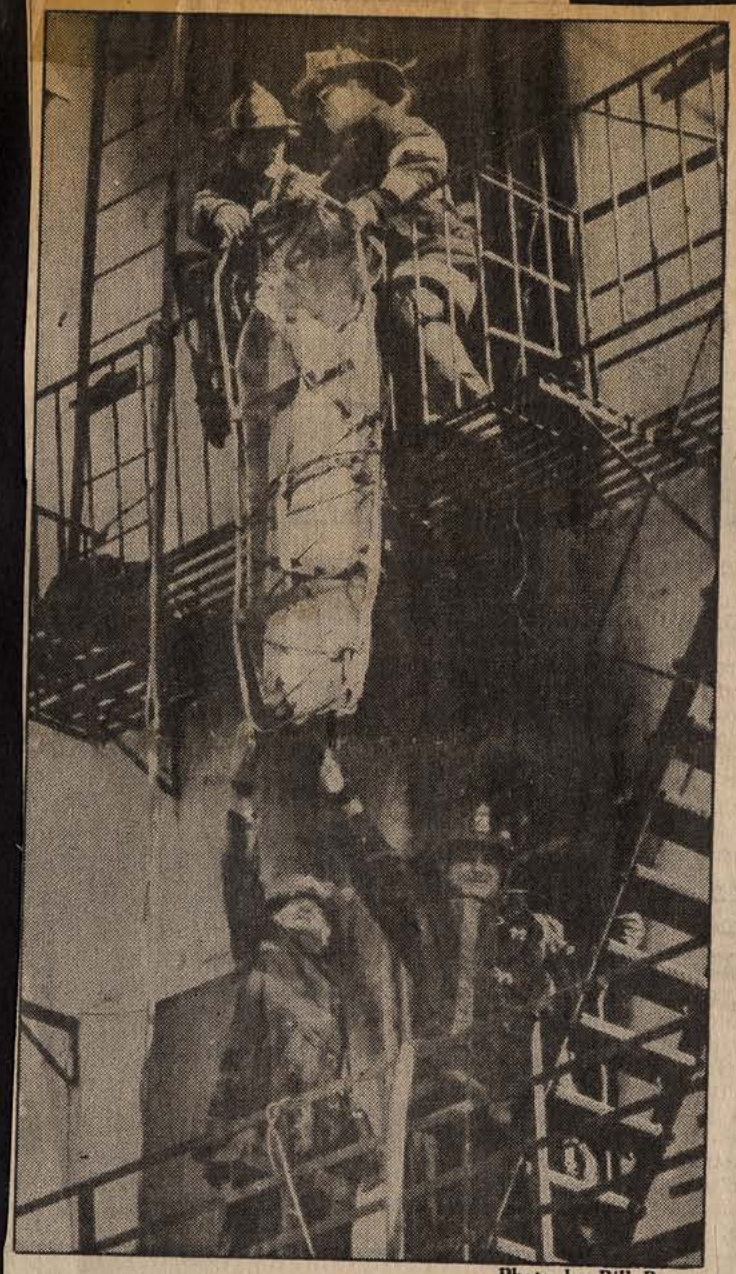


Photo by Bill Bayer

FIREFIGHTERS LOWER the body of what appears to be a child, one of a dozen victims of the blaze early yesterday in a four-story brick rooming house on 14th Street.

The fire:

Page 1 (1+D) 5/1/82

Suspicious fire kills 12, one a 1-month-old infant, and injures six others

By ROY KAHN
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—Twelve people burned to death and six were injured yesterday when a "suspicious" early morning fire consumed a four-story brick rooming house on 14th Street.

Of the dead, six were children ranging in age from one month to eight years, two were teenagers and four were adults. The victims were from three families.

Firefighters said the blaze, which they suspect was set, was reported at 4:23 a.m. But by the time the first engines appeared on the scene, flames were already shooting out of windows on all three floors.

As of last night the cause was still being investigated, but fire investigators said it apparently started in a second- story stairwell. It appeared to have spread rapidly throughout the building, trapping the $80-a-week-tenants in their apartments.

Some tenants died in their rooms. One woman, Luz Delia Garcia, was found by firefighters leaning against her apartment window with her newborn baby, Erica Negron, in her arms.

"She looked like a mannequin from a store,' said Jimmy Patnaude, 17, who lives down the street. "I thought that was what she was until the firemen went up and took her down."

Garcia and her family were supposed to move into an apartment in New York City yesterday. Thursday night was to have been her last night in the apartment, neighbors said.

There were others trapped in their rooms, who tried to escape by jumping out of windows.

See FIRE, Page 22

On Wednesday night, as the bar was closing, barmaid Patty Franklin got into a fight with a patron who allegedly wanted one more beer which she wouldn't serve. She was stabbed and the man, whom witnesses would not identify, sped away in a blue Chevrolet station wagon.

Franklin signed a complaint to the police, but no arrest has been made. She reportedly required several stitches on her arm to close the slash wounds

FIRE

page 5, 1, 82
HD

Continued from Page 1

Patrolmen James Mancuso, Edward Mack and Robert Burns together with some civilians caught three babies who were thrown to safety from the upper floors. Police said one unidentified child bounced off an awning and was caught before it hit the ground.

Olga Garcia, 22, and a woman police would not identify also jumped. They, however, died.

"We pleaded with them not to jump, the ladders were coming up," Detective Martin Kiely said later. "But with the heat and the smoke and the flames, I guess they didn't listen."

But it may not have been terror alone that prompted tenants to jump.

Sixteen-year-old Carmen Tirado said she watched as one woman with a baby in her arms stood up in the window.

"She was trying to wait for the ladder," she said. "But it seemed like the flames pushed the baby right out of her arms. Then the flames pushed her out of the window."

Tirado said she and her family barely escaped from their second-story apartment. She woke up to go to the bathroom and immediately smelled smoke. She alerted her family and, after realizing the stairs were blocked by fire, went out a rear window and down the fire escape.

Whatever the reason, shortly after 4:30 a.m., police and first aid squad rescue workers were trying to cope with a hail of bodies coming down from the buring floors.

A Weehawken emergency fire aid squad member to called the scene, "the worst I have ever seen in my life.

"I was working on one man, and suddenly I heard thuds around me (as others jumped.) I was scared s---less. All I wanted to do was get out of there."

It took firefighters about an hour, 39 men and six pieces of equipment to bring the blaze under control. The building was condemned yesterday afternoon by the city building department and demolition was expected to begin either late yesterday or today.

Police said a total of 18 people were either dead or injured.

Police tentatively identified the dead as: Olga Garcia, 22, and her daughter, Kathleen Torres, four months; Anna Hilda Perez, 48, and her grandson, Angel L. Perez, 8; and Luz Delia Garcia, 17, her son, Jorge Negron, 1, and her daughter, Erica Negron. The Garcia women were sisters and police identified Perez as their mother.

Also killed were Francisca Vasquez, 42, Juan Serrano, 32, Charles Serrano, 3, and Ismael Vasquez, 15, listed as all one family by police. Police said Luis Xavier Colon, 4, also died in the fire. His mother, Maria Colon, 20, was reported in critical condition at Hackensack Hospital. Her son Willie, 2, is in stable condition at St. Mary Hospital.

Elizabeth Garcia was listed in critical condition and was taken to St. Barnabas Hospital burn unit in Livingston suffering from severe burns and trauma.

A state police helicopter flew Donald Brunesky, 30, from Kennedy Stadium in Hoboken to the Burn Center at New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center on East 68th Street in Manhattan. He was listed in critical condition there with burns over 25 percent of his body and multiple fractures. Police said they believe he jumped from a window in the burning building.

Santos Sepulveda, 29, was reported in stable condition at St. Mary Hospital here, suffering from smoke inhalation and multiple fractures. He, too, is thought to have jumped from the building.

Two firefighters were admitted to St. Mary Hospital. One, Jerry Costante, 30, was listed in critical condition in the intensive care unit last night, suffering from smoke inhalation. The other, Salvatore Dorso, was listed in stable condition last night.

Meanwhile, the state police arson squad, together with arson investigators from the city police departement and the Hudson County Prosecutor's Office, were busy last night sorting through both rubble and rumor to determine whether there was a motive strong enough to produce a case of deadly arson.

The residential hotel, situated above Thee Steak House, a tired rundown bar, reportedly is known to both Hoboken police and residents as a trouble spot.

Neighbors complained fights often break out, not only in the hotel but in the bar and the street outside.

On Wednesday night, as the bar was closing, barmaid Patty Franklin got into a fight with a patron who allegedly wanted one more beer which she wouldn't serve. She was stabbed and the man, whom witnesses would not identify, sped away in a blue Chevrolet station wagon.

Franklin signed a complaint to the police, but no arrest has been made. She reportedly required several stitches on her arm to close the slash wounds.



Photo by Ted Boswell

Onlookers watch anxiously as firefighters remove bodies from the building.

Blaze brings grim toll to 102

By WINNIE BONELLI

Staff Writer

• March 19, 1979 — A two-alarm fire [illegible]



Photo by Ted Boswell

Onlookers watch anxiously as firefighters remove bodies from the building.

Blaze brings grim toll to 102

By WINNIE BONELLI
Staff Writer

Yesterday's early morning fire tragedy at Pinter's Hotel brought to 102 the toll of fatalities from a series of fires that have ravaged Hoboken and Jersey City since 1979.

• Jan. 20, 1979 — Fire raged through a 75-year-old Hoboken tenement at 131 Clinton St. leaving in its wake 21 victims, 10 of whom were children. It was labeled by Capt. Ray Falco, chief arson investigator, as "definitely suspicious." Blame was later attributed to three youngsters aged 8 and 9 who set fire to a bag of garbage. They were not prosecuted on the grounds that, because of their age, they did not realize the consequence of their actions.

This fire represented the second worst New Jersey residential fire in modern times. The first occurred in November 1963, when 25 elderly persons perished in an Atlantic City hotel blaze set by a former mental patient.

• Jan. 22, 1979 — Two days later, Jersey City firemen found themselves battling a blaze at 358 York St. that claimed the lives of Marie Gonzalez, her five children and her common-law husband. Sixteen-year-old Kevin Madison was convicted of the crime in March 1981 and sentenced to 30 years in prison.

• March 19, 1979 — A two-alarm fire destroyed a Jersey City tenement, killing six persons and leaving 26 homeless at 192 Mercer St. Although the origin was originally termed "suspicious," the blaze was later pinpointed to a carelessly discarded cigarette.

• March 30, 1979 — A cigarette proved the culprit when five persons, including three children, became trapped in a tenement building fire at 605 Grove St., Jersey City.

• Jan. 2, 1980 — Two drifters met their death in an abandoned Jersey City tenement at 241 Monmouth St. where they set a fire in attempts to keep warm.

• Jan. 5, 1980 — Children playing with matches resulted in the death of a friend and destroyed three Jersey City tenements. The fire originated at 29 Clinton Ave.

• Feb. 8, 1980 — Arson was suspected in a fire that drove a 82-year-old women to seek refuge in a basement closet in her two-story brick home at 129 Kearney Ave., Jersey City.

• March 2, 1980 — The body of a teenage girl was discovered in the rubble of a four-alarm fire that destroyed a row of three tenements beginning at 162 Union St., Jersey City. Cause of the fire was not determined.

• March 16, 1980 — A 23-year-old man was found dead on the floor of his apartment when police responded to a fire alarm at 349 Liberty Ave., Jersey City. A cigarette stuffed in a couch was noted as the cause.

• March 16, 1980 — A candles used by a woman to light her home became a torch that ignited a row of frame houses and left the homeowner dead. The affected buildings from 123 to 133 Orient Ave., Jersey City.

• June 11, 1980 — Two men were later acquitted of charges that they set a fire which killed a 52-year-old woman and her infant granddaughter. The woman died when she plunged from a fourth-floor window at 516 Bergen Ave., Jersey City.

• Sept. 28, 1980 — The investigation focused on a space heater as the cause of an early morning blaze that claimed the lives of two children at the 224 Jefferson St., Hoboken, site of a three-alarm fire.

• Oct. 27, 1980 — "Possible arson" was cited when another grandmother and two infants were discovered in the after-effects of a fire at 298 Sixth St., Jersey City.

See TOLL: Page 22

TOLL

Continued from Page 13

• Nov. 19, 1980 — Careless smoking lead to the death of one man in his basement apartment at 350 Grove St., Jersey City.

• Jan. 10, 1981 — A 44-year-old was found wrapped in a dirty quilt besides a homemade stove and ashes, reputed to be the remnants of clothing she was wearing at the time of her death in a warehouse at 417 Whiton St., Jersey City.

• Jan. 12, 1981 — Four girls and their mothers were the victims of a fire which swept through 190 New York Ave. in Jersey City. Ironically, the group was only four feet away from safety when they died. The cause was categorized as "undetermined."

• Feb. 7, 1981 — Seven victims, including a witness in an arson case, were killed in a suspicious Jersey City tenement fire at 204 York St. Believed to have begun in a sofa at the rear of the first-floor public hallway, the fire was accelerated by exploding gas. The building subsequently collapsed and the bodies were recovered from the rubble.

• Feb. 18, 1981 — A two-alarm fire killed an elderly man as it swept through two-one family houses at 39 Manhattan Ave. The cause was not established.

• May 28, 1981 — An ignited bedroom mattress led to the death of two teenage sisters plus a neighbor and her four children at 54 Bright St., Jersey City.

• July 2, 1981 — Two Jersey City residents were eventually arrested on charges stemming from a fire at 276 Duncan Ave. that claimed the life of a teenager.

• Oct. 12, 1981 — A fire in a tenement at 67 Park Ave., Hoboken, left two young boys dead.

• Oct. 24, 1981 — Tragedy again struck in Hoboken when 11 persons perished in a Saturday morning blaze at 102 12th St. Arson investigators indicated "some kind of liquid accelerant" had been poured into the hallway before the fire was set.

• Nov. 21, 1981 — The American Hotel, a five-story building at 78 River St., Hoboken, was the site of the next fatal fire. Two men perished, 16 were injured, and 60 left homeless. Although the immediate cause of the fire was not determined, there were indications it started in a mattress on the third floor.

Fires have killed 55 in four years

JJ 5/1/82

A total of 55 persons have died in nine major fires in Hoboken since March 1978.

The grisly streak began on March 10, 1978, when fire took the life of Alberto Langini of 560 Marshall Drive. Two others died in a blaze two months later.

The next major fire occurred in the early morning of Jan. 20, 1979, when 21 persons perished in a blaze that swept through three tenement buildings at 129, 131 and 133 Clinton St.

After that, the next fatal fires occurred on Oct. 25, 1979, and Sept. 28, 1980, when four people died in two tenement fires.

On Oct. 24, 1981, a fire at 102 12th St. took 11 lives, including five children.

Two months later, a suspicious blaze at the Americana Hotel on River Street claimed two lives.

Fires changing Hoboken

JJ Sat 5/1/82

Yesterday at lunchtime patrons at Hoboken's Madison Hotel munched away on clams, oysters, and quiche along with a glass or two of white wine in the Victorian ambience of this restaurant-tavern. It was only a half block from the fatal fire scene at Pinter's Hotel yet it was literally a world apart.

"Slowly but surely, this whole neighborhood is going to become Madison Hotels," said one resident. She pointed to a row of tenement houses across the street.

"In five years those tenements wouldn't be there," said the young woman. "What will be there is fancy renovated apartment buildings and fancy stores like on Columbus Avenue in New York. I predict there are going to be more fires. How else are these landlords going to get the tenants out?"

"I'm not from Hoboken," said one middle-aged man as he put lemon on his oysters. "I don't know what fire you are talking about. I was just thinking about moving here because of the closeness to New York and the low rents."

Another woman said she hoped the tenement buildings would disappear.

"I don't want people to be burned," she said. "But I wouldn't mind a nicer element of people here, if you know what I mean."

The dead and injured

JJ 5/1/82

Hoboken police released the following tentative list of persons who died in yesterday's fire:

Anahilda Perez, 48, and her daughter, Olga Garcia, 22, and Luz Delia Garcia, 17. Two children of Luz Delia Garcia — Jorge Negron, 1, and Erica Negron, three weeks — also died, as did Katelin Torres, four months, daughter of Olga Garcia.

The other fire victims were Juan Serrano, 32, his son, Charles Serrano, 3, Francisca Vasquez, 42, Ismael Vasquez, 15, Xavier Colon, 4, and Angel Luis Perez, 8.

A spokeswoman for St. Mary Hospital said that five of the fire victims were taken to the hospital and pronounced dead on arrival, while the others were pronounced dead at the scene.

In addition, the St. Mary Hospital spokeswoman said that three persons injured in the fire were transported by helicopter to burn centers for treatment of burns and trauma.

They are: Donald Brunesky, 39, who was taken to the Cornell Medical Center in New York; Elizabeth Garcia, 15, who was transported to St. Barnabas Hospital in Livingston; and Maria Colon, 20, who was taken to Hackensack Hospital.

Two others injured in the blaze are being treated at St.Mary Hospital.

They are: Santos Sepulveda, 29, who is in guarded condition in the intensive care unit after suffering from smoke inhalation and multiple fractures; and Willy Colon, 2, who is in stable condition in the pediatrics ward after suffering minor burns.

Two Hoboken firefighters are being treated at St. Mary Hospital: Gerald Costante, 30, who is in stable condition, and Salvatore Dorso, 39, also in stable condition. Both firemen suffered smoke inhalation.In addition authorities said four residents of the hotel were treated for minor smoke injuries.

Four die in fire

N 5/1/82

JERSEY CITY—Four children were killed in a one-alarm fire in a Jersey City tenement last night, the fire division reported.

The children were all on the second floor of the two-story frame tenement on Pearsall Avenue near Garfield Avenue, a source in the fire division said. He said the children were alone in the apartment.

The blaze started around 9 p.m., Lt. David Cutburth of the fire division said. He said the division received the alarm at 9:15 and the fire was under control at 9:22.

The dead were taken to the Jersey City Medical Center. "My guess would be they died of smoke inhalation," said John Whitely, a spokesman for the hospital. "No one was injured, either firefighters or residents of the building. All we have are four dead children."

An off-duty firefighter said he heard the report on his radio at home. "I didn't pay much attention, because it was only one alarm, and all of a sudden, they were screaming for ambulances."

Arson almost a way of lif

Continued from Page 1

suspected. Once again people are dead. But the residents of this Mile Square City have seen it all before — bodies being pulled out of a charred building, mothers crying, children dying.

They have seen it all before but they have not gotten used to it. The reaction of onlookers at the fire scene yesterday ranged from shock to sorrow to anger.

Nearby, Rafael Cabrera looked at the charred remains of 153 14th St., the building next to the Pinter Hotel, which also suffered extensive damage because of the fire.

Cabrera and six relatives had lived in that building since 1976. They are now homeless. But at least they are alive.

"That fire was horrible," he said. "When I got out of the building, I heard the screams and saw the people jumping out of the windows. It was unbel
Thank God, we're alive."

Cabrera said that he
family will stay with rela
North Bergen until they
a new home. But they
return to Hoboken.

"I won't come back he
said. "The rents keep
higher. Poor people car
here anymore. And there
fires."

Victor Molina, who ha
in Hoboken for 20 years, loo
the still-smoking ruins
hotel and shook his head.

"Somebody has t
something," he said. "This
go on. People keep dyi
women and children. It's s

Others in the crow
onlookers nodded in agree
Some called for a federal in
vestigation. Others feared tha
their homes would be the next t
be consumed by fire.

22, and their infant child, Katelin, since January.

"I can't believe it," said Torres, tears streaming down his face. "I can't believe it."

Once again, fire had struck Hoboken. Once again arson is

See ARSON — Page 4.



The crowd:

'I wanted to make sure I got my children out. ... I cried. I cried for all the babies who lived next

Rash of fires ed Cross

Over the past several days, fires in Jersey City and Hoboken have claimed the lives of 16 people, left 100 families homeless and 23 injured, and they have left a financial and manpower drain on the local lchapter of the American Red Cross.

Joseph Lecowitch, director of teh local Red Cross chapter, which services Jersey City and Hoboken, said he's never seen it this bad.

"Since last Friday, we've been running co
said.

According to
cost his agency $3
housing and eme
for the 100 fa
numbered 311
adults, over the p

Most of the h
put up in tempor
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The crowd:

'I wanted to make sure I got my children out. ... I cried. I cried for all the babies who lived next door'

By CHUCK SUTTON
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—"It's getting hard to live in Hoboken. You have to live all the time with fear that you are going to get burned." Yvette Caberra, a resident of 153 14th St., said yesterday as she pondered where she would sleep that night.

"I just wanted to make sure I got my children out when I knew the builing next door was on fire. I cried. I cried for all the babies who lived next door," she added.

Across the street a group of men were huddled around a man they called Raymundo "TaTa" Torres. He was still crying. His wife, Olga Garcia, 22, died, with their 4-month-old daughter, Katalinain, in her arms.

He had been working late as a bartender and came home to a building in flames. Swollen eyed he showed his only possession, a color photo of his wife and child.

"Why does it happen to the Spanish people who are dying all the time," one young girl about 15 years old asked as she stood watching the crowd around Torres.

"It is Tierra del Fuego (land of fire)," Ruben Ortiz responded, almost in a whisper. Tall Victor Malin stood next to Torres, embracing his friend. An hour later Malin was in Spiro's bar on 14th Street, one block from the fire, initiating a drive to help raise money for the burials.

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22, and their infant child, Katelin, since January.

"I can't believe it," said Torres, tears streaming down his face. "I can't believe it."

Once again, fire had struck Hoboken. Once again arson is

See ARSON — Page 4.

Rash of fires ed Cross

Over the past several days, fires in Jersey City and Hoboken have claimed the lives of 16 people, left 100 families homeless and 23 injured, and they have left a financial and manpower drain on the local lchapter of the American Red Cross.

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Arson almost a way of life

Continued from Page 1

suspected. Once again people are dead. But the residents of this Mile Square City have seen it all before — bodies being pulled out of a charred building, mothers crying, children dying.

They have seen it all before but they have not gotten used to it. The reaction of onlookers at the fire scene yesterday ranged from shock to sorrow to anger.

Nearby, Rafael Cabrera looked at the charred remains of 153 14th St., the building next to the Pinter Hotel, which also suffered extensive damage because of the fire.

Cabrera and six relatives had lived in that building since 1976. They are now homeless. But at least they are alive.

"That fire was horrible," he said. "When I got out of the building, I heard the screams and saw the people jumping out of the windows. It was unbelievable. Thank God, we're alive."

Cabrera said that he and his family will stay with relatives in North Bergen until they can find a new home. But they will not return to Hoboken.

"I won't come back here," he said. "The rents keep getting higher. Poor people can't live here anymore. And there are the fires."

Victor Molina, who has lived in Hoboken for 20 years, looked at the still-smoking ruins of the hotel and shook his head.

"Somebody has to do something," he said. "This can't go on. People keep dying — women and children. It's sick."

Others in the crowd of onlookers nodded in agreement. Some called for a federal investigation. Others feared that their homes would be the next to be consumed by fire.

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Joseph Lecowitch, director of teh local Red Cross chapter, which services Jersey City and Hoboken, said he's never seen it this bad.

"Since last Friday, we've been running constantly," he said.

According to Lecowitch, it cost his agency $30,000 to provide housing and emergency shelter for the 100 families, which numbered 311 children and adults, over the past two weeks.

Most of the homelessss were put up in temporary shelter in local motels in Hudson County.

In addition to the financial strain, the seven full-time Red Cross workers and the 30 volunteers worked long hours — as many as 12 at one time — in providing assistance, the director said.

Although the Red Cross is a member of the United Way, and it receives funding from that agency, most of the finances to keep the local chapter in operation are through voluntary donations, he said.

Since April 17, the Red Cross responded to multiple alarms at 107-09-11 Clinton St. and 151-53 14th St., both in Hoboken.

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In Hoboken arson almost a way of life

By Thomas Rojas

Raymond Torres arrived home yesterday to find his building a smoking ruins and to witness firemen pulling out his wife, their four-month-old baby still clutched in her arms. Both were dead.

While the fire raged early yesterday morning at 151 14th St., the Pinter Hotel, in Hoboken, Torres was working in Union City. A friend called him and told him to come home right away. Torres, 29, had been living in the hotel with his wife, Olga Garcia, 22, and their infant child, Katelin, since January.

"I can't believe it," said Torres, tears streaming down his face. "I can't believe it."

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JJ 5/4/82

Activists charge arson plot

Continued from Page 1

Donatacci said that "every available" police detective is working on the case — interviewing survivors of the tragedy, questioning witnesses, and "following every lead."

Meanwhile, as demolition crews yeaterday continued to level the burned-out building, there were also these developments:

Garcia said that community groups want to know why a safety net was not used by firefighters to catch tenants who leaped out of the burning building early Friday morning.

Citizens' groups are also calling once again for a municipal smoke detector law, following the discovery that alarms had not been installed in the hotel's hallways.

Several Hoboken firefighters charge that manpower shortages left them short-handed to handle the blaze.

Regarding the safety net controversy, Fire Chief James Houn said that fire departments no longer use nets to catch persons trapped in a building building, because "they aren't safe for people jumping from a great height," and because "you need at least 10 firemen to hold the net."

But Garcia insists that safety nets are necessary, and said that a collection would be taken up to purchase the nets for the fire department if the city refuses to supply them.

"They should use any method to save lives," he said, pointing out that two persons died during the fire after leaping out of windows.

In regard to the demand for a municipal smoke detector law, Mayor Steve Cappiello said that the city cannot pass a local smoke alarm ordinance as long as there is a possibility of the city

...dents demand fire protection 5/6/82

Hoboken residents demand fire protection

By Thomas Rojas JJ Thurs 5/6/82

The Hoboken Housing Coalition is calling on Mayor Steve Cappiello to establish a comprehensive program to prevent deadly fires and improve arson investigations.

At a meeting with Cappiello, the Housing Coalition — which represents a number of community groups — called for a "new, coordinated action on the part of the administration" to stop the "deaths and dislocation due to fires."

Among those attending the meeting were Sister Norberta, a leader of the "Por La Gente" (For the People) tenants' group; Helen Manogue, chairman of the Hoboken Environment Committee, and Hugh Hothem of the League of Hoboken Homeowners.

The meeting was called to express the community's concern about Friday's fire at Pinter's Hotel, which killed 13 persons, injured nine, and left 40 persons homeless. That blaze brought to 28 the number of residents who have died as the result of suspicious fires in the past seven months.

Specifically, the Housing Coalition is calling for the following:

- The establishment of a task force — which would include the mayor, housing inspectors, the health and welfare department, and the police and fire departments — to handle fire prevention and detection.
- A citywide education program on how to prevent fires, how to report a fire, and how to get out of a burning building.

See RESIDENTS — Page 10.

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- The creation of a Fire Victim Trauma Treatment Center at St. Mary Hospital.
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They are also expected to okay the re-advertisement of bids for the demolition of the

Cops see no link between hotel fire and other blazes, but community activists say it's a plot by landlords

By Thomas Rojas JJ 5/4/82

Hoboken police see no connection between Friday's fire at the Pinter Hotel — which took the lives of 12 women and children — and the previous suspicious blazes that have struck the city since October.

Meanwhile, community leaders have scheduled a demonstration for May 15, to protest what they claim to be a conspiracy to drive the poor out of the city.

And in Jersey City, a youth charged in the arson murder of four children in last Friday night's blaze in their Pearsall Avenue home in the city's Greenville section is in the Hudson County Youth House, pending a further appearance tomorrow in juvenile court.

The youth, whose father owns the two-family house where the fire killed four children living on the upper floor, surrendered to North Bergen police Sunday while carrying a copy of Saturday's Jersey Journal containing an account of the fatal fire.

His stepmother, with whom he lives in the Jersey City Heights, accompanied him, police said.

"There is no indication that the fire was related to the previous fires," said Hoboken Police Capt. Patrick Donatacci, who is heading the investigation into the blaze. "But we're not closing the door on anything."

Related stories on Page 2.

Hudson County Prosecutor Harold Ruvoldt, who is working with Hoboken police in their investigation, has classified as arson the general-alarm blaze that also injured nine persons and left 40 others homeless.

The fire brought to 27 the number of persons who have died in suspicious fires in Hoboken in the last seven months. A total of 55 city residents have died in nine major fires since 1978.

Juan Garcia, director of CUNA (Citizens United for New Action), said that protesters will meet at 151 14th St. — the site of the blaze — on May 15 and march to the locations of the previous suspicious fires.

Garcia and other community leaders claim that the string of arson fires is a plot by city landlords to drive the poor out of Hoboken, and increase property values.

However, Donatacci said that there is little likelihood that arson-for-profit was the motive for the Pinter Hotel fire.

"That hotel was a big money-maker," he explained, adding that the building's landlords collected more than $3,000 in rents every month. "As for the 'For Sale' sign that was hanging on the building, that had been there for the last two years."

See ACTIVISTS — Page 8.

Activists charge arson plot

Continued from Page 1

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Garcia said that community groups want to know why a safety net was not used by firefighters to catch tenants who leaped out of the burning building early Friday morning.

Citizens' groups are also calling once again for a municipal smoke detector law, following the discovery that alarms had not been installed in the hotel's hallways.

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Regarding the safety net controversy, Fire Chief James Houn said that fire departments no longer use nets to catch persons trapped in a building building, because "they aren't safe for people jumping from a great height," and because "you need at least 10 firemen to hold the net."

But Garcia insists that safety nets are necessary, and said that a collection would be taken up to purchase the nets for the fire department if the city refuses to supply them.

"They should use any method to save lives," he said, pointing out that two persons died during the fire after leaping out of windows.

In regard to the demand for a municipal smoke detector law, Mayor Steve Cappiello said that the city cannot pass a local smoke alarm ordinance as long as there is a possibility of the city being held liable for damages in the event that smoke detectors aren't installed.

Although Superior Court Judge Thomas O'Brien recently ruled that Hoboken is not legally liable for damages suffered in a tenement fire three years ago, that decision is being appealed, according to Cappiello. Pending that appeal, the city will not act on a local smoke detector law.

Finally, regarding the claim that the fire department was ill-equipped to handle the blaze because of manpower shortages, Cappiello said, "we're doing the best we can with the people we have."

"I'd like to hire more firemen, but the money just isn't there," he added.

...dents demand fire protection 5/6/82

Hoboken residents demand fire protection

By Thomas Rojas JJ Plus 5/6/82

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Among those attending the meeting were Sister Norberta, a leader of the "Por La Gente" (For the People) tenants' group; Helen Manogue, chairman of the Hoboken Environment Committee, and Hugh Hothem of the League of Hoboken Homeowners.

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Specifically, the Housing Coalition is calling for the following:

- The establishment of a task force — which would include the mayor, housing inspectors, the health and welfare department, and the police and fire departments — to handle fire prevention and detection.
- A citywide education program on how to prevent fires, how to report a fire, and how to get out of a burning building.

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5/4/82

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5/6/82

...dents demand fire protection

Continued from Page 1

- An improved fire prevention program in the schools.
- Improved housing inspection by the state and frequent follow-up inspections of multi-family buildings with housing violations.
- An evaluation of fire fighting equipment to ensure that all the equipment is operable and to determine if additional equipment (such as safety nets or air bags) is needed.
- The hiring of additional arson investigators for the fire department. The coalition also suggests that the city ask neighboring municipalities for help in arson investigations.
- The creation of a Fire Victim Trauma Treatment Center at St. Mary Hospital.
- Additional information from the Red Cross on the services that the agency provides for fire victims. The coalition also asks that the Red Cross work to the one recommended by the housing coalition.

Mrs. Manogue said that the group would meet with Cappiello again "at the end of May" to discuss the progress of the proposals.

Rent control

Continued from Page 1

According to officials, this may come about because some wording in the ordinance concerning the landlord's right for a fair and reasonable return on his investment is considered "too vague.

In other business, the commissioners are expected to okay Theodore Failla's resignation from the parking authority and appoint someone to fill his unexpired term.

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Activists ask re control

Hoboken community activists, who are concerned about Friday's arson fire at Pinter's Hotel, are calling once again for a repeal of the city's rent vacancy decontrol law.

The activists claim that the vacancy decontrol law, passed last summer, gives landlords a "material incentive" for driving tenants out of a building, through "whatever means possible."

"Once the tenants are out of a building, the rents go up," said Thomas Soto, a leader of the New Jersey All People's Congress. "The arsons in Hoboken began when vacancy decontrol was passed."

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Nevertheless, com rs are needed in order to make up a quorum at a meeting.

In addition, the council is scheduled to discuss closing a section of Shore Road (also known as Frank Sinatra Drive) during weekends from May to October.

In past years, Shore Road has always been closed to traffic during the summer months to allow children to use the thoroughfare for bike-riding and other activities.

However, the Maxwell House Coffee Co. recently opened a new entrance on Shore Road, leading to speculation that the road may not be closed this summer.

Hob Pictorial 5/6/82

MAYOR CAPPIELLO TO BE HONORED AS "MAN OF DECADE"

More than 300 persons are expected to attend the Hoboken Lions Club "Charity Ball" at the Union Club, Hoboken, on Sunday, May 16, which will honor Mayor Steve Cappiello as "Man of the Decade."

According to David Marsh, president of the Lions Club, Nicholas Damiano, past president and Joseph Karafky, both local businessmen, will co-chair the event which is one of the largest affairs ever sponsored by the Mile Square City civic organization.

All proceeds from ticket sales and a special journal will go toward a variety of charities which will be selected this week and announced by the Lions Club.

Cappiello has been selected for his leadership in helping bring about what is characterized as a Hoboken Renaissance.

Serving on the citizens advisory committee are Richard T. Bozzone, Sr., Councilwoman Helen Macri, Public Safety Director James Giordano, James Monaco and Angelo Catalano.

The event will consist of a cocktail party followed by a "black tie" dinner. Dignitaries from throughout New Jersey Lions Club's will be attendance.

CUNA plans rally against arson

By CHUCK SUTTON
Staff Writer

HD 5/5/82

HOBOKEN—A community group aroused by the grim toll of recent fires here has scheduled a demonstration May 15 to protest "the attitude on the part of the city's administration which allows for these deaths to happen."

The protest is planned by Citizens United for New Action, the organization which was instrumental in organizing a mass demonstration following the deadly fires in October. At that time, an estimated 1,000 demonstrators filed past buildings where arson victims died.

Juan Garcia, CUNA's executive director, said yesterday that the arson has been a major factor in displacing Hi-

fire at 11th and Willow in 1974, and 37 of them were children. In the last four years, 54 people have died, and 28 have been children. In the last six months, we have had 27 deaths — 15 have been children.

"We can't do anything for those who have already been displaced by arson. high rent and poor housing conditions. But we can do something to maintain our people here. We won't allow things to continue."

Garcia also said that CUNA will be meeting with a representative of Ssate Attorney General Irwin Kimmelman's office late this week to discuss the impact of the Hoboken fires.

On Saturday, Garcia said, local people

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Houn added that it would take 10 men to hold the net. He said large air bags are being considered for rescue operations, but they have not yet been accepted by any major fire department or the ISO.

A housing coalition also met with Mayor Steve Cappiello, requesting that he go to the state to get help with housing inspections. Capppiello said yesterday such a program had been under way but collapsed during the transition to the administration of Gov. Thomas H. Kean.

The group also raised the question of whether safety nets could be carried on

Activists ask repeal of decontrol

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A total of 27 persons have died in suspicious fires in the city over the last seven months, including 13 persons at Pinter's Hotel.

But Hoboken police see no connection between Friday's blaze and the previous fires.

In addition, city officials have said that there is no connection between vacancy decontrol and the streak of suspicious fires.

They claim that the decontrol measure gives landlords the power to raise rents only when a tenant voluntarily vacates his apartment, not when a tenant is forced out.

Nevertheless, community leaders are expected to renew their call for a repeal of the controversial decontrol law at tonight's City Council meeting, at 7 at City Hall.

Also at the meeting, the city is expected to amend the city's zoning board of adjustment ordinance to provide for alternate members to the zoning board.

The alternate would replace members of the board who are unable to attend a particular meeting, or who must disqualify themselves from voting on a particular issue because of a possible conflict-of-interest.

There are nine members on the zoning board. Six members are needed in order to make up a quorum at a meeting.

In addition, the council is scheduled to discuss closing a section of Shore Road (also known as Frank Sinatra Drive) during weekends from May to October.

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Hot Pictorial 5/6/82

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The protest is planned by Citizens United for New Action, the organization which was instrumental in organizing a mass demonstration following the deadly fires in October. At that time, an estimated 1,000 demonstrators filed past buildings where arson victims died.

Juan Garcia, CUNA's executive director, said yesterday that the arson has been a major factor in displacing Hispanics from a city that is continuing to undergo gentrification. "We don't accuse the administration of directly being involved in the planning or setting of these fires. But they are aware of what is going on, and they have set the conditions conducive for setting these fires," he said yesterday.

Garcia added, "The city's poor housing conditions, the housing violations that are never corrected, the city still not passing the smoke detector law, all point to the city's attitude."

Garcia said the demonstration will begin at 102 12th St. at 1 p.m. and wind past the site of the fire which killed 12 persons Friday in Pinter's Hotel, which has already been demolished. The residential hotel stood at 151 14th St.

"We've have lost 65 people since the fire at 11th and Willow in 1974, and 37 of them were children. In the last four years, 54 people have died, and 28 have been children. In the last six months, we have had 27 deaths — 15 have been children.

"We can't do anything for those who have already been displaced by arson, high rent and poor housing conditions. But we can do something to maintain our people here. We won't allow things to continue."

Garcia also said that CUNA will be meeting with a representative of Ssate Attorney General Irwin Kimmelman's office late this week to discuss the impact of the Hoboken fires.

On Saturday, Garcia said, local people will join a demonstration for better housing in Jersey City. "It's all part of the same fight to survive," he said.

In other developments, Fire Chief James Houn rejected calls for including a safety net in the department's fire equipment. Some local groups have called on the fire department to have the nets available to catch people jumping to escape death by fire.

In the aftermath of the blaze Friday, there has been a flurry of criticism that the fire department was not equipped to rescue fire victims who were forced to jump to escape the flames.

Houn said in a telephone interview yesterday that the Insurance Service Organization, which sets firefighting standards by setting municipal insurance rates, found that the nets too often cause injury to the jumpers.

Houn added that it would take 10 men to hold the net. He said large air bags are being considered for rescue operations, but they have not yet been accepted by any major fire department or the ISO.

A housing coalition also met with Mayor Steve Cappiello, requesting that he go to the state to get help with housing inspections. Cappiello said yesterday such a program had been under way but collapsed during the transition to the administration of Gov. Thomas H. Kean.

The group also raised the question of whether safety nets could be carried on fire apparatus, and also asked why the fire department was not exempted from budget cuts.

Cappiello said he was willing to cooperate with the group, but yesterday would not commit himself to any specific course of action.

The speakers on behalf of the housing coalition included Helen Manogue, Sister Norberta, and the Rev. Jeffery Curtis.

Downstairs in City Hall, Detective Capt. Patrick Donatacci said yesterday that there has been no arrest of the person or persons who poured an accelerant on the stairs leading from the second to the third floor of Pinter's. Hudson County Prosecutor Harold J. Ruvoldt said Sunday that the presence of the accelerant (a flammable substance) makes the fire a definite case of arson.



Wreckers raze the remains of a hotel at 151 14th St., Hoboken, where

Accelerant used in Hoboken fire

Prosecutor says ar

By BILL ALPERT
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—The fire which killed 12 in a 14th Street hotel Friday, one of them a month-old infant, was started by arson, said Hudson County Prosecutor Harold J. Ruvoldt Jr. yesterday.

"An accelerant was used," said Ruvoldt of the blaze which broke out in the four-story Pinter's Hotel around 4:23 a.m. "We have confirmed it to be arson."

Ruvoldt said analysis of materials from the charred brick structure indicated that an accelerant — that is, a flammable substance such as gasoline — had been spilled on the stairs leading from the second to the third story. He said there was also no indication tha[illegible]nen entry into the building had been forcible.

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Photo by Bill Bayer

Wreckers raze the remains of a hotel at 151 14th St., Hoboken, where 12 died in a fire on Friday.

Accelerant used in Hoboken fire

H.D 5/3/82

Prosecutor says arson took 12 lives

By BILL ALPERT
Staff Writer

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"We are actively continuing the investigation," he said. "A number of people are in the field right now."

By yesterday afternoon, demolition crews had nearly leveled the burnt building. Anti-arson activists, such as Ron Hine of the Hoboken Housing Coalition, noted that rapid demolition also followed the city's other large fires and questioned whether such rapid demolition might hinder later investigation.

"They are destroying the evidence," said Hine, who is the full-time director of the North Flatbush Arson Research Project in Brooklyn, N.Y. "If they end up arresting someone and have not documented the cause and origin of the fire, they could get torn apart in court."

Ruvoldt said investigators had received sufficient materials to complete the investigation. The cranes were called in quickly, he said, because the tottering remnants of the building were even a danger to investigators.

Six engines and 39 firefighters battled the blaze for an hour before they quelled it. Twenty-four firefighters were on duty when the alarm sounded, and the others soon joined them. Police at the scene said that the first engines to arrive appeared to have only three men each.

Firefighters yesterday said that department reports listed the full complement as having arrived at the blaze. They said, however, that manpower attrition did leave them with "not really enough" firefighters.

"I don't think we can get much smaller," said one firefighter. The city government is considering a budget that would require layoffs of 100 employees, many from the fire, police and public works departments.

A fire department member pointed out that the

See ARSON, Page 5

The Dispatch, Hudson/Bergen Counties, N.J. Monday, May 3, 1982

Crane demolishes site of tragic fire

By BILL ALPERT
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—The jaws of the crane ripped timber from the burnt skeleton of 151 14th St., like a scavenger tearing carrion.

Across the street, the people prayed.

Yellow Caterpillar tractors crawling over the heap of rubble that was a residential hotel house before a fire killed 12 persons there Friday morning.

A crowd of nuns, ministers, neighbors, and street kids singing hymns — the sights are now familiar here.

The fire had ripped through the four-story brick structure about 4:20 a.m., sending Pinter Hotel's $80-a-week tenants crying to their windows, from which some jumped — and lived. By the time 39 Hoboken firefighters put the blaze out, it had killed six children, two teenagers and four adults from four families.

Hudson County Prosecutor Harold J. Ruvoldt Jr. said yesterday that tests showed the fire was started by an arsonist. Traces of accelerants were found going up the stairwell from the second story to the third, he said.

Twenty-seven Hoboken residents have now died in suspicious fires since October.

Demolition of the hotel began Saturday, a day after the fire, as the crew of A. Ambrosio & Sons Construction Co. of Jersey City started razing the ruined building. By noon yesterday, all that remained was about 15 feet of the back and side walls.

The ground shuddered when the container trucks pulled away with their cargoes. "Our Business is Booming," said slogans on the fenders.

Puffing cigars, the demolition crew worked rapidly on the remains of the hotel. They loaded the splintered wood and twisted cables into the casketlike containers with the easy efficiency of long experience.

The water from the hoses they used to wash down their trucks flowed with the ashes past the feet of a prayer group assembled in the Exxon station across 14th Street.

About 50 people had gathered for the prayer vigil organized by the Hoboken Housing Coalition. The coalition has held prayer vigils at the site of every fatal blaze since that of Oct. 12.

"Oh God, our help in ages past," they sang, their voices rising over the throbbing engine of the crane. "Our shelter from the stormy blast."

As the members of several Hoboken congregations bowed their heads humbly in prayer, the teeth of the crane ripped the charred skin of the hotel from the walls of the neighboring building.

The clergy began to speak, through a bullhorn. There were priests from St. Joseph's and St. Anne's, and their colleagues from St. Matthews-Trinity and St. John's Lutheran Church.

The members of the Ambrosio work crew shut off their engines and paused, waiting with gruff deference, one crew member turning over the shards with the toe of his boot, another wandering over the rubble to pick out valuable pieces of copper piping.

"More people have died as a result of arson in the last five years here than have probably died in New York City or in Jersey City," said Rev. Geoffrey Curtiss of the Church of the Holy Innocents, in a rapid rush of anger. He added: "The leadership of this city refuses to face the possibility of arson as part of the life of this city."

"The incredible fear that runs through the people of low income in this city, who are scared, scared to death as to what will happen to them."

The crowd grew. Teenagers turned off their cassette players. Old men wandered over from the doors of cafes.

"The people who bear the burden of this tragedy are the children," said Sister Norberta of St. Joseph's.

She took a cardboard box and passed it around, taking a collection for the burial of the dead members of the four families. A gust of wind blew over a whiff of the ashes.

The service ended.

The crew revved up the tractors again. A redcapped worker tossed more metal tubing onto a heap on a flatbed truck.

"Excuse me, please," shouted a policeman to the dispersing prayer group. "Would you please move to the end of the block so that the construction crew can continue working?"

The ground again shuddered under the bulldozers.

ARSON

Continued from Page 1

department had shrunk from 170 members in 1963 to about 120 now. "Each man has to pick up the slack," he said.

The day before the fire swept the building, the hotel's owner, Andrew Pinter of Jersey City, was fined $1,000 for not installing a central smoke detector system in the building's hallways.

Seven of the victims, all members of one family, will be buried in Puerto Rico. They are Anna Hilda Torres, 43, Olga Garcia, 22, Luz Delia Garcia, 18, Angel Luis Perez, 10, Jorge Alejandro Negron, 1½, Catherine Torres, 5 months, and Erica Negron, 1 month. Funeraria Rivera in North Bergen is in charge of the arrangements.

Thug blinds officer

BI AIRSTOWN (UPI)—The driver of a

Hoboken wants state anti-fire task force

By Thomas Rojas JJ 5/10/82

Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello has asked the state to appoint a special task force to conduct strict follow-up inspections of multi-family buildings in the city with life-threatening housing violations.

Cappiello said that he is calling on the state Department of Community Affairs' Bureau of Housing Inspection to establish a special team, headed by a deputy attorney general, which will concentrate on Hoboken, where suspicious fires have claimed 28 lives in the past seven months.

The mayor added that he would like the state team to concentrate on "large, multi-family buildings," where landlords have failed to install smoke detectors, or provide adequate fire escapes.

The proposed state task force would issue stiff fines to landlords who do not abate the violations, and would conduct frequent follow-up inspections to insure that the violations are corrected, it was added.

In the wake of the April 30 fire at Pinter's Hotel, which killed 13 persons, Hoboken residents have demanded increased fire protection.

Cappiello has said that plans are in the works for improving fire prevention and detection through a coordinated program involving all city agencies.

Meanwhile, Hoboken police continue to investigate the Pinter's Hotel blaze, which has been classified as arson by the Hudson County prosecutor's office.

Arson investigators said that the building's landlords had failed to provide electronic smoke detectors in the hallways, as mandated by state law.

Several local community groups have scheduled a protest march for Saturday, beginning at 1 p.m. The groups are expected to march to the sites of the recent suspicious fires in the city to protest what they claim is a lack of protection by the administration.

3-alarm blaze guts Hoboken factory

JJ 5/10/82 Monday

By DIANE CURCIO
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—A three-alarm fire gutted a bamboo products factory early Saturday and was still smoldering yesterday as officials searched the charred structure to determine the cause.

Twenty-five firefighters battled the blaze, which broke out around 4:20 a.m. Saturday at the Bamboo & Rattan Works at 901 Jefferson St. Firefighter Frank Castallano suffered a rib injury in the blaze and was treated at St. Mary Hospital.

The fire was first seen on the upper floor of the three-story brick structure, officials said. But when firefighters arrived, the building was fully engulfed in flames. The factory was equipped with a sprinkler system, but authorities have not yet determined whether the system worked.

Deputy Chief Edward Fitzsimmons yesterday said a fire watch would be kept on the building because the structure was still smoldering. Around 12:30 p.m. yesterday, a small fire flared amid the ruins, Fitzsimmons said.

The fire was so strong that people in Union City said they could smell it Saturday morning. The first alarm came in at 4:20 a.m., following by alarms at 4:24 and 4:31.

Authorities have not labeled the fire suspicious, but have launched an investigation to determine the cause and location of its origin. Police Detective Sgt. Jack Hovre was at the scene yesterday checking the sprinkler system.

Seek causes of two blazes

JJ 5/10/82

Investigators for the Jersey City Fire Prevention Bureau are still trying to determine causes for two blazes early Saturday, fire officials said.

Sources indicated that fire officials are leaning toward arson in at least one of teh blazes — at 321 First St., which was vacant at the time — because there was no electric, no water and no source of ignition in the structure.

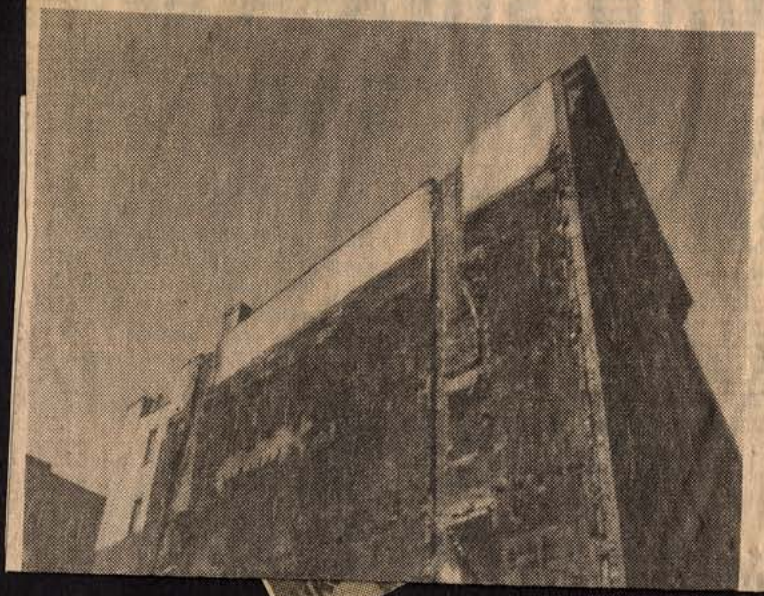
Three firefighters were trapped in the building for a time and were treated for bruises at the Jersey City Medical Center and released. A fourth fireman was injured when he fell from the structure while fighting the blaze. He was also treated and released.

Felix Colandri, the lone casualty in the second fire at 1209 Summit Ave., was listed in critical condition at Christ Hospital after he jumped from the four-story building while fleeing the flames.

A total of 16 families were left homeless by that blaze and some 50 people were given temporary shelter at the Holiday Inn in North Bergen.

Local
The Dispatch, Hudson/Bergen Counties, N.J. Wednesday

Angry Hobokenites deman



By WILLIAM BOLE
Special to The Dispatch

HOBOKEN—Rallying at the site of the April 30 rooming house fire on 14th Street here, local residents called upon the city to take specific actions aganist what they termed the "alarming rate" of suspicious fires that have "murdered 56 persons in the past four years."

Some of the 75 demonstrators had lived in the rooming house before it was gutted by the fire less than two weeks ago. Thirteen people died in that blaze. The demonstrators carried posters that read, "Stop Arson, Repeal Vacancy Decontrol Law, Approve Smoke Detector Law," and "Emergency Housing for Fire Victims."

The rally was sponsored by Citizens United for New Action, a Hoboken group founded in 1974, and the Hoboken chapter of the All People's Congress, a national group founded last year in response to the Reagan Administration's budget cuts.

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U.S. probe of fires

JJ

By Thomas Rojas

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The coalition held a press conference yesterday in front of the demolished ruins of Pinter's Hotel at 151 14th St. — where a general-alarm blaze killed 13 women and children on April 30 — to announce plans for a "March Against Fires" on Saturday.

Tom Soto of the New Jersey All People's Congress, one of the organizers of the march, said that protesters will meetg at 102 12th St. — the site of a blaze that killed 11 persons last October — at 1 p.m., and then march to the sites of other recent arson fires in order to demand increased fire protection for Hoboken residents.

At yesterday's press conference, activists made the following demands:

- A full federal investigation of the arson fires.
- A repeal of the city's rent vacancy decontrol law, which they claim gives a "material incentive" for landlords to drive out tenants "through whatever means possible."
- The immediate passage of a municipal smoke detector law.
- A city-built shelter for fire victims.
- Stiff prosecution of landlords who violate rent registration laws.
- Improved fire-fighting equipment, including safety nets and "air bags" to catch persons who leap out of burning buildings.
- Increase nighttime police patrols of buildings and neighborhoods likely to be targets of arson.

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Angry Hobokenites demand action on arson

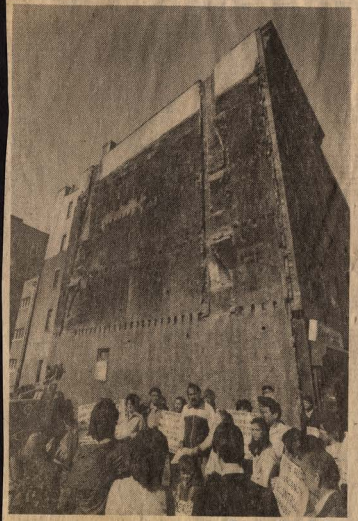


Photo by Chuck Zoeller

TOM SOTO, head of the local chapter of All People's Congress, leads demonstration at site of the fatal Pinter's Hotel fire.



By WILLIAM BOLE
Special to The Dispatch

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The rally was sponsored by Citizens United for New Action, a Hoboken group founded in 1974, and the Hoboken chapter of the All People's Congress, a national group founded last year in response to the Reagan Administration's budget cuts.

"The mayor laughs at us when we tell him we're being murdered by the fires and by the landlords," said Tom Soto, head of the Hoboken chapter of All People's Congress. The city hasn't even spoken out against the fires. They say we're setting them ourselves, that we're burning ourselves," he said.

Soto charged that the recent fires in Hoboken have been set by landlords who want to "get rid of" low-income tenants and convert the buildings into high-rent condominiums. He referred to these as "arson-for-profit" fires.

He said the city can curtail the spread of these fires by "repealing the vacancy decontrol law" passed in Hoboken in July. The ordinance allows landlords to raise rents after the buildings have been burned. Through these fires, Soto alleged, landlords have been able to start construction on condominiums.

"While a material incentive remains for the landlords to make money on fires, the fires will continue, and more people will die," Soto said.

Soto cited the recent fires that gutted the American Hotel on River Street and an apartment building on 12th Street as examples of instances in which "buildings had already been sold to be turned into condominiums."

Mayor Steve Cappiello denied the charges, saying the city has taken "decisive action" against the fire problem. He said the city has joined with state housing departments in inspecting "all of the dwelling units" in Hoboken, and that it has started a "training program in schools to alert people to fire hazards."

The mayor added that the city is also studying legislation that would make it illegal to convert buildings to condominiums after they have been "burned down." The purpose of this law would be to discourage landlords from setting fires in order to get rid of low-income tenants and construct high-rent units.

Some residents expressed fear that their buildings were also in danger of falling to arson.

"No one knows who's next, or whether we'll be living next week," said Victor Rodriguez, a member of CUNA.

Soto said the local residents also "want a strong local" ordinance requiring that all apartment-buildings install smoke alarms and detectors.

Although the state already has such a law, Soto said it has been largely ignored because "the city has no ordinance enforcing the law." He said such a law would "place the responsibility of enforcement on the city government."

He pointed out that the owner of the 14th Street rooming house had been fined $1,000 by the state for not installing a smoke alarm.

Soto continued, "The city must also provide shelter for displaced victims" of fires.

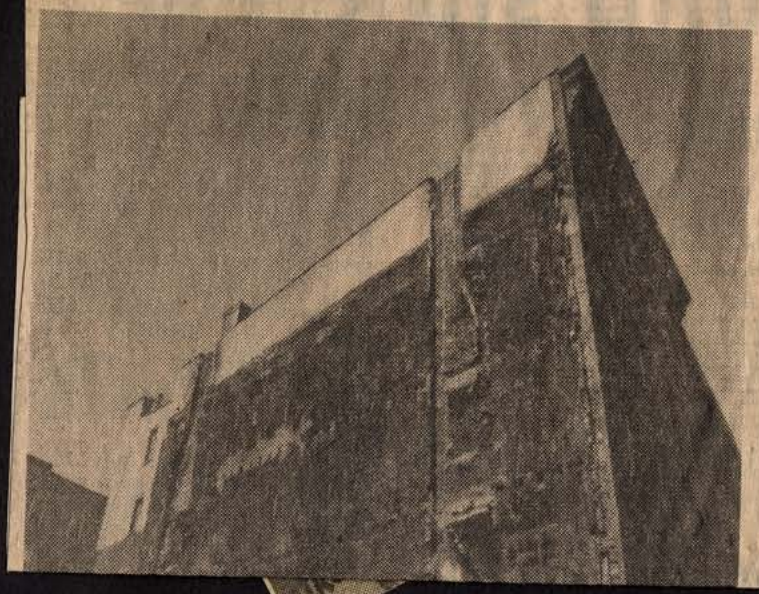
The demonstrators called upon the state and federal governments to investigate the 14th Street fire and other recent fires.

They said they believed the fires and the displacement of large numbers of Hispanics in Hoboken have been caused by Hoboken's "gentrification," in which old and run-down buildings have been converted into expensive, middle-class housing.

The demonstrators said that on Saturday at 1 p.m., they will hold a march in protest of what they see as the city's weak response to the fires. The march will start at 12th and Washington streets.

Local
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JJ 5/12/82

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- The immediate passage of a municipal smoke detector law.
- A city-built shelter for fire victims.
- Stiff prosecution of landlords who violate rent registration laws.
- Improved fire-fighting equipment, including safety nets and "air bags" to catch persons who leap out of burning buildings.
- Increase nighttime police patrols of buildings and neighborhoods likely to be targets of arson.

"The fires have created an atmosphere of fear in this city," said Soto, who claims that the rash of suspicious fires is part of a plot by landlords and "real estate interests" to drive the poor out of the city and increase property values.

"The main thing we want is a repeal of vacancy decontrol," he continued. "Once you remove the material incentive for arson-for-profit, the fires will stop."

Yesterday's rally was attended by several Hoboken residents — most of them Hispanic — who held signs that read, "Hoboken Renaissance Means Arson" and "Emergency Housing for Fire Victims."

"I'm afraid that my building will be the next to catch fire," said Zonaida Negron of 163 14th St., who lost seven relatives and friends in the Pinter's Hotel fire. "If you were Hispanic and poor in this city, wouldn't you be afraid?"

Mayor Steve Cappiello could not be reached for comment yesterday, but he has said in the past that there is no link between rent vacancy decontrol and the arson fires.

Cappiello has also said that the city cannot pass a local smoke detector law because it might be held liable for damages if alarms are not installed.

As for shelter for fire victims, the mayor has said that there is no city housing available for a shelter, adding that the Red Cross has done a good job of housing fire victims.

Regarding fire-fighting equipment, the city is reportedly considering purchasing air bags in the future.

Among the groups organizing Saturday's "March Against Fires" are the New Jersey All People's Congress, a statewide activist organization; CUNA (Citizens United for New Action), a local Hispanic youth counseling agency, and the Emergency Coalition to Save Rent Control in Hoboken.

xt arson blaze



Victor Molina of Hoboken examines one of a row of dilapidated buildings that surround Pinter's Hotel. It is his contention that if something isn't done by the city, these structures will be the next place for an arson fire.

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Molina, like many other local residents, inists tha tthe rah of arson fires in Hoboken is a plot by landlords to drive poor tenants out of the city so that the vacated buildings can be converted into high-rent condominiums.

But Cappiello said that the city's legal department is studying a proposed ordinance which would make it illegal to convert buildings to condominiums after they have been vacated by fire.

"The law department is concerned about the constitutionality of such a law," he said. "But we're tryig to put some kind of restraints on landlords."



WHO'S NEW IN HOBOKEN

By Hugh Kilmer

"A Very Good House Indeed"

Early on Friday morning, April 30, thirteen people were killed during the fire at Pinter's Hotel on Fourteenth st. and Bloomfield. About six o'clock on that morning, a friend of mine who had been interviewing survivors about possible causes of the fire, talked to me. "I couldn't get much information out of them," he said; "it wasn't a good house. There are rumors that prostitutes lived there."

Rightly or wrongly, Pinter's Hotel had a "reputation"; we need to recognize that, in order to recognize something of much greater importance. News reports spoke of women holding children out of windows, and dropping them in hopes they would be saved. I saw one of these events: a woman leanedout of her fourth floor window as far as she could, and dropped a child into the arms of a Hoboken cabby who lived in the hotel. The child was saved, with only a small cut; the woman overbalanced and fell to her death. Several other women who died in the fire died in much the same way.

her ch... but this ... which opened Mother's Day, I am deeply moved by her sacrifice.

I don't know how anyone, except one cab driver, who lived at Pinter's Hotel earned a living. I do know that the people who lived there are the kind of people who are willing to lay down their lives for their friends. A house full of people like that is a very good house indeed.

THE JERSEY JOURNAL, THURSDAY, MAY 13, 1982



Victor Molina of Hoboken examines one of a row of dilapidated buildings that surround Pinter's Hotel. It is his contention that if something isn't done by the city, these structures will be the next place for an arson fire.

Hoboken fears next arson blaze

By Thomas Rojas

In the aftermath of the recent arson fire at Pinter's Hotel in Hoboken — in which 13 women and children were killed — residents are wondering "which building will be next?"

In the past seven months, suspicious fires in (Hoboken) have claimed 28 lives, including those of 15 children. And the residents of the Mile-Square City will tell you that they are afraid.

"The people here can't sleep at night because they are afraid that their building may be next," says Victor Molina, who has lived in Hoboken for 20 years. "If you had children, wouldn't you be afraid?"

Molina, who helped collect more than $1,300 for families left homeless by the Pinter's Hotel blaze, believes that any one of a row of dilapidated apartment buildings next to the burned-out hotel on 14th Street could be a likely target for arson.

"All of those buildings are firetraps," he says. "They are filled with dangerous violations, but the city won't do anything about them."

Molina yesterday took a Jersey Journal reporter inside one building local residents are particularly concerned about: a five-story tenement at 161 14th St.

Molina pointed out that there are no smoke dectators inside the apartments or in the hallways, and indicated garbage cans that are kept inside the building where they can easily catch fire.

But tenants of the building — which is owned by the Severino Real Esate Co. — are especially disturbed about the basement, which is filled with wood, mattresses, discarded furniture, even dead birds.

"If anyone throws a match into that basement, the whole building will go up," said Molina, who added that he had notified Mayor Steve Cappiello of the violations, but has received no response.

However, Cappiello said yesterday that he is aware of the problems, and has referred the matter to the city's housing department.

The mayor added that the tenants of the building have been granted a permit to put a garbage container out on the street in order to clean the basement out.

He also reiterated that the city is working with state authorities in an intensified effort to inspect all multiple dwelling units in the city.

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"A Very Good House Indeed"

Early on Friday morning, April 30, thirteen people were killed during the fire at Pinter's Hotel on Fourteenth st. and Bloomfield. About six o'clock on that morning, a friend of mine who had been interviewing survivors about possible causes of the fire, talked to me. "I couldn't get much information out of them," he said; "it wasn't a good house. There are rumors that prostitutes lived there."

Rightly or wrongly, Pinter's Hotel had a "reputation"; we need to recognize that, in order to recognize something of much greater importance. News reports spoke of women holding children out of windows, and dropping them in hopes they would be saved. I saw one of these events: a woman leanedout of her fourth floor window as far as she could, and dropped a child into the arms of a Hoboken cabby who lived in the hotel. The child was saved, with only a small cut; the woman overbalanced and fell to her death. Several other women who died in the fire died in much the same way.

her ch... but this ... which opened ... Mother's Day, I am deeply moved by her sacrifice.

I don't know how anyone, except one cab driver, who lived at Pinter's Hotel earned a living. I do know that the people who lived there are the kind of people who are willing to lay down their lives for their friends. A house full of people like that is a very good house indeed.

JERSEY JOURNAL, TUESDAY, MAY 11, 1982

Hoboken looks to purchase of 'air bags'

Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello says that the city is considering purchasing "air bags" to catch persons who leap out of burning buildings.

Meanwhile, local community groups have called a press conference for today to discuss plans for a protest march on Saturday to demand increased fire protection.

In the wake of the [illegible] scheduled the press conference today at 151 14th St., the site of the Pinter's Hotel blaze.

The protestors are scheduled to march Saturday to the sites of the recent suspicious fires in the city — which have claimed 28 lives in the past seven months — beginning at 1 p.m.

In a related development, fire officials are investigating the fire that gutted the Bamboo & Rarran Works' factory at 901 Jefferson St. early Saturday morning.

Fire officials have not yet determined a cause for the blaze, in which one firefighter suffered a rib injury. No other injuries were reported.

Fire victims' shelter sought

5/14/82

Hoboken residents are once again calling on the city to open a shelter for fire victims.

The recent general-alarm blaze at Pinter's Hotel — which killed 13 persons and left 40 others homeless — has residents renewing a demand that city officials provide emergency housing for persons left homeless by fire.

Leo Genese, chairman of the citizens' advisory council of the Community Development Agency, has been calling for a shelter for fire victims since the Oct. 24 blaze at 102 12th St. that killed 11 persons and left dozens homeless.

"The Pinter's Hotel fire just points out the need for a shelter all over again," he said. "The city has to take responsibility for people who are burned out of their homes."

Meanwhile, Hoboken activists who are organizing a "March Against Fires" to take place tomorrow are also demanding emergency housing. "If the city can't protect the people from fires, they should at least provide shelter for the victims," said Tom Soto, one of the organizers of the march, which is scheduled to begin at 1 p.m. at the site of the 12th Street fire.

However, most city officials, including Mayor Steve Cappiello, insist that there is no housing in the city available for a fire shelter. They also contend that the Red Cross is doing a good job of finding temporary shelter for those left homeless by fire.

"I would like to see a shelter opened, but there just isn't any housing available," said Councilman Thomas Kennedy. "We discussed using the Multi-Service Center, but it doesn't have the necessary facilities. For the time being, we have to hope that the Red Cross continues to do the job."

Rent law may be thrown out

5/11/82

Superior Court Judge Thomas S. O'Brien is expected to declare the North Bergen rent leveling ordinance unconstitutional today.

The judge was on the brink on making such a declaration last month, but decided to hear further arguments by the township attorney, Dennis Oury, today.

O'Brien had said that, based on a recent appellate court decision, North Bergen's 1973 ordinance appeared unconstitutional because it lacked standards for granting landlords hardship rent boosts.

Harvey Douglen, representing the owners of the 400-unit Woodcliff Management Corp., and Joseph Pojanowski, representing the Samos and Exton firms, having a total of 130 tenants, argued the owners have been tied up in litigation over rent leveling for some five years by an unconstitutional ordinance.

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In the wake of the April 30 fire at Pinter's Hotel — which claimed 13 lives — Hoboken residents have criticized the fire department for not using safety nets to catch persons who leaped out of the building's windows.

Two persons died after jumping out of windows.

But Fire Chief James Houn said that the fire department has not used safety nets in years because they are unsafe.

"The nets aren't reliable when people jump from a great height," he explained. "Also, you need to have at least 10 men holding the net."

But Cappiello said that the city is considering using inflatable "air bags" to catch persons trapped in burning buildings, as an alternative to safety nets.

"I've asked Chief Houn to talk to New York fire officials about the pros and cons of air bags," he said. "We're looking into the possibility of purchasing air bags in the future."

Meanwhile, several activist groups — including CUNA (Citizens United for New Action), a Hispanic youth counseling group, and the New Jersey All People's Congress — have scheduled the press conference today at 151 14th St., the site of the Pinter's Hotel blaze.

The protestors are scheduled to march Saturday to the sites of the recent suspicious fires in the city — which have claimed 28 lives in the past seven months — beginning at 1 p.m.

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Anti-arson march gets small turnout

5/17/82

Small turnout dampens anti-arson march

JJ 5/n/82

By Randolph Diamond

The sun was shining in Hoboken on Saturday as many residents enjoyed the beautiful spring weather. The fancy new restaurants were full as were the many boutiques that have opened recently.

But, for the disappointing turnout of 200 persons — most of them Puerto Rican — who marched that afternoon against a recent rash of fatal fires that have been occurring in the city, it was not a happy day.

For them Saturday was a day of mourning and anger as they visited a number of sites where suspicious fires have occurred — fires that have killed 67 persons since 1974 and 27 persons since last October alone.

They shouted "Decent Housing Yes, Landlord Arson No" as they marched the mile-and-a-half.

Two of the buildings they passed, where only a few months ago fire victims were being carried out in body bags, are now being made into condominiums.

Later, at a rally at city hall, march organizers denounced Mayor Steve Cappiello, City Council members, bankers, real estate brokers and landlords and accused them all of joining in a conspiracy to first try to drive Hispanics out of Hoboken and, failing to do that voluntarily — "burning them to death."

"It's a conspiracy," march leader Tom Soto, of the New Jersey All People's Congress told the crowd outside the front steps of city hall.

"The landlords are burning their tenants to death. The real estate and the banking community are contributing to it by encouraging the renovation of tenements that now house Hispanics for rich New Yorkers. The mayor and the city ad-

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Saturday's march started at the site of the fire at 102 12th St. and proceeded to the vacant lot that only three weeks ago was the site of Pinter's Hotel.

Hoboken Groups Join to Fight Arson

NY Times 5/16/82

By ROBERT DIAMOND

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THREE community groups have called on Mayor Steve Cappiello to establish a comprehensive program to stop the wave of arson that has left 27 persons dead and many more homeless here since last October.

Among other things, the groups want more-frequent inspections of multiple-family dwellings.

The Mayor met with representatives of the three groups and said that he had asked the state's Division of Housing to set up a special task force to inspect multiple dwellings for violations. Currently, the state pays Hoboken $10 per unit, up to a maximum of $150, for every multiple dwelling inspected once every five years.

Mayor Cappiello said that the city did not have the staff to inspect the houses more frequently than the required once in five years, unless there was a specific complaint, but that a special state task force could speed up the process.

William Connelly, director of the Division of Housing, said that the state was concerned about the situation and would do what it could to help the Mayor.

One possibility, Mr. Connelly said, would be for the state to pay Hoboken inspectors to make the special surveys. The fees for such special inspections could enable the municipality to hire more inspectors, he asserted.

The three community groups are the Hoboken Environmental Committee, Por La Gente (For the People) and the League of Hoboken Home Owners. Por La Gente is made up of mostly low- and moderate-income tenants, and the two other groups consist mostly of homeowners and landlords of small dwellings.

The three groups have a total active membership of about 300.

Although Por La Gente has been at odds with the other groups, Helen Manogue, chairman of the environmental committee, noted that all three groups had participated in a housing forum late last year and realized that they had many goals in common, including stopping the arson.

Thirteen persons died as a result of a fire in the Hotel Pinter on April 30. Investigators said that arson was the cause of the blaze, but there have been no arrests to date. Nor have there been any arrests in three previous fatal and suspicious fires since last October.

The groups have proposed the following, in addition to more frequent inspections of multiple dwellings:

¶Improving school fire-prevention programs.

¶Establishing a task force — it would include the Mayor, housing inspectors, the Health and Welfare, Police and Fire Departments — to handle fire prevention and detection.

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Mrs. Manogue said that the task force proposal was similar to a program implemented in New Haven in the late 1970's, and that it would lead to a coordinated approach to fire prevention.

The task force, she said, could identify which buildings were susceptible to arson and act to avert it.

Mayor Cappiello said that he planned to go to New Haven and talk with officials there to see how its task force was working out.

The Mayor said that Hoboken already was carrying out some of the groups' proposals, such as improving school fire-prevention programs. He added that he had asked the city's Fire Prevention officer, James Monaco, to expand the current program and start a new one in local day-care centers.

Officials of St. Mary Hospital and the Red Cross, Mr. Cappiello said, will meet soon to discuss the groups' recommendations.

The Mayor said that he would present a proposal he made last year to create a position calling for a fireman to perform patrol duty, the way police officers do. Mr. Cappiello said that the proposal had been strongly opposed by both police and fire unions, as well as some members of the City Council.

As for the use of fire nets, Fire Chief James Houn said he was opposed to their use because they offered a false sense of security. Chief Houn said it took at least eight men to hold a net and that even then they were not safe.

Sister Norberta of St. Joseph's Church, the head of Por La Gente, said that the coalition of the three groups was important.

"Previously, I had met with the Mayor, making some of the same proposals the coalition did," she said, "but the Mayor didn't seem as interested as he did at our recent meetings."

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See ANTI-ARSON — Page 31.

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Among other things, the groups want more-frequent inspections of multiple-family dwellings.

Mayor met with representatives of the three groups and said that he asked the state's Division of Housing to set up a special task force to help make the city's multiple-dwelling inspections more frequent.

Currently, the state pays Hoboken $10 per unit, up to a maximum of $10,000, every five years for every multiple dwelling inspection. Cappiello said that the city would have the state inspect the buildings more frequently — at least once in five years, unless there is a specific complaint, but that a special state task force could speed up the process.

William Connelly, director of the Division of Housing, said that the state was concerned about the situation and would do what it could to help the Mayor.

Connelly said, however, that he would be for the state to pay Hoboken inspectors to make the special surveys. The fees for such special inspections could enable the municipality to hire more inspectors, he asserted.

The three community groups are the Hoboken Environmental Committee, Por La Gente (For the People) and the League of Hoboken Homeowners. Por La Gente is made up of mostly low- and moderate-income residents, and the two other groups consist mostly of homeowners and landlords of small dwellings.

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Although Por La Gente has been at odds with the other groups, Helen Mack, chairman of the environmental committee, noted that all three groups had participated in a housing forum last September and realized that they had many goals in common, including holding the arson-related deaths of thirteen persons died as a result of a fire in the Hotel Pinter on April 30. Investigators said that arson was the cause of the blaze, but there have been no arrests to date. Nor have there been any arrests in three previous fatal and suspicious fires since last October.

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The task force, she said, could identify which buildings were susceptible to arson and act to avert it.

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As for the use of fire nets, Fire Chief James Hoban said he was opposed to them because they offered a false sense of security. Chief Hoban said he took at least one city official out to hold a net and that even then they were not safe.

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SLA
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DRES

from Page 1

ministration know what's going on but they don't do anything."

While Cappiello was not in attendance at the rally and was unavailable for comment he has labeled previous similar remarks by Soto as "ludicrous" and said the police are trying hard to solve the suspicious fires.

The organizers of Saturday's march, sponsored by Citizens United for New Action, a Hoboken Hispanic organization; the Emergency Coalition to Save Rent Control in Hoboken and the New Jersey All People's Congress, had hoped to attract a larger crowd than the 400 persons who turned out for a similar march and rally last November, shortly after the fire at the tenement at 102 12th St. which killed 11 persons.

But they only got half the crowd of last time and, by the time of the rally had ended at 5 p.m., there were only 50 persons left.

Juan Garcia, the executive director of CUNA, told the crowd he was disappointed in the small turnout, especially given the fact that Hispanics made up at least one-third of Hoboken's 42,000 residents and it was Hispanics who were the people being killed in the fires and displaced by the gentrification that has hit the city.

"We're not going to stop the fires until we get together and form a coalition in fighting this," Garcia said. "We have to all join together."

Notably absent from Saturday's rally were members of Por La Gente (For the People) a group led by Sister Norberta of St. Joseph's Church, which has been active in fighting for tenants' rights and was one of the prime groups involved in the prior march and demonstration in November.

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Instant Zingo: 18 35, 43, 65, 79, 93.

Saturday's winners

Pick-It — 695 Box — $43
Straight — $259 Pairs — $25.50

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5/17/82

Hoboken Groups Join to Fight Arson

NY Times 5/16/82

By ROBERT DIAMOND

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ARSON

HD 5/17/82

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March US to arson

By C

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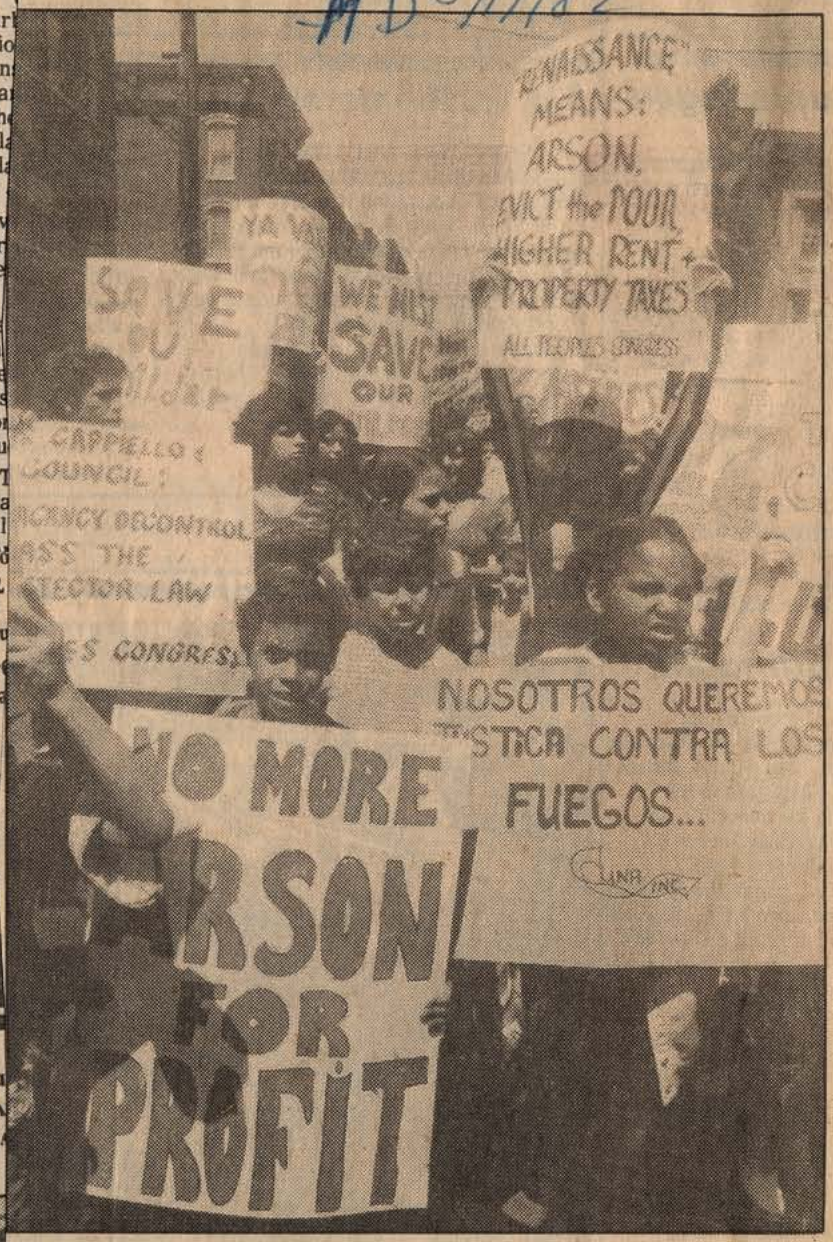
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Protesters march

ARSON

HD 5/17/82

HD 5/17/82

Marchers ask US to probe arson fires

By CHUCK SUTTON
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—More than 400 angry residents took to the streets here Saturday to call for a federal investigation into the rash of arson fires that have left 28 people dead in seven months.

The four-hour demonstration was called in response to the latest arson on April 30 in which 13 people, all Hispanic, died in a fire to the Pinter Hotel, organizers said. The hotel, located at 151 14th St., has since been demolished.

Juan Garcia, executive director of Citizens United for New Action and one of the protest's organizers, reminded demonstrators that the hotel victims only were the latest in almost eight years of arson-related deaths in the city. He said that since 1974, 66 residents have lost their lives in arson fires.

"If the 66 people who have died in arson fires here had been rich people, the National Guard would have been in Hoboken by now," Garcia told demonstrators rallying at City Hall after march through the streets of the city.

He called for the city to be declared a national disaster and for the federal government to investigate the fires.

Garcia also said he is awaiting a response from the state Attorney General's Office on his request that the office investigate the fires. He said he met with representatives a week ago to request the probe.

"Everytime there is a fire, the building is closed down and it is converted into a condominium," Garcia said.

The protestors indirectly linked the arson wave with a city housing rehabilitation program — "Hoboken Renaissance" — under which 25 percent of the city's housing stock, mostly brownstones and row houses, has been upgraded.

See ARSON, Page 6



Protesters march along Willow Street in Hoboken Saturday to protest the rash of arsons that have plagued the city.



Marchers carry a coffin bearing the number 66 to show how many people have been killed in Hoboken fires.

While the program has earned this urban waterfront community a national reputation, most of the demonstrators denounced the renaissance as "gentrification." The poor, the elderly and minorities are displaced by mostly white, middle-class families, they said.

"Hoboken Renaissance means evictions, displacement, higher property taxes, arson and higher rents," a demonstrator's sign read.

Meanwhile, Rafael Jimenez, a Jersey City resident and a spokesman for Jersey City Fair Housing Federation, told demonstrators that his organization has requested a congressional hearing into arson in Hudson County.

Tom Soto, representing the local branch of All People's Congress, called for a national campaign, similar to the one prompted by the murders of 28 blacks in Atlanta, to bring attention to Hoboken's climbing death toll.

Also marching in the demonstration were representatives of various Jersey City tenants' organizations, Organization, whose fight with its landlord and with Jersey City's Mayor Gerald McCann has attracted attention.

Of the 28 fire deaths since Oct. 18, 1981, 18 of the victims have been children.

Close to a third of the participants in Saturday's demonstration were children — many of whom knew the children who died in the fires.

"Save the Children," read one sign, reminiscent of the murders of 28 blacks in Atlanta that rocked the country a year ago. Many of the demonstrators said that, as in Atlanta, fear in Hoboken has seized the community.

"I could be next," 9-year-old Rosana Hernandez said in an interview as she rode in the lead car bearing a black wooden coffin with the words, "66 victims" painted on the side.

"At night, before I go to bed, I put my clothes next to the window," she said. "I have trouble getting to sleep at night and I go to school late the next day. I think about the fires, and I just don't want to die."

Economy

5 or 20% interest seen

WASHINGTON (UPI)—Economist Milton Friedman, unofficial adviser to President Reagan, believes long-term rates will be 5 percent or 20 percent — but nowhere in between. Although Reagan

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Cappiello opposes tax abatement moratorium plan

Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello says that he opposes the proposed moratorium on tax abatements for property developers in the city.

"Tax abatements induce business and industry to come into the city," said Cappiello. "If we don't grant tax abatements, how are we going to provide housing for the poor and the elderly? What do I say to the people who come to me looking for apartments?"

A resolution, proposed by City Councilman Nunzio Malfetti, which would have imposed a one-year moratorium on tax abatements, was defeated by the council last week by a 7-2 vote.

The resolution sought to "declare a public policy banning all future tax abatements on all property in the city for one year after the completion and utilization of the revaluation of all property." Section 8 housing for the poor and elderly would have been exempt from the moratorium.

Although the resolution was defeated, Councilman E. Norman Wilson, who supported the Malfetti proposal, said that he is drafting a revised version of the resolution, which would require that the city establish a strict policy for granting abatements in the future, and mandate that a public hearing be held before any abatements are granted.

"I just want to make sure that the council is extremely careful in granting abatements in the future," said Wilson. "The city is in a position now where we can get more favorable terms on abatements. We can be more selective in the future."

But Cappiello insists that tax abatements are "the only way" to persuade developers to come to the city.

"It's good business," said the mayor. "I'd like to know what the alternatives are."

Hoboken board turns down rent boost bid

6/17/82

After some 20 hours of public hearings, the Hoboken Rent Leveling and Stabilization Board has rejected an application for a hardship rent increase at buildings at 819-821 Washington St.

By a vote of 5-to-1, the rent board voted Tuesday night to deny the application — by the landlords, J & E Associates, Limited — to raise rents in the buildings by about $70. Board member Michael Flanagan cast the only dissenting vote.

According to Thalia Doukas, a spokeswoman for the tenants, Tuesday's special meeting was the third hearing on the rent increase application.

She aid that the tenants were first notified of the planned increase last March 1. Rents in the buildings range from $250 to $500 per month.

Ms. Doukas reported that tenants were "very pleased and surprised" at the rent board's decision, but they are afraid that the landlords will not correct existing violations in the buildings, in reprisal for the rejection of the increase application.

She explained that the buildings have "several outstanding violations," including exposed copper heating pipes and faulty electrical wiring. She said that the tenants would report the violations if they are not abated.

The buildings' landlords could not be reached for comment.

NY Times
6/5/82

As Hoboken Gentrifies, Fires Kill

By Jean Forest

Hoboken, 10 minutes by PATH train from Manhattan, is an old town, only one square mile in size. But Hoboken has caught its neighbor's spreading disease, gentrification — the upgrading of neighborhoods — and is beginning to show not only the benefits of urban renewal but also several frightening symptoms. The most insidious is suspected arson.

Gentrification in Manhattan and Hoboken had its idealistic beginnings in the 1960's as predominantly young people moved into tenements and, through their combined efforts and those of neighborhood developers and landlords, renovated the properties.

In Manhattan, landlords and developers took over such areas as the Upper West Side, Chelsea and SoHo, and turned the original ideal into the fast-profit turnover we know too well. They have driven away not only young people but also working- and middle-class families, artists, members of minorities and the elderly from these areas and into worse tenements and less-accessible neighborhoods.

Hoboken has become something of a refuge for working people, students, struggling artists, the elderly and certain minority members for whom living in Manhattan is out of the question. The town is a quaint mixture of railroad flats, brownstones and tenements interspersed with small businesses and light industry.

Hoboken had its beginnings as one of several reception areas for the waves of 19th and 20th century immigrants. Of late, word has gotten around that it is relatively safe, an easy commute, and that its housing is still within reach of working people's income. This reputation has been both a blessing and a curse. Some desirable renovation and population growth has occurred, but gentrification blight is beginning to strangle both the tenants and small homeowners who cannot afford Manhattan-style rents and the property taxes that come with the need for increased municipal services.

In the last seven months, five fires have taken the lives of 28 people — [illegible] children — in Hoboken. Fire inspectors say that they suspect arson in all five. All the buildings involved were designated to be sold as condominiums. Why arson? Toward what end? No one has yet been arrested for arson.

On May 15, in the second protest march within a year, the town's tenants' organizations called for a Federal investigation of the fires. A representative of the tenants' groups said at that time that if the victims had been rich people, the National Guard would have been called to Hoboken.

The second characteristic of gentrification is failure to enforce laws protecting tenants' rights. Mayor Steve Cappiello and the City Council at first resisted enacting a smoke-detector law and, after doing so, have not effectively enforced it. They readily passed a vacancy-decontrol law that amounts to an incentive for landlords to try to get rid of old tenants and charge rents that sometimes are 33 percent higher to new tenants. The press has reported that more than 40 percent of Hoboken's landlords are violating this law by not registering their base rents, as the law requires. Many landlords are skyrocketing rents far beyond the 25 percent limit. Not one landlord has been prosecuted.

Along with the apparent arson and lack of law enforcement, the third effect of gentrification is renovation of supposedly substandard dwellings, which is creating havoc for many longtime Hoboken residents. At a recent City Council meeting, an elderly, crippled man presented a document he had just received from his landlord stating that his bathroom and kitchen were to be renovated and that the heating and hot water systems in the building would be replaced. This would result in his rent's being raised from $175 to $550 a month. Guess who probably will be evicted?

Tenants' groups are of the opinion that gentrification and the so-called Hoboken renaissance are an economic conspiracy involving big landlords, real estate agencies and contractors and New York City banks.

Obviously, some changes are inevitable in Hoboken. It is prime real estate. However, the existing community of working people, the elderly and the poor need to be protected from arbitrary, callous actions of those who stand to profit from changes but accept no responsibility for the effects of such changes on the lives of community residents. Hoboken residents have become pawns in a contagious game called greed that does not necessarily bring progress.

Consider the consequences of gentrification in crime-ridden Manhattan, which is almost devoid of the stable influences of working- and middle-class families and is polarized between extreme wealth and poverty.

Jean Forest is a part-time writer who has lived in Hoboken for eight months. She works in Manhattan for Non-Traditional Employment for Women, a New York City program to place women in [illegible] jobs.

THURSDAY, JUNE 24, 1982

HOBOKEN PICTORIAL

Protests safety measures

DEAR EDITOR:

We, the Residents of Hoboken, wish to voice a Protest to the Mayor and the City Council regarding the dangerous conditions that Tenants are forced to live in. After many disastrous and tragic fires where heavy loss of life has occurred, a state of constant fear is prevalent throughout the City. We Protest mostly the lack of safety measres which are allowed to exist in multiple dwellings and some smaller dwellings. We point out there where the loss of lives took place there was an inadequate amount of exits for vacating these apartments by way of fire escapes. The people were trapped without any way of escape. We find that there were no fire alarm systems in operation in each disastrous fire. We find that building safety codes are not sufficiently adequate and they should be revised to give greater protection to lives and property. We also arrived at the consensus opinion by the residents, that the building fire safety inspections are insufficient and not cohesive enough. We Protest this because it is a matter of life and death to the Tenants and Residents of Hoboken. We Protest the fact that these conditions are allowed to continue, to exist year ater year and we Petition the Mayor and the City Council to remedy this situation. We Protest Budget Cuts for Firemen and Policemen. Had we had more firefighters at this last fire and previous fires, more people could have been saved and more property protected. We suggest that if there are not enough fire inspectors or building inspectors that a Code of Volunteers should be installed with the power to make reports to the City Departments and to have power to write summones where repeated violations continue to exist.

Sister Norberta
Por La Gente
for the People
St. Francis Parish

Tenants group wants break for elderly

By Thomas Rojas JJ 6/7/82

A Hoboken tenants' group is circulating a petition calling on city officials to amend the local rent control law in order to exempt senior citizens from rent increases for capital improvements or substantial rehabilitation.

"Por La Gente" (For the People), the tenants' organization headed by Sister Norberta of St. Francis Church, is calling on Mayor Steve Cappiello and the City Council to amend the city's controversial rent control ordinance, which was passed last summer.

The proposed amendment would exempt persons 62 or older who "have federally-taxable income at or below the poverty level as determined by the U.S. Census Bureau" from rent increases for capital improvements or substantial rehabilitation.

The substantial rehabilitation clause enables landlords to renovate their property at a cost equal to 100 percent of the market value of the building, then pass the cost increase on to the tenants in the form of higher rents.

Cappiello said that he has received a request for the rent law amendment from the tenants' group. He added that the proposed amendment has been turned over to the city's legal department for study.

Wilson vs. mayor

JJ 6/3/82

Hoboken 'anarchy'

By CHUCK SUTTON
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—The next mayoral election is at least a year off, but Mayor Steve Cappiello says charges from Councilman E. Norman Wilson that he can no longer govern the city effectively are just campaign rhetoric.

In a tersely worded press statement released Wednesday, Wilson said the way Cappiello is running the city is not "leadership but anarchy" because of "a slow-motion, no-motion administration which is floundering from crisis to crisis while burdening its citizens with one of the biggest tax rates in the state."

Although his term is not up until 1985, Cappiello has stated on several occasions that he probably will step down next year and seek higher office.

Wilson's statement charged the mayor with not exercising leadership to protect residents from displacement, saying, "The renaissance in Hoboken, while rejuvenating the physical part of the city, is on the other hand killing the soul by large-scale displacement of its citizens."

Wilson asserts that Cappiello had a $28 tax increase in 1981 (it was actually $26, to the present $132 per $1,000 of assessed valuation) and again in 1982 submitted a budget calling for another $28 increase "indicating neither he or his administrators made any attempts to trim expenditures, plan for the future or increase productivity."

Cappiello has stated his willingness to work with the City Council to keep the budget down, and the actual increase in the tax rate is expected to be less than $28.

Wilson's diatribe continued, "The school system is in turmoil, with patronage, nepotism and cronyism running rampant. Faculty morale is low and politics takes priority over education."

The mayor dismissed the charges yesterday, saying, "He wrote to you (the press), not to me. He must be kicking off his 1983 campaign."

Cappiello added, "I will be very happy to sit down with Norman Wilson and try to effectuate the best remedies for any defencies that he cites."

"He has to give us some specifices here. There's nothing here to back up his charges," the mayor said.

Hoboken tenants group petitioning to get elderly a break under rent law

JJ 6/7/82

By Thomas Rojas

A Hoboken tenants' group is circulating a petition calling on city officials to amend the local rent control law in order to exempt senior citizens from rent increases for capital improvements or substantial rehabilitation.

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Year moratorium to be sought on tax abatements

Hoboken Councilman Nunzio Malfetti plans to re-introduce to the City Council a resolution imposing a one-year moratorium on tax abatements for property developers.

Malfetti, who introduced a tax abatement moratorium resolution earlier this month, only to see it defeated by a 7-to-2 vote, said that he will reintroduce the controversial measure at the next regular council meeting, scheduled for July 21.

The resolution seeks to ban all future tax abatements on all city property for one year after the completion of the current revaluation. Section 8 housing for the poor and elderly would be exempt from the proposed moratorium.

Malfetti contends that it is time for city officials and residents to evaluate whether the city can continue to grant tax abatements and burden taxpayers.

"How many more city employees are we going to lose and how much more can our services be cut before people will say 'enough?' " he argued. "How many homeowners are going to be forced to leave?"

Malfetti cited statistics from the city's Department of Revenue and Finance which show that the amount the city raised from local taxation in 1981 was $14.4 million. Of that amount, only 6 percent was scheduled to be collected from tax-abated properties, and only 3 percent was actually collected as of last August.

"The small homeowner is being saddled with a heavy tax burden to subsidize tax abatements," he said.

Meanwhile, Councilman E. Norman Wilson, who supported the Malfetti resolution, said he is preparing a revised resolution which would require that the city adopt a strict policy for granting tax abatements in the future, and mandate that a public hearing be held before the granting of an abatement.

Mayor Steve Cappiello has said that he opposes any moratorium or restrictions on the granting of tax abatements, arguing that abatements are needed.

Wants 4 barred from voting on $2M bond issue

Hoboken Councilman Nunzio Malfetti charges that four council members should not be eligible to vote on a $2 million school bond issue on Monday because the four are affiliated with the Board of Education.

Malfetti said that he may ask the state attorney general to probe the matter if the council members—Walter Cramer, Anthony Romano, Louis Francone and Thomas Kennedy—are allowed to vote on the bond issue.

Malfetti contends that Cramer, who is the school board's business manager, Romano, the assistant secretary and Francone, head custodian, should be disqualified from voting because of a possible conflict of interest. He said that Kennedy should be disqualified because his wife works for the board in a clerical position.

Malfetti said that any vote taken on the bond issue may be illegal because of the possible conflict of interest. He said he may call on the attorney general to investigate the legality of the matter.

However, Council President Cramer said that he sees no conflict of interest in the bond issue vote.

"If there were a conflict of interest and the city's legal department asked me to abstain from voting, I would abstain," he said. "But I see no conflict of interest. We are not going to vote on school board policy, but on a bond issue, which is the council's responsibility."

Kennedy also denied any conflict of interest, explaining that his wife took a test for the clerical post, was judged qualified for the job, and is being paid on a per diem basis, without any benefits. He added that she is being terminated next Wednesday, because of budget cuts.

In addition, Kennedy charged that Malfetti, should be disqualified from voting on the final 1982 municipal budget because his son works for the county, and the budget includes county monies.

The $2 million bond issue is slated for repairs in city schools. A vote on the bond issue is scheduled for 12 p.m. Monday at a special council meeting.

Arson-for-profit war flares to new peaks

J.J 7/9/82

By Sylvia Porter

Arson has now become one of the fastest-growing, if not the fastest-growing crime in our nation — with the informed estimate that close to a quarter of all U.S. fires originate in arson. The consensus is that there are around 175,000 arson fires a year in this country, claiming 500 to 1,000 lives plus 10,000 to 15,000 injuries and mounting to a direct cost of up to $4 billion!

When indirect losses such as lost jobs and income, medical and social expenses and lost taxes are added, the yearly total hits $15 billion.

"Of course, not all arson fires are set for profit," says Christopher Pitt, spokesman for the American Institute for Property and Liability Underwriters. "There's arson for revenue, arson as a byproduct of religious or racial bigotry, arson to eliminate competition, arson by pyromaniacs and other mentally unbalanced people, arson by children looking for excitement and teenagers looking for trouble. There is even arson by firemen."

Disgruntled former employees set fires to get even with the company, criminals set fires to cover other crimes.

No matter what the reason, the insurance industry has quietly begun an all-out fight on one kind of arson — arson-for-profit.

Any seasoned mystery-story reader will recognize the reason at once: There is a clear motive in arson-for-profit; it can be found with enough digging and it can be linked directly or indirectly to one person — the one making the claim.

Let's pretend you're an investigator of a fire suspected as arson. You'd look at once for the many telltale signs. For instance:

Witnesses may say that the fire spread very rapidly, or that the fire seemed to start in several places at once.

Traces of gasoline or other incendiary substances may be detected or patterns of charring or scorching may be abnormal. The way the fire spread through the building may indicate arson (a fire burning horizontally instead of vertically would be suspicious).

There are red flags, too, to alert an investigator to arson-for-profit. Some conditions that are potentially dangerous:

- When a building has 65 percent or more of its rental units unoccupied.
- When a damaged building hasn't been repaired after a reasonable lapse of time, or when an insured owner has stated that he doesn't intend to repair it.
- When repairs have not been started on a fire-damaged building 60 days after the loss has been settled.
- When a building is unoccupied for 60 days (except under certain conditions of construction or repair).
- When a building is in danger of collapse.
- When a building has been ordered to be vacated or demolished, or been declared unsafe.
- When fixed items are being removed from the building without reasonable explanation for the removal.
- When there is reasonable belief that the property is endangered and not protected from possible arson-for-profit.
- When property taxes have not been paid on a property for a year.

This listing may alert, I regret, a would-be arsonist to warning signals to avoid but the fact is that one or more of the above nine conditions have historically been found present in buildings torched for profit.

In recent years, over 43 states have passed some sort of arson reporting-immunity law in order to permit insurance companies and public officials to share pertinent information without risking civil suits by the insured for invasion of privacy. The Alliance of American Insurers has drafted a model law to push all states into laws that conform. There also is the Property Insurance Loss Register, in operation for several years, acting as a computerized central registry of fire loss claims information. PILR (pronounced "pillar") is a major weapon in the fight of the insurance industry against arson-for-profit.

Under PILR, information is fed into a computer which conducts four basic information searches: first, for any duplicate insurance on the property where the fire occurred; second, for the loss history of the insured person or organization; third, for the insured's previous addresses; fourth, for combinations of names on the claim report that would demand additional investigation or reinforce suspicions of arson.

To keep suspicions and investigations a secret from the individual claiming insurance, the insurance industry is fighting on still another front. The National Association of Insurance Commissioners has drafted a Model Unfair Claims Settlement Practices Regulation that would relieve the companies from meeting a set time deadline for payment on property believed arson-prone. This would eliminate the danger that during the period payment is being withheld because of a suspected threat of arson, the threat may have been turned into reality and an insured building may be just a pile of ashes and debris.

Hoboken rent rule revision stalled again for night meeting

A rent leveling ordinance has been completed and will finally be introduced before the Hoboken City Council, but that action won't happen tomorrow night.

At last night's caucus of the council, it was decided to delay the introduction of the ordinance until the July 1 reorganization meeting with the public hearing set for the night meeting two weeks later.

That decision was made because the council didn't want to schedule the public hearing for a day meeting and because "there's just too much stuff going on at the reorganization meeting," according to Councilman Robert Ranieri.

At the caucus meeting, the councilmen decided to amend the proposed ordinance to require that all buildings with rental units, from two-families on up, register with the city, listing the name of the landlord, the name of the tenant, the number of rooms in the rental unit, and the present rent and amount and date of the last increase.

That registration will be required within 90 days of the final approval of the ordinance and will be required on an annual basis.

Ranieri said that provision was brought in by the council to balance the vacancy decontrol provision, which allows the landlord to raise the rent for any apartment that the previous tenant voluntarily left to whatever amount the market will bear. Once a rent has been set, the apartment is again covered by the rent control ordinance.

The council also delayed the introduction of an ar-

Hoboken forms arson task force

Wednesday, July 21, 1982

By CHUCK SUTTON
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—"Warning, this building is under surveillance for arson."

That's the notice some landlords and tenants of buildings that have been identified as possible arson targets will be receiving when the city's new arson task force goes into action.

In a meeting Thursday, Mayor Steve Cappiello agreed with the Hoboken Housing Coalition to set up a special force that will help identify arson-prone properties and place such buildings under surveillance.

"I am willing to cooperate with them in setting up the task force," Cappiello said yesterday.

"It will be a major's task force that will be a research, review, and policy-making group," explained Helen Manogue, a member of the coalition that has been meeting with Cappiello on the city's arson problem.

"Under his (Cappiello) leadership, the broad-based task force can spend time every few weeks identifying buildings and even prevent some potential arson incidents," added the Rev. Geoffrey Curtiss, minister at the Episcopal Church of the Holy Innocents and a member of the coalition.

The new task force, according to Manogue and Curtiss, is different from the present law enforcement agencies investigating the wave of arsons that has cursed the city for 3½ years. Investigative officials involved include representatives of the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the state police, the Hudson County Prosecutor's Office, and the Hoboken police and fire departments.

The new task force would include Police Chief George Crimmins, Fire Chief James Houn, Chief

See ARSON, Page 10

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The Rev. Geoffrey Curtiss
He's tackling a tough foe

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See ARSON, Page 10

ARSON

Continued from Page 1

Building Inspector Michael Curcio, a representative of the prosecutor's office, and private citizens.

The group would be responsible for setting up criteria to determine which buildings are likely arson targets, including the number of fires they have experienced or the number of violations. Such building's owners and tenants would then be notified that the structure is considered suspect and has been placed under surveillance by the police and fire departments.

On the very night of Cappiello's meeting with the coalition, the building at 153 First St. was used an example during the meeting of what would constitute a suspect building that city officials would have under surveillance.

Thursday night, the building had a serious fire that has since been classified as arson.

According to Cappiello, the arson task force will have its first meeting on Aug. 19 with John Lynch, a representative of the Federal Emergency Management Agency who has responsibilities for combatting arson.

Tenement burns an hour after inspection, beating insurance deadline by three hours

THE JERSEY JOURNAL. FRIDAY. JULY 16, 1982

By Peter LaVilla

A four-story brick building in Hoboken went up in smoke last night just one hour after police followed up on complaints from residents and the business sector on First Street about the condition of the structure. The building's fire insurance expired at midnight, according to city officials.

It was feared that several tenants were trapped inside the burning building but that proved false some two hours later when the fire was brought under control.

However, a firefighter was overcome by smoke and exhaustion, and a fire victim fainted on the street.

Fireman Felix Santiago is in the intensive care unit at St. Mary Hospital, a spokesman said. He is listed in stable condition.

Maria Ramos fainted because she feared her 14-year-old son James was trapped inside the building. She was treated at the hospital and released, the spokesman added.

See TENEMENT — Page 6B.



Photo by Jeff Huntley

Maria Ramos, who feared her son was trapped in a burning building at 153 First St., Hoboken, is helped by the Hoboken Volunteer Ambulance Corps after she fainted on the street. Her son was not trapped.

Union City candidates find it's all relative

There are only two candidates running for the vacant seat on the Union City Board of Commissioners in the city's special Aug. 4 election — and both are having some problems getting their messages across to the public because of their names.

Mrs. Rhyta Musto, the wife of the former mayor, is being opposed by Joseph Bonacci Sr., a member of the Parking Authority, for the seat vacated by former Mayor William V. Musto.

For Mrs. Musto, the problem is that because she is the former mayor's wife many potential voters believe that if she is elected she will become the mayor. They would vote for her to become a commissioner but not to become mayor.

"We've had to explain often that Mrs. Musto isn't running for mayor but for a seat on the board of commissioners," related one campaign worker. "Then, we have to go into explaining how the five commissioners are the ones who decide who will be given the title of mayor, and that Mrs. Musto doesn't want to be mayor, and that the mayor will be one of the other four commissioners. Probably Commissioner (Robert C.) Botti. But it's like word association. They hear Musto and almost automatically think mayor."

See RELATIVITY — Page 6B.

Jersey City plans to eliminate its rules which call for overtime for municipal

would accomplish is elimination of the following laws now contained in the city code: having all

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THE JERSEY JOURNAL, FRIDAY, JULY 16, 1982

Tenement burns after inspection

Continued from Page 1

Carlos Aversa, owner of Aversa's Market, located at 155 First St., met with mayor Steve Cappiello earlier in the week to register a complaint against the owner of 153 First St. where the fire occurred.

Following that meeting, Cappiello issued a memo to the police department to begin a daily check of the building and to log the inspection.

Last night's inspection by city detectives was at 8:16, according to Police Chief George Crimmins. The fire was reported at 9:20 p.m., he said.

According to the mayor and area residents, 153 First St. has been struck by numerous fires over the past two weeks.

In fact, according to Cappiello, the second and third floors were sealed up because they posed a safety threat to the tenants and the building. The city ordered the two floors by boarded up, he said.

The building is owned by Michael Spano, an out-of-town landlord.

According to Cappiello, the fire insurance on the building expired at midnight.

Spano could not be reached for comment.

"We saw strange people going in and out of the building all the time," Aversa told the mayor and city officials last night. "We knew something was going to happen in that building but we just couldn't do anything about it. We were watching helplessly."

Other tenants in the area complained about the condition of the building and the effect it had on the community.

Fire Chief James Houn said the fire is being investigated by the Fire Prevention Bureau. He did not rule out arson.

"The thing that bothers me is that we were here Tuesday inspecting the building because of the rash of fires," said Houn. "We actually did a pre-fire testing. It's a good thing we did. It helped us to contain the fire and evacuate tenants.

He said 12 children lived on the top floor of the building and six on the first floor. That, he said, was a major concern in the pre-fire test. Some of the firefighters worked on their own time to help with the test, he said.

Although parts of the city were without water because of a watermain break in Jersey City and Secaucus, Houn said there was enough water to combat the fire. Hoboken gets its water supply from Jersey City.

"We managed to get 35 pounds of pressure per square inch from the hydrants and that was enough to help us contain and control the fire," Houn said. "Normally, we get 60 pounds of pressure. Had the fire occurred in another section of the city where there is no water, that could have been another story."

The local chapter of the American Red Cross was at the scene aiding the four families left homeless by the fire.

Also lending assistance were the Jersey City and Union City fire departments. Those two fire agencies were on hand to cover the city had there been a fire sounded elsewhere in Hoboken.

HOBOKEN PICTORIAL
THURSDAY, JULY 22, 1982

Arson Squad Meets

Hoboken's new arson task force will hold its first meeting August 19.

Mayor Steve Cappiello and the Hoboken Housing Coalition had earlier agreed to setting up an arson task force.

The unit, spawned at a meeting between Cappiello and the coalition, would include Police Chief George Crimmins, Fire Chief James Houn, Chief Building Inspector Michael Curcio, a representative of the prosecutors office and a local citizen.

Primarily, it would be the group's responsibility to determine which structures would be likely arson targets.

Following their evaluation, building owners and tenats would be notified that their building was suspect and is under surveillance by the police and fire departments.

Cappiello following the meeting with the coalition, more than a week ago, announced his full cooperation explaining that it would, unlike other arson units, be a mayor's task foce which will search and review and set as a policy making group.

Hoboken housing outlook called 'less promising'

JERSEY JOURNAL, FRIDAY, JULY 23, 1982

The annual report of the Hoboken Housing Authority said the outlook for the coming year will be "less promising" because of federal budget cuts, and that there is a "great need for middle-income housing in Hoboken."

But the report also spoke about the authority's accomplishments in public housing and urban renewal, and the benefit to the city of the federally-funded work.

"Hoboken has a good contract with Uncle Sam," said the report, signed by Andrew H. Scherer, authority chairman.

The printed report was dated May 13 and a cover letter was dated May 28, but The Jersey Journal only received the report yesterday.

Dominic Gallo, executive director of the authority, explained that the former executive director retired June 1 and the report was held until a new permanent executive director took over. Gallo started work this past Monday as executive director.

The report said President Reagan, Congress and the Department of Housing and Urban Development are cutting public housing authority assistance deeper than they cut it last year, but actually more assistance to the various housing programs is needed.

The report said there is a "dire need' for more senior-citizen housing.

"There is still a great need for middle-income housing in Hoboken," the report said. "A definite shortage exists for housing available for young married couples and also senior citizens who can afford to pay middle-income rents.

"This condition could be eliminated by a concentrated building program to meet such needs. Brownstone houses are in demand and can easily be altered to make attractive apartments for those who do have funds.

"A great number of buildings have been rehabilitated by private companies and landlords, but we still have a long way to go to achieve our goals of safe, decent, fireproof and sanitary housing for all of our low and moderate-income families in Hoboken."

The authority has six projects, the Andrew Jackson Gardens with 598 families; Christopher Columbus Gardens with 97 units; Harrison Gardens with 208 units, and three senior-citizen projects, Monroe ardens with 125 units, Adams Gardens with 125 units and Fox Hill Gardens with 200 units.

They represent a total of $26.16 million in construction costs and modernization investments, and after the 40-year bonds are paid off they will become city property. By that time early in the next century they will be worth $78 million, the annual report said.

The authority said because of better health care facilities and housing, "our senior-citizen residents have increased their life span for at least another five years."

The report said the authority has paid $962,149.97 to the city in lieu of taxes since its inception.

It also saved the city "inestimable" thousands by its fireproof buildings and availability of community rooms for social programs, the report said. The authority cited its Section 8 program of rental assistance for 195 units and its application for such assistance for 80 more units.

HD 7/28/82

TV show to probe arson in Hoboken

By CHUCK SUTTON
Staff Writer

Hoboken will not be the same city after Aug. 7.

At 10:30 that night, WPIX-TV will air a special documentry "Hell ... Heaven ... Hoboken," a graphic and critical examination of the city's arson and tenant displacement problems on the program "Focus: New Jersey."

The half-hour documentary is the first major look by a television station at what host John Hamilton calls "a Janus-faced symbol for what's happening in urban America." One segment of the program casts a shadow of doubt over the credibility of the city's rent leveling and stabilization board.

In another segment, the Hoboken Police Department and the Hudson County Sheriff's Office are summoned by a developer to prevent the film crew, Hamilton, and attorney Ramon Irrizary from speaking to one of his clients, the only tenant in the building under rehabilitation.

The documentary also takes a look at charges of arson for profit and charges that the arsons are tied to evictions and housing problems for the city's poor. "It's amazing that this story hasn't become more of a national story," Hamilton said yesterday before a special screening of the film.

Hamilton and his son Jay helped produce the documentary that includes scenes from three major fires and interviews with local officials, community leaders, tenants and federal investigators.

"I consider this an extremely important story. I've followed urban affairs. Hoboken really symbolizes what is going on in the urban centers in the country. Hoboken, because of the deaths, because of its size, makes the story more dramatic," Hamilton said.

The film uses the World War I slogan of Gen. John J. "Black Jack" Pershing as he rallied American troops to finish the war and return to their port of embarkation this way: "Hell, Heaven, or Hoboken by Christmas." The program contrasts the city's attractive neighborhoods with an alarming total of 250 fires a year.

During the program, civic activist Juan Garcia. Irrizary, an unidentified Hispanic male and others charge that unscrupulous landlords are seeking to evict poor tenants so they can spruce up their properties and get higher rents, or convert to condominiums.

In one scene, a tenant tells of the rent leveling board increasing her rent from $195 to $350 a month after a landlord claimed he spent $51,000 in renovating the building. Terse questioning of the board's attorney, Barry Sarkisian, by Hamilton produces some questions about the validity of the actions of the rent leveling board.

Denying the allegations of arson for profit are Mayor Steve Cappiello and Police Detective Patrick Donatacci. Graphic in the film are scenes from a 1979 fire that took 21 lives, the 1981 Park Avenue and Washington Street fires that took 15 lives, and footage of the Pinter Hotel fire in the spring which resulted in the loss of 13 lives.

The documentary will be repeated at 11 a.m. Monday, Aug. 9, and again the following day.

Hoboken "Under Fire" In TV Film

The City which has run the amut in being filmed from its waterfront to a side street tatoo parlor, is now going to be the star of a T.V. flick called, "Hell, Heaven and Hoboken", no less.

To be aired on Channel 11 at 10:30 p.m., August 7th, the documentary will probe arson and alleged arson for profit in the city. It has been charged that in many cities around the nation, including New York City, arson is being committed to evict tenants so that condominiums or other business ventures can replace them.

Allegations of profit for arson are denied by Mayor Cappiello and Police Detective Patrick Donatacci in the film which also shows scenes from two fires which took 36 lives in a two-year span. The film will be shown again at 11 a.m. Monday, Aug. 9 and again the next day.

Present Art Show

Hoboken Pictorial 7/29/82

The Hoboken Art Gallery, 60 Newark St., announces the opening of its new exhibit, "Two Realists," representing painters Bill Adams and Tim Heins.

Opening reception will be held Thursday, Aug. 5, from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. Regular gallery hours are Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Arson task force will meet

J.J July 29 - 82

By Thomas Rojas

Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello's newly-formed "arson task force" is scheduled to hold its first two meetings next month.

Cappiello announced that the task force, which will develop a comprehensive program for arson control in the city, will meet on Aug. 19, at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

The first meeting will be a general briefing for local and state police and fire officials and representatives of the county prosecutor's office, while the second meeting will involve only members of the task force team.

Cappiello will chair the task force, which will include the heads of the local police, fire and housing departments, Public Safety Director James Giordano, Hudson County Prosecutor Harold Rvoldt, an insurance industry representative, and a member of the federal Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Bureau.

In addition, the state Commissioner of Insurance has been invited to attend the meetings. Insurance claims are widely believed to be one of the primary motives for arson.

"The immediate aim of the task force is to identify areas in the city that are potential arson targets and take steps to prevent future arsons," said Cappiello. The group's ultimate goal, he added, is to implement a comprehensive arson prevention and investigation program in the city.

In the wake of the recent rash of arson fires in Hoboken — which has claimed 28 lives in the past 10 months — local citizens' groups have called on Cappiello to take steps to stop the fires.

In addition to setting up the task force, Cappiello has begun an "arson alert" program, which involves more frequent police surveillance of possible arson targets, improved housing inspections, and intensified fire prevention programs in the schools.

In addition, the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Bureau, a branch of the U.S. Treasury Depar
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Suspect named in arson try

H D 8/2/82

By WILFREDO FERNANDEZ
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—Police say they have a suspect, whom they intend to question this morning, in the attempted arson during the weekend of a 20-family apartment building.

Fire reports indicate that a liquid accelerant was poured over the second- and third-floor stairwells of the five-story brick building at 715 Clinton St. around 4:30 a.m. Saturday.

Officials say two plastic gallon containers were found on the scene. One was full of an undetermined liquid, while the other was empty.

"You could say that the containers had something in it that belonged to the gasoline family, but we're not sure exactly what it is," one fire official said.

Crumpled newspapers and scorch marks were found on the stairs, leading officials to speculate the papers were lit, but the liquid would not ignite.

The building was evacuated as a safety precaution, but police said there were no flames. The stairwells were cleaned with detergent and the residents permitted to re-enter.

Ramon Alonzo, 43, the superintendent of the building, told police an unidentified man knocked on his door Saturday morning around 10:13 a.m. and asked if he was the super. When Alonzo answered, "Yes," the man said, "Be careful. Chiringo said he tried starting a fire here but failed and will try again," according to police reports.

'Be careful. Chiringo said he tried starting a fire here but failed and will try again'

The man turned around and left the building, police said.

Alonzo was able to give police a description of Chiringo, whom he said he knew from the neighborhood, and gave a Clinton Street work address where they could reach him.

Police said they searched for Chiringo on Saturday but were unable to locate him.

Hoboken fires topic of television special

S.J. 8/2/82

"Hell, Heaven, Hoboken," an examination of the arson problem in Hoboken, will be aired on Saturday at 10:30 p.m. on WPIX-TV, Channel 11.

The half-hour program, hosted by John Hamilton, will explore the recent rash of arson fires in the city through interviews with local officials and communicity leaders.

The documentary also confronts the charges that the arsons are a plot by landlords and developers to drive the poor out of the city. Those charges are denied in the program by Mayor Steve Cappiello and Police Capt. Patrick Donatacci.

The show also includes graphic scenes of recent fires in the city, including the April 30 blaze at Pinter's Hotel that claimed 13 lives. A total of 56 persons have died in arson-related fires in Hoboken since 1978.

The documentary will be repeated at 11 a.m. on Aug. 9, and at the same time the following day.

ARSON

The scars are slow to heal

This is the first of a three-part series on the effects, causes and some possible solutions to Hoboken's wave of arson.

HP 8/2/82

By CHUCK SUTTON
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—Alan Hernandez, a cute 5-year-old boy, should be dreaming about baseball and Disneyland. Instead, he has nightmares about dying in a tenement fire.

Rosana Hernandez, 9, lives in the same neighborhood. "I could be next," she laments. "I think about the fires, and I just don't want to die." The fear experienced by these two unrelated children is not the result of an overactive imagination; it is a real fear experinced by many in this city's poor and Hispanic neighborhoods.

There have been 28 arson deaths here since September, and most of the victims have been children. Not since the case of the missing and murdered boys of Atlanta have the children of a community been so preoccupied with a fear of dying at the hands of an unknown culprit, a fear so foreboding that it has compelled many children and their families to alter the pattern of their lives.

Each night, Rosana packs her clothes and places them on the window by the fire escape. It is a ritual she has performed nightly since the Oct. 25 fire that claimed the lives of 11 people at 102 12th St.

Said the young girl: "Sometimes, I have trouble getting to sleep at night. I think about dying in a fire. I put the blanket on top of me, and I just look out the window until I fall asleep."

Alan also has a nightly ritual. He sees to it that his mother puts out her clothes, then checks to make sure his window will open in the event he has to flee from a fire.

There are other children in this city who do not put their clothes out at night. Lois Toledo, 12, a student at Wallace School where many of the victims studied, is one of them.

She said she is so frightened that she sleeps in her clothes with a pair of sneakers and a jacket next to her bed.

The Rev. Geoffrey Curtiss, minister of the Episcopal Church of the Holy Innocents here, said he has talked to some familes who are

See ARSON, Page 7



Photo by Bill Bayer

ALAN HERNANDEZ sleeps with his window open every night in case Hoboken's arson curse strikes him next.

ARSON

Continued from Page 1

sending their children to sleep in the homes of relatives in the already rehabilitated sections of the city, which are considered "safe." Areas are considered "safe" if they are not designated for rehabilitation or condominimun conversion, the two categories where most fires have occurred.

Curtiss said he is also aware of families who have someone staying up every night as a watchman who would alert other families in the event of a predawn fire, the kind that have come to be known as a killer fire.

Hoboken is a community of 42,000 residents, about half of them said to be Puerto Rican.

The city is only one square mile in area and very densely populated. When there is an arson fire, it is not really far across town, but only blocks away. It is difficult for residents not to have been directly or indirectly touched by the fires — difficult to find someone who does not know a fire victim, to find a child who has not lost a schoolmate to the raging flames.

Toledo knew Maria Colon, who died several days after jumping from a window of the Pinter Hotel on 14th Street when it burned April 30.

Rosana Hernandez had a fire in her building just a year ago, and her aunt, Hilda, survived the Pinter Hotel fire.

Carmen Tirado, 14, is a survivor of the same hotel fire, her second such escape. In 1979, a fire blamed on arson forced her family to vacate a $250-a-month apartment at 1040 Willow Ave. The building has since been rehabilitated, and rents are now $500 a month.

What has added to their fear is what these young people feel is the reason for the fires. As young Toledo puts it, "They're after the Puerto Ricans. They want us to get out of Hoboken."

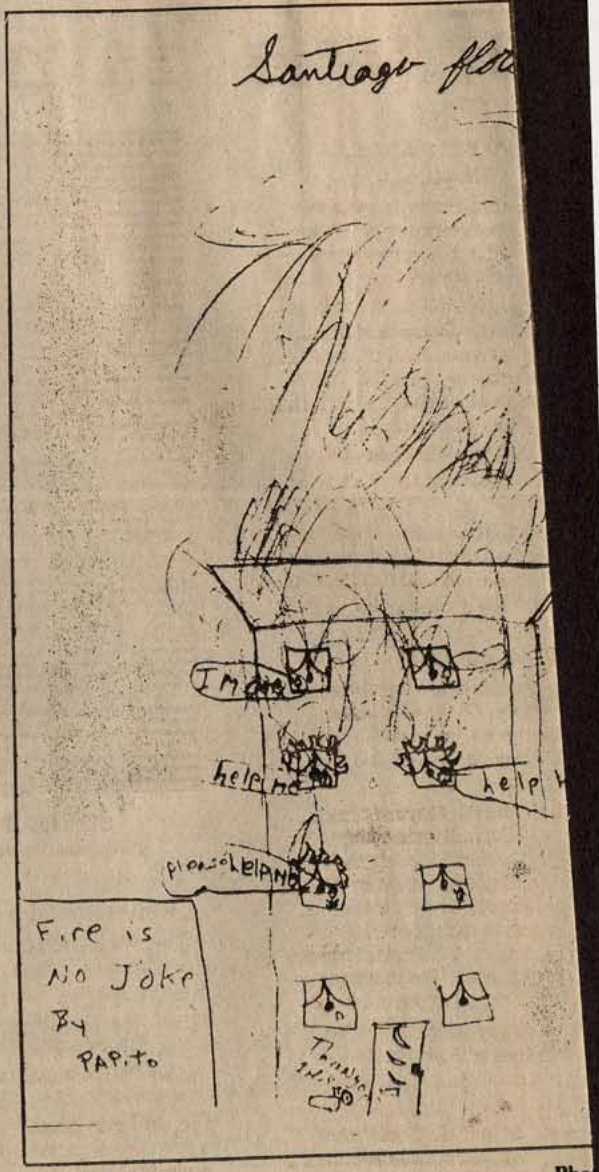
While the majority of the fire victims have been Hispanic, the fear is not limited to the Hispanic community.

"Truthfully, I couldn't live here. I'd be afraid that my apartment house would be next. It scares me. Every time you look around, there is a fire. It's usually the older buildings in the rundown section of town. You'll never see one of the modern buildings burn," observed Cheryl Costello, a Bayonne resident who has worked for six years at her family's Carvel Ice Cream store on Washington Street here.

Before the Pinter Hotel fire, fear had already had its impact on the children here. But it was that fire that left a lasting nightmare. Mothers dropped their children from third-floor windows into the arms of bystanders below as the fiery orange flames licked the life from their victims as they stood in the windows. Their neighbors watched helplessly.

The morning of that fire, Yvette Caberra, a young mother who lived next door to the Pinter Hotel, capsulized the feelings that many who watched that fire expressed. "I cried. I cried for all the babies who lived next door."

She then added, "It's getting harder to live in Hoboken. You have to live all the time with fear that you are going to get burned."



Pho

A CHILD'S DRAWING reflects the fear of that haunts Hoboken's children.

Photo

jacket next to her bed.

The Rev. Geoffrey Curtiss, minister of the Episcopal Church of the Holy Innocents here, said he has talked to some familes who are

See ARSON, Page 7

ALAN HERNANDEZ sleeps with his window open every nig Hoboken's arson curse strikes him next.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 4, 1982

Five fire captains charg with blocking arson che

By James Kopchains

Five Hoboken fire captains have been served with departmental charges for reportedly refusing to allow their men to make routine checks on potential arson sites in the city.

Meanwhile, an arson investigator for the city has described Saturday's arson attempt at a Clinton Street apartment building as revenge and done to deliberately kill persons in the apartment.

The departmental charges stem from a Friday night incident in which eight men of the firehous[e] at Eighth and Clinton streets refused an order from Deputy Chief John Sheehan to inspect a 20-family apartment building at 715 Clinton St. Later that night the same building was almost burned in an arson attempt.

Public Safety Director James Giordano said the official report of the incident showed fire captains at houses throughout the city failing to obey Sheehan's order. Since the captains had reportedly directly refused the order, Giordano said he was

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JJ TUESDAY, AUGUST 3, 1982

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JJ 8/3/82

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Ramon Alonzo, 43, the building superintendent, has reportedly said that an unidentified man had come to his apartment about 6 hours after the incident, saying that a neighborhood resident, known as "Chiringo," would try to burn the building again.

The building was saved from fire because the accelerant did not ignite, despite attempts by the arsonist to light it with crumpled newspapers, police said. Two plastic gallon containers were found near the stairwells.

Residents of the building were evacuated by police as a safety precaution. Later the stairwells were scrubbed and the residents allowed to return.

Detective Sgt. James Behrens, of the Hoboken police, said yesterday he questioned Alonzo and "Chiringo," but has arrested nobody in the case.

Giordano said the building, though it had never had an arson attempted there, was considered a prime site in the city's Arson Alert program.

Five fire captains charged with blocking arson checks

By James Kopchains

Five Hoboken fire captains have been served with departmental charges for reportedly refusing to allow their men to make routine checks on potential arson sites in the city.

Meanwhile, an arson investigator for the city has described Saturday's arson attempt at a Clinton Street apartment building as revenge and done to deliberately kill persons in the apartment.

The departmental charges stem from a Friday night incident in which eight men of the firehouse at Eighth and Clinton streets refused an order from Deputy Chief John Sheehan to inspect a 20-family apartment building at 715 Clinton St. Later that night the same building was almost burned in an arson attempt.

Public Safety Director James Giordano said the official report of the incident showed fire captains at houses throughout the city failing to obey Sheehan's order. Since the captains had reportedly directly refused the order, Giordano said he was holding them responsible.

The five captains charged yesterday were Eugene Failla, Gerard Peterson, Robert Moore, John Lisa and Michael Wladich. Each of the men was charged with violating the direct orders of a superior, according to Thomas Calligy, of the city's law department.

The attempted arson took place at about 4:30 a.m. Saturday. Earlier that evening, Sheehan had reportedly told the companies to make routine checks during the night at various buildings to check on any suspected arson, according to Giordano.

See CHARGE — Page 26.

Charge fire captains blocked arson checks

Continued from Page 1

In a report prepared for him by Fire Chief James Houn on the situation, Giordano said the captains refused to make the inspections, explaining it was "police work" and "too dangerous" for firefighters.

Giordano said the men also had consulted with union leaders who agreed with the action. The city's fire union leaders have been out of town this past week attending a convention and could not be reached for comment.

Saturday's attempted arson apparently was the work of someone bent on revenge against a resident of the building, according to Detective Sgt. John Behrens.

Behrens said the stairwell on the second and third floor of the building had been doused with a liquid accelerant. It was then attempted to set it afire with lighted newspapers.

Behrens said Monday that trying to start a fire on the stairs was definitely a sign that the arsonist was trying to kill someone, explaining that fires set for insurance payments are normally set at the top floors of the building in order to cause damage yet provide escape for the residents.

Meanwhile, tenants at the building are continuing their 24-hour arson watch on the building's steps to prevent any more attempts. April Seidenzahl, one of the organizers of the watch, said response has been good so far with as many as three residents sitting on the steps at any time of day or night.

Tenants held another meeting last night on the house's front steps, their second consecutive evening meeting. The tenants have already agreed to collect money to place a fireproof metal door in order to strengthen security there.

JJ TUESDAY, AUGUST 3, 1982

Did firefighters refuse to inspect arson target?

By James Kopchains

Eight Hoboken firefighters may be facing departmental and criminal charges after reportedly refusing to inspect a Clinton Street apartment the night an arsonist tried to set the building on fire.

Public Safety Director James Giordano said he is checking reports that men at the Eighth Street firehouse refused an order from Deputy Chief John Sheehan to check 715-717 Clinton St. as part of the city's "Arson Alert" program.

Giordano said he is still waiting for a full report from Fire Chief James Houn on the incident, which reportedly occurred Saturday night. He would not name the individuals who reportedly refused the order.

"If they refused the order I'm definitely going to file charges against the men involved," Giordano said. "In fact, I may even forward all information to the Hudson County prosecutor's office for them to take action."

Meanwhile, tenants at the building met last night at the structure to discuss ways of keeping an "arson vigil" to guard the building until the landlord has a more secure door installed in buildings 715-717, according to April Seidenzahl, a spokeswoman for the tenants.

The tenants met with John Ross, the landlord, and agreed to pay for the installation of a door that operates electrically through a buzzer system, she said.

Ross said it could cost upwards of $200 for each building to install an electrically-powered

See DID — Page 4.

Did firefighters refuse to inspect arson target?

JJ 8/3/82

Continued from Page 1

door. If the tenants agree on that system, and they come up with the money, Ross said he could have a contractor install the system in about a week.

In the meantime, Ms. Seidenzahl said the tenants will guard their buildings around the clock until the new system is installed. She also said a window watch will continue. Anyone who looks suspicious in the buildings will be reported to the police, she added.

Giordano would not comment on the reasons why the men reportedly refused to make the check. Reports from fire department sources said that the men refused, saying it was "police work" and not covered in their contract.

Fire union officials were at a union convention and could not be reached for comment.

Police said the 20-family apartment building was definitely the target of an arsonist. A liquid accelerant was poured over the second-and third-floor stairwells there sometime around 4:30 a.m. Saturday.

Ramon Alonzo, 43, the building superintendent, has reportedly said that an unidentified man had come to his apartment about 6 hours after the incident, saying that a neighborhood resident, known as "Chiringo," would try to burn the building again.

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ARSON

Poor see villainy in arsons

This is the second of a three-part series on the effects, causes and some possible solutions to Hoboken's wave of arson. The final segment will deal with action taken by the city.

By CHUCK SUTTON
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—For the poor, often Hispanic residents here, every time a "for sale" sign goes up on their building, they become terrified that their home will be the next structure to go up in flames.

Many of the city's poor believe that arson is being used to force them out so that speculators, real estate brokers, condominium developers and investment consortiums can rehabilitate the buildings and attract wealthier tenants. They are bitter because they feel outside real estate interests (many based in New York), and residents of that city want to push them out of their homes here.

They say what is going on in Hoboken is going on in other urban cities in country: Baltimore, Boston and Chicago. They say what has made Hoboken feel the pain so acutely is that it is a small community that has become a literal gold mine for real estate interests.

But investors have a different view. The fires, they charge, are being set by tenants as a way of getting back at landlords, or settling lovers' quarrels.

"It has to do with vendetta and high passions," said one prominent real estate broker who asked not to be identified. "I just can't believe it could be arson for profit."

While much of the public and media attention has focused on the more sensational fires in the last 10 months, the suspicious blazes started when Hoboken's redevelopment movement began in the early 1970s. Called the "Renaissance," one-family Victorian homes were first converted to apartment complexes and now are being converted into condominiums.

See ARSON, Page 17

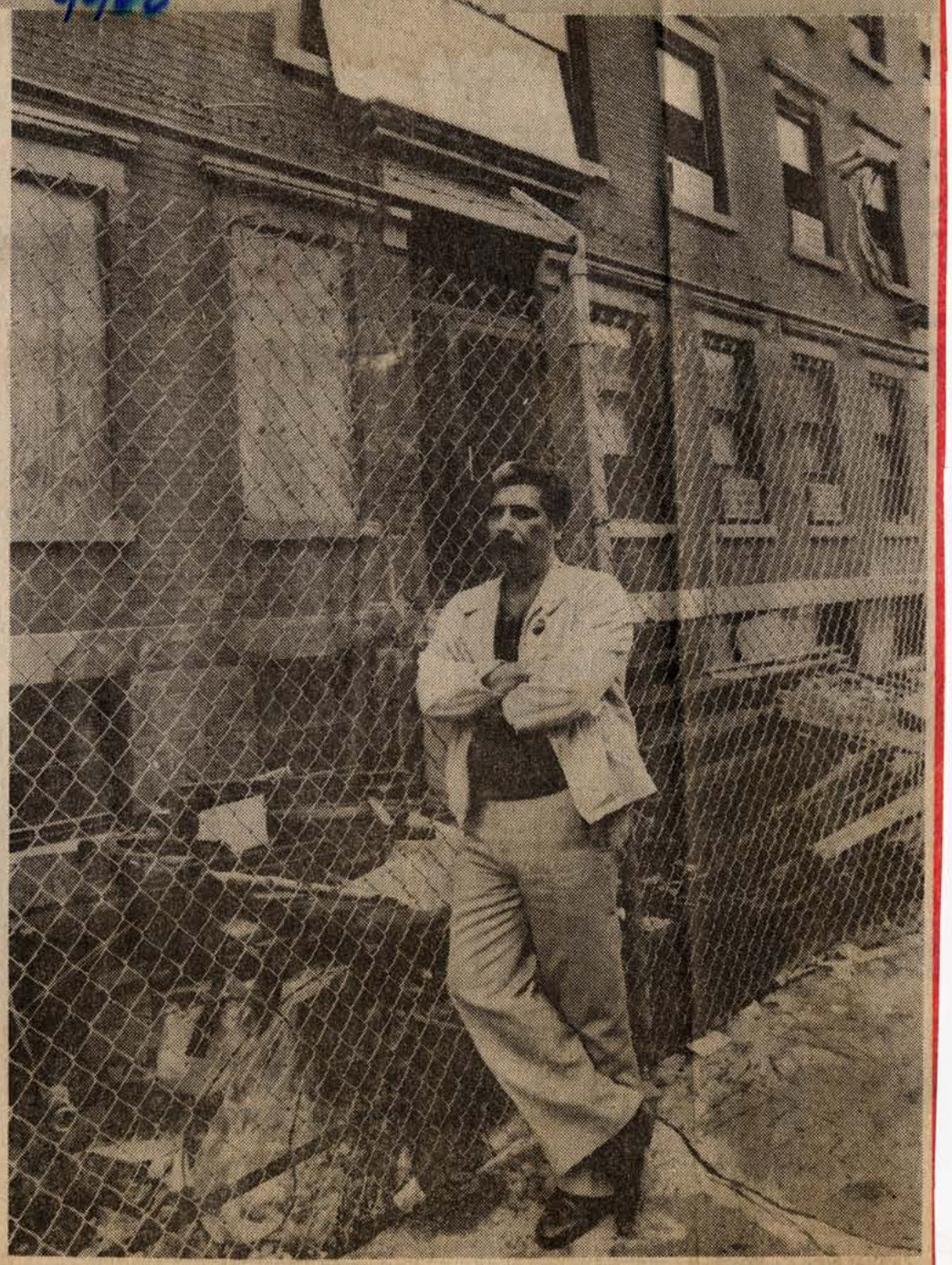


Photo by Bill Bayer

JUAN GARCIA of Citizens United for New Action stands outside a tenement being converted to a condominium in Hoboken.

ARSON

HD 8/3/82

Continued from Page 1

Because of the redevelopment, Hoboken has started to become an extension of Manhattan's Greenwich Village. Connected with New York City by the PATH train system, Hoboken now has a Village ambiance with a number of quaint shops, coffeehouses and specialty restaurants on the principal thoroughfare of Washington Street.

The real drawing card for New Yorkers, however, is the relatively low rents in Hoboken compared to its neighbor across the Hudson River. But for Hoboken's poor, the rents still are too high.

In Hoboken, it has become more profitable for landlords to convert to condominiums than to keep making massive repairs to a tenement.

But a question remains. What happens to the tenants who live in these tenements and can not afford the conversion to condos?

According to a New Jersey law, developers must give tenants three years notice prior to converting to condominiums. The state statute on Condominium Conversion also states that occupants can apply for as many as five one-year extensions before being required to leave the apartment. Theoretically, a tenant can hold up a project for eight years.

But tenant groups have charged that landlords and developers have taken measures which undercut the law by resorting to a cruder form of eviction — arson.

If there is significant damage, even water damage following a fire, a building is vacated and condemned. And in Hoboken, it is quickly sold.

The fear of arson encircles this city, which already suffers from a critical housing shortage for the poor. The housing situation and the fear is so strong that families and friends move out of the city after a fire.

Thus the fear of a conspiracy is born — a conspiracy believed to be aimed at forcing Hispanics to leave the city.

Juan Garcia, executive director of the only Hispanic community group in Hoboken — Citizens United for New Action — charges that in a seven-year period, at least 8,000 Hispanics have been displaced by the housing developments going on, even those developments which are designed to house low- and middle-income families. He contends that federal and state housing laws have been silent accomplices.

Pointing to a row of five buildings on Willow Avenue now under rehabilitation, Garcia estimates that 350 Hispanics once lived there in 76 apartments.

Only 54 apartments in the building are planned, the majority are one-bedroom and studio apartments, which Garcia said will eliminate most of the Hispanic families and will reduce the number of tenants who will live in the five buildings under rehabilitation.

It is this displacement and the fires that have added to the fears of the children here and their families. It also has added to the concern of tenant activists and other concerned citizens.

"Most fires in Hoboken take place in sections where the whole neighborhood is slated for condo development," said Ron Hine, a member of the Hoboken Housing Coalition and Por La Gente, a tenant activist group. Por La Gente has a primarily white membership.

Hine works in Brooklyn as a project director for the North Flatbush Arson Reasearch Corp., an agency that attempts to identify arson-prone neighborhoods. He said recently that the Hoboken fires follow a familiar pattern.

"If you look at the buildings that are burned, there are 'for sale' signs on all those buildings," said the Rev. Geoffrey Curtiss, pastor of the Episcopal Church of the Holy Innocents, a member of the recently organized Hoboken Housing Coalition.

While authorities do not discount either theory — the tenants setting fires, or a new strain of arson for profit — progress has been slow.



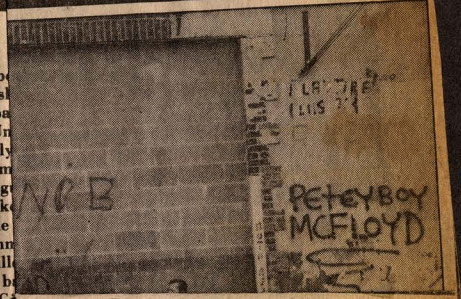
Photo by Bill Bayer

SIGNS advertising condominiums — like this one at the American Hotel across from the PATH Building where two people died in a fire — can be found in many areas of Hoboken.

The sounds of summer



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HD 8/14/82

5 fire captains dismissal

By WILFREDO FERNANDEZ
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—Five fire captains are facing departmental charges and possible dismissal after refusing yesterday to inspect a building that could be the target of a second arson attempt.

The captains reportedly told their superiors that checking buildings for signs of arson should be done by the police and is not one of the duties enumerated in their contract.

Of the six fire captains who are in charge of the six fire stations in the city, only one — Capt. Edward Hodge — obeyed the order to check 715 Clinton St. for any signs of suspicious activity.

Deputy Fire Chiefs Edward McDonald and Raymond Sheehan ordered the captains to check the five-story brick building hourly following a Saturday morning arson attempt in which a liquid accelerant and burn newspapers were found on the second- and third-floo stairwells of the building.

A spokesman for the city's law department, Thoma Calligy, said yesterday that he notified Fire Capts Eugene Failla, Gerard Petersen, John Lisa, Michae Waldich and Robert Moore that charges are bein brought against them.

The captains will be charged with violating d partmental regulations requiring "strict compliand with orders given by a superior" and provide penalti for "neglect or shirking of duty" or "conduct prejud cial to good order and discipline."

The penalties range from dismissal to a me reprimand.

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The fire captains were requested to inspect the building because they are "more adept at spotting fire hazards," Cappiello said.

The mayor called the captains' action a "flagrant disregard for human life."

"These men get paid $29,000 a year. If we can get citizens to volunteer to become arson watchers, the least we could expect is cooperation from the fire department," Cappiello said. "The proper procedure is to comply with the order and then file a grievance."

Although it is official up to Public Safety Director James Giordano and Fire Chief James Houn to decide on a punishment for the captains, Cappiello said that because of the seriousness of the charges, he believed the captains were "close to being suspended."

More than 20 families live in the Clinton Street building. Police refused to say yesterday whether they have a suspect in Saturday's attempted arson.

The sounds of summer

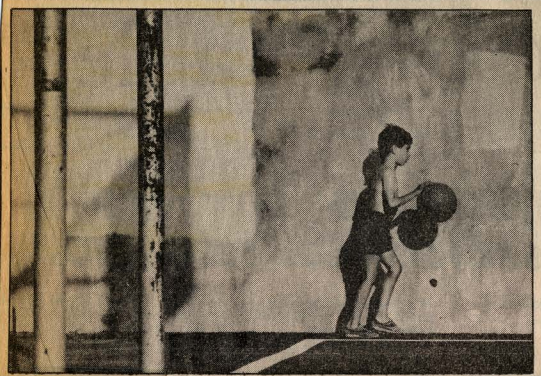


Photo by Ted Boswell

The bouncing of a basketball on the pavement in a Union City schoolyard or the soft melodies of a guitar in Hoboken are two of the sounds of summer. Jose Castillo dribbles his ball in the Gilmore schoolyard as Alexandro Santiago plays a summer tune on Paterson Avenue.



Photo by Chuck Zoeller

the dispatch

Wednesday, August 4, 1982

HD 8/14/82

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By WILFREDO FERNANDEZ
Staff Writer

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The penalties range from dismissal to a mere reprimand.

The five captains will face a hearing conducted by the department of public safety. It is expected to be held within 15 to 30 days. The captains must be sent the charges first. The men were to have been formally notified by the law department yesterday.

One informed source said the charges were "serious enough to warrant a dismissal."

The exact details of the contract which the captains said excuses them from conducting a periodic search of the building was not immediately known. All four officers of the local Firemen's Mutual Benevolent Association are attending a convention in Chicago and were unavailable for comment.

Despite the fire captains' refusal, the building is being inspected periodically. Mayor Steve Cappiello said yesterday. Policemen and firefighters have been at the scene almost hourly to inspect the building, he said.

It is believed that the fire watch will continue all this month in the belief that the arsonist may try again.

The fire captains were requested to inspect the building because they are "more adept at spotting fire hazards," Cappiello said.

The mayor called the captains' action a "flagrant disregard for human life."

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Better publicity sought for Hoboken

JJ Sat 8/7/82

By James Kopchains

Worried that recent bad publicity may give off a bad portrayal of what is going on in the city, Hoboken officials are considering hiring a publicity firm to bring out the better side of the city in the media.

Business Administrator Edwin Chius said he would recommend hiring a firm to counteract the bad reports that have been appearing lately on television and in newspapers.

Chius was especially pointing to the results of a recent study published by the Rand Corporation of California that listed Hoboken as among 14 "disaster areas" in comparison with other suburban areas throughout the country. This report was sent out on a national news wire service to papers about the country.

Also, Chius said he "expects the worst" from a half-hour television documentary "Hell . . . Heaven . . . or Hoboken" to be aired tonight at 10:30 on WPIX-TV. The documentary will focus on the recent rash of arson fires hitting the city as well as the new resurgence in residential and commercial activity in the city.

Chius said he fears the documentary may focus only on the fires and scare industries and potential new residents away from the city.

A publicity firm could help to correct that image, Chius said, and help city officials in luring more revenues into the city.

The city had hired a part-time publicity director between 1974 and 1978, according to Chius, but had to drop the position when federal funding ran out to pay his salary.

Chius said he believes that the articles and information the director was able to put out contributed ink a large degree to the "renaissance" the city has been experiencing with its new residents.

Attempted arson — at firehouse

JJ 8/6/82

Hoboken firefighters were taken a bit by surprise when someone tried to start a fire — at one of their own firehouses.

Enrique Roman, 40, of Weehawken, is under arrest today and charged with aggravated arson after he allegedly tried to set fire to one of the rear doors of the city firehouse at 511 Observer Highway.

According to police reports, Ramon reportedly filled a cardboard box with garbage and set it at one of the two wooden rear doors of the building at about 4.a.m. yesterday. Ramon then set the box on fire with a cigarette and ran.

Fire Captain John Lisa, on duty at that time, was alerted by a woman calling up to the windows on the second-floor of the building.

Lisa then saw the fire, ordered men to douse it and chased after Ramon whom he caught and held until police arrived. The fire in the box was quickly extinguished by the men with no damage to the door or building.

ARSON

Revenge motive for many

#D 8/14/82

By CHUCK SUTTON
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—Despite the formation of an arson task force, the beefing up of building inspectors, and intensive federal, state, county and local probes, concern remains that the arsons which have terrorized the poor sections of this city will continue.

Critics of the administration of Mayor Steve Cappiello say what is happening here also is happening in other urban communities. There is mistrust, based in part on the fact that officials already have focused the blame for the arson problem on those who set fires for revenge, or on those who set fires because they may be mentally ill.

Juan Garcia, the executive director of Citizens United For New Action, and Ramon Irizarry, the attorney for the New Jersey Fair Housing Federation, say that local officials are not giving serious consideration to their belief that arson-for-profit is behind the terror. They say that unless that prospect is at least given serious consideration, arson will continue.

This is the third and final segment on the effects, causes and some possible solutions to Hoboken's wave of arson.

ARSON

Continued from Page 1

"Until recently, arson was perceived as a way to dispose of unprofitable properties for tax writeoffs or insurance proceeds. It was not viewed as a way to prepare properties for rehabilitation," the report said.

In New Jersey, the state Condominium Conversion Law is another consideration for arson investigators. In protecting tenants, it stipulates that an owner must give three years notice of the intended conversion to any tenant who has been in the building for at least two years. It also allows the tenant to take five one-year extensions.

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2/82 JJ

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Firefighters' hearing set

HOBOKEN—A hearing for the five city fire captains being brought up on charges of insubordination and negligence in the line of duty has been scheduled for Aug. 23.

The firefighters are accused of failing to comply with an order by their superiors earlier this month to inspect a city building suspected of being the target of arson. The firefighters say they refused to patrol the building at 715 Willow Ave. because of the safety measures involved.

Public Safety Director James Giordano is expected to hear the case.

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ARSON

Continued from Page 1

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In New Jersey, the state Condominium Conversion Law is another consideration for arson investigators. In protecting tenants, it stipulates that an owner must give three years notice of the intended conversion to any tenant who has been in the building for at least two years. It also allows the tenant to take five one-year extensions.

Owners can cut down on the waiting period by paying relocation fees to the tenants, sometimes going as high as $4,000.

But a fire could empty that building within minutes, thus getting around the provisions of the conversion law.

Arson is a difficult crime to prove. For Alan Hernandez and other children who each night place their clothes by the window of their Hoboken apartment, waiting for the time they may have to escape a fiery death, easing their fear is likely to prove a more difficult task for officials.

ARSON

Revenge motive for many

By CHUCK SUTTON
Staff Writer

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This is the third and final segment on the effects, causes and some possible solutions to Hoboken's wave of arson.

Cappiello and other local officials involved in the investigation have been very frank about their feelings that arson-for-profit is not the culprit.

"There is very little indication other than in the commercial sector that we have a problem with arson for profit," Cappiello said in a recent interview.

A highly placed source at City Hall who is close to the investigation said there are suspects in the fires at 109 Clinton St., 102 12th St. and the Pinter Hotel on 14th Street. There has been an arrest in the more recent fire at 153 First St., the source said. All the suspects have been characterized as having "possible mental problems."

There is no discounting the possibility that some of the 250 suspicious fires that have plagued the city every year for the last four years may have been motivated by those factors listed by city officials. The annual figure of 250 blazes includes incidents in which no one was injured. The total compares favorably with the number of suspicious fires elsewhere in the state.

At the same time, there are indications that what is happening in Hoboken also is occurring around the country in other older urban areas.

Arson has become one of the fastest-growing crimes in the country. Cities such as San Francisco, New Haven, Conn., and Boston all have had a high incidence of arson fires.

Last month, New York City's Arson Task Force rattled quite a few bureaucrats with its study that concluded that federal, state, and local money for housing rehabilitation created an atmosphere that encouraged arson as the first step to getting rid of tenants by eviction.

That report, drawing on statistics from San Francisco and Massachusetts, concluded that one of the major stumbling blocks in investigating arson-for-profit is that officials tend to think only in terms of the traditional arson for profit.

See ARSON, Page 12

'Innocent,' says arson suspect

HD 8/3/82

By WILFREDO FERNANDEZ
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—A suspect in the attempted arson at 715 Clinton St. said yesterday that police questioned him about the incident, but he denied having tried to set fire to the building.

Carmelo Muni, 57, who is employed at the Atlantic Tropical Markets at 729 Clinton St. here, denied in a telephone interview yesterday that he tried to set fire to the 20-family, five-story building early Saturday morning.

"I have been working here (Atlantic Tropical Markets) for seven years," Muni said. "I dedicate myself to my work, not to setting fires."

An unidentified man reportedly told the building's superintendent, Ramon Alonzo, that a man known to him as "Chiringo" was responsible for the 4:30 a.m. attempted arson Saturday that caused the evacuation of the building's residents. Alonzo also was told that Chiringo would try again.

Muni, whose nickname is Chiringo, said he has no idea who told the superintendent "those lies." Muni, a Hoboken resident who is separated from his wife and has five grown children, said he does not know anyone who lives at 715 Clinton St. Police confirmed only that they have questioned Muni. They would not comment on his answers.

A liquid accelerant was found spilled over the second- and third-floor stairwells of the building, along with scorch marks and burnt newspapers.

Pictorial - Aug 26, 1982

Upcoming ballot issue sparks controversy

Hoboken Civic League president Salvatore D'Amelio and Michael Schaffer, candidate for Second Ward Council, issued the following statement:

"The action of a majority of the Hoboken City Council in voting to place on the November ballot a question to eliminate municipal ward runoffs smacks of dictatorship at its worst. These councilmen who voted to use the guise of economy are political stooges of Mayor Steve Cappiello. They are actually reverting to the senseless pattern of going to another alternate such as the discredited commission form of government they wanted, again with the expectation that they would save themselves and the mayor from being thrown out of office by an aroused citizenry."

The statement from D'Amelio and Schaffer continued:

"This action is well collaborated by the Cappiello controlled foils he has placed on the city council through a political organization which is now weakened. They feel by eliminating runoffs, thereby giving their own organization with all its patronage a built-in advantage, they can control the destiny of the people of Hoboken forever.

With Council president Walter Cramer leading the city council by its nose, they think they can fool voters who now suffer under the highest tax rate in the State of New Jersey. They cannot fool the intelligent voter and they cannot fool the people who intend to throw these political charlatans out of office next May.

The fact that they use economy as a justification to bring this to a head is hypocrisy. Why did they not do this recently when they felt sure of themselves. They are now doing it because they feel the wrath of the voters breathing down their necks seeking revenge from elected officials who care not about the rentpayers and taxpayers, but also have caused chaos among the ranks of veteran and decent city workers now facing so-called economy layoffs and harrassment. If Cramer and Councilman Anthony Romano want economy, let them resign their double dipping jobs in the Board of Education. Let them request Mayor Steve Cappiello to resign his Freeholder post and give up his county job."

There is life after eviction

HD 8/16/82

Hoboken senior lives on stairs

By WILFREDO FERNANDEZ
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—Every neighborhood has a Jerry Teehan.

He's the guy who runs errands and takes out your garbage. He volunteers to water your plants in the summer and shovel the walk in the winter. He is the unofficial babysitter and the neighborhood's "Mr. Fixit."

Teehan sat outside yesterday in the afternoon sunlight on the flight of stairs he has called his home for several weeks.

At the age of 72, Teehan is firmly set in his ways. He is so set in his ways, in fact, that he has rejected a variety of efforts to find another home for him after he was evicted from his $90.48-a-month apartment at 709 Willow Ave. on May 25. He had lived 44 years at the Willow Avenue address, but now is content to sleep on the stoop, watching life go by.

He has slept there on and off since June 1.

"I like it here. This is my home. These people are my family," he said, pointing to the children playing in the streets.

It is his love for the neighborhood, and the neighborhood's love for him, officials say, that has prompted Teehan to sleep, eat and live on the front steps.

The reason for Teehan's eviction was not clear last night. Teehan said that on May 25, a representative from the Hudson County Sheriff's Office placed a padlock on the door of his apartment. Teehan said he had paid his rent. He was given an opportunity to move into the Monroe Gardens senior citizens building, but turned it down.

See EVICTION, Page 8

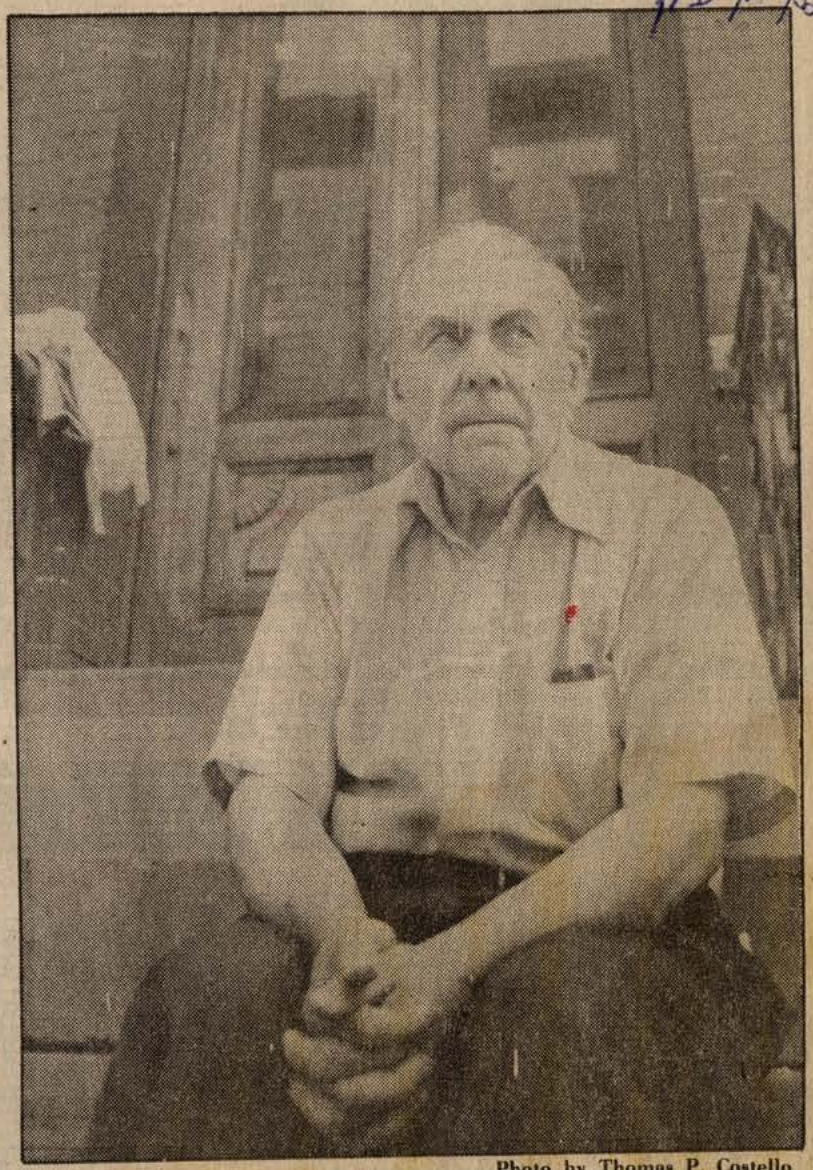


Photo by Thomas P. Costello

Jerry Teehan sits in front of the site of his eviction.

life after eviction

HD 8/16/82

Continued from Page 1

City Councilman Nunzio Malfetti sat on the stoop with Teehan yesterday, patiently listening to the elderly man explain his refusal to find another place to live in another part of the city. Mary Hudock, one of the building's tenants who has been washing his clothes and making sure he is fed, stood on the sidewalk and pleaded with him.

"Please, Jerry, I just need to know that you've got somewhere to sleep. I'll help you move," she said.

But Teehan is adamant.

"I just can't believe I don't live here any more," he said sadly.

Teehan occasionally spends the night on a stairwell inside the building. On Friday, he was upset and moved to the Salvation Army for the night after learning that the 200-piece collection of plates he had inherited from his mother had been stolen from its storage place in a tiny shed behind the building.

Police said thieves broke the padlock on the shed door and made off with 200 antique plates made in Germany and the United States. There are no suspects in the case. No one is quite sure when the plates were stolen.

Hudock let Teehan keep the plates there after his eviction. The last time anyone checked on the plates, however, was in June, Teehan said, adding he had no idea how much they were worth.

Malfetti said there is probably a health code violation involved with Teehan sleeping on the steps, but that "the man is so nice ... so charming ... that no one really minds."

Everyone is concerned with finding a place for him to live, however.

"I got kind of huffy. I have a slight heart condition," Teehan said, in explaining why he turned down previous efforts to find an apartment.

He has mellowed slightly since then, he admits, and is now looking for a place in the neighborhood. The $150-a-month combined railroad and Social Security pension he receives has made things that much more difficult, he complained.

Patrick Mangan, the building's landlord, was unavailable for comment.

Teehan has served as the building's janitor since he was laid off from his job as a clerk at the Erie-Lackawanna Terminal here in 1952. He has done some odd jobs since then, but has not held a steady job.

Malfetti said he would contact the appropriate city officials today to help him in the search for a place for Teehan to live.

"I'm just used to the neighborhood. I don't want to leave," the elderly man said.

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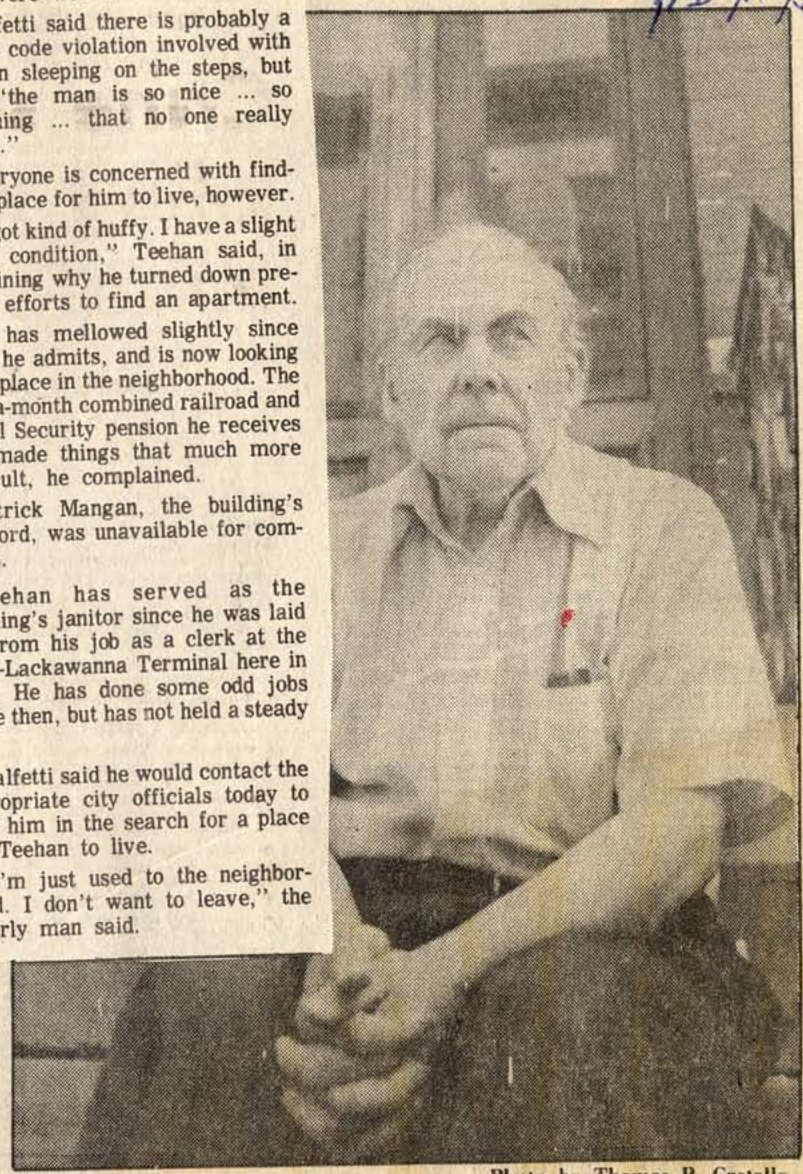


Photo by Thomas P. Costello

Jerry Teehan sits in front of the site of his eviction.

THE JERSEY JOURNAL, FRIDAY

9/82

Defer hearing for landlord

A hearing in Hoboken Municipal Court on the "lights-out landlord" whose tenants have been living for months without electricity and other utilities has been put off another week at the request of his attorney.

Municipal Court Judge Rudolph Naddeo agreed to postpone the hearing until Thursday after the attorney for the landlord, Luis Lieles, owner of 223 Madison St., asked for more time to prepare his defense.

Mieles has been charged by city inspectors for allowing tenants to move into the building after it was declared officially "vacated" by city inspectors and for letting them live there without the proper certificate of occupancy.

Naddeo said yesterday that he would sign a court order removing the tenants living in the building and declaring it again vacated and boarded up, if building inspectors find conditions there unlivable. However, as of 4 p.m. yesterday no order had yet been signed.

Arson is now a hot issue

NY News 8/82

ARSON HAS NOW become one of the fastest-growing, if not the fastest-growing crime, in our nation—an estimated 25% of all U.S. fires are the result of arson. There are about 175,000 arsons a year in this country, claiming 500 to 1,000 lives plus 10,000 to 15,000 injuries. The direct cost of such fires ranges up to $4 billion!



SYLVIA PORTER

When indirect losses such as lost jobs and income, medical and social expenses, and lost taxes are added, the yearly total hits $15 billion.

"Of course, not all arson fires are set for profit," says Christopher Pitt, a spokesman for the American Institute for Property and Liability Underwriters. "There's arson for revenue, arson as a byproduct of religious or racial bigotry, arson to eliminate competition, arson by pyromaniacs and other mentally unbalanced people, arson by children looking for excitement and by teenagers looking for trouble. There is even arson by firemen."

No matter what the reason, the insurance industry has quietly begun an all-out fight on one kind of arson: arson-for-profit.

THERE ARE RED flags to alert an investigator to arson-for-profit. Some conditions that are potentially dangerous:

- When a building has 65% or more of its rental units unoccupied.
- When a damaged building hasn't been repaired after a reasonable lapse of time, or when an insured owner has stated that he doesn't intend to repair it.
- When repairs have not been started on a fire-damaged building, 60 days after the loss has been settled.

Aug 17-82

Wilson asks stud on housing list

A Hoboken councilman is suggesting forming a committee to look into reports of abuses regarding waiting lists for subsidized housing in the city.

Fifth Ward Councilman E. Norman Wilson said he would like to see a committee formed "just so that we can get to the bottom of it all." Reports of such abuses have been coming to him nearly everyday he said.

The most common complaint is that political influence moves some people up the waiting list. Also, Wilson said he had heard complaints of bribery and favors being demanded in return for a better kposition on the list.

Wilson said he has heard of families that have been waiting for more than four years on the list.

Since most of the buildings in question were built with tax abatements from the city, Wilson said, their rental policies should be monitored by officials.

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Arson is now a hot issue

NY News 8/82

ARSON HAS NOW become one of the fastest-growing, if not the fastest-growing crime, in our nation—an estimated 25% of all U.S. fires are the result of arson. There are about 175,000 arsons a year in this country, claiming 500 to 1,000 lives plus 10,000 to 15,000 injuries. The direct cost of such fires ranges up to $4 billion!



SYLVIA PORTER

When indirect losses such as lost jobs and income, medical and social expenses, and lost taxes are added, the yearly total hits $15 billion.

"Of course, not all arson fires are set for profit," says Christopher Pitt, a spokesman for the American Institute for Property and Liability Underwriters. "There's arson for revenue, arson as a byproduct of religious or racial bigotry, arson to eliminate competition, arson by pyromaniacs and other mentally unbalanced people, arson by children looking for excitement and by teenagers looking for trouble. There is even arson by firemen."

No matter what the reason, the insurance industry has quietly begun an all-out fight on one kind of arson: arson-for-profit.

THERE ARE RED flags to alert an investigator to arson-for-profit. Some conditions that are potentially dangerous:

- When a building has 65% or more of its rental units unoccupied.
- When a damaged building hasn't been repaired after a reasonable lapse of time, or when an insured owner has stated that he doesn't intend to repair it.
- When repairs have not been started on a fire-damaged building, 60 days after the loss has been settled.
- When a building is unoccupied for 60 days (except under certain conditions of construction or repair).
- When a building is in danger of collapse.
- When a building has been ordered to be vacated or demolished, or been declared unsafe.
- When fixed items are being removed from the building without a reasonable explanation for the removal.
- When property taxes have not been paid on a property for a year.

A STUDY IN NEW HAVEN, Conn., matched randomly selected buildings that had not had fires with those which had had suspicious fires. A striking result: Seventy-eight per cent of the buildings that had had suspicious fires had at least four of these characteristics.

In recent years, more than 43 states have passed some sort of arson reporting-immunity law to permit insurance companies and public officials to share pertinent information without risking civil invasion-of-privacy suits by the insured. The Alliance of American Insurers had drafted a model law, hoping to get all states to adopt laws that conform. There also is the Property Insurance Loss Register, a computerized central registry of fire loss claims information which is considered a major weapon in the insurance industry's fight against arson-for profit.

The information is fed into a computer which searches for duplicate insurance on property where a fire occurred, for the loss history of the insured person or organization, for the insured's previous addresses, and for combinations of names on the claim report that would call for additional investigation or reinforce suspicions of arson.

TO KEEP SUSPICIONS and investigations a secret from the individual claiming insurance, the insurance industry is fighting on still another front. The National Association of Insurance Commissioners had drafted a Model Unfair Claims Settlement Practices Regulation that would relieve the companies from meeting a deadline for payment on property believed arson-prone.

It's extremely difficult to get a conviction for arson, so suspected arsonists often are penalized for fraud. Model laws are being drafted to close loopholes in this area as well.

1982, Universal Press Syndicate

Daily News, Sunday, August 8, 1982

for landlord

y for the s, owner of ed for more defense.

charged by allowing te- the building ed officially spectors and live there without the proper certificate of occupancy.

Naddeo said yesterday that he would sign a court order removing the tenants living in the building and declaring it again vacated and boarded up, if building inspectors find conditions there unlivable. However, as of 4 p.m. yesterday no order had yet been signed.

Aug 17-82

Wilson asks study on housing list

A Hoboken councilman is suggesting forming a committee to look into reports of abuses regarding waiting lists for subsidized housing in the city.

Fifth Ward Councilman E. Norman Wilson said he would like to see a committee formed "just so that we can get to the bottom of it all." Reports of such abuses have been coming to him nearly everyday he said.

The most common complaint is that political influence moves some people up the waiting list. Also, Wilson said he had heard complaints of bribery and favors being demanded in return for a better kposition on the list.

Wilson said he has heard of families that have been waiting for more than four years on the list.

Since most of the buildings in question were built with tax abatements from the city, Wilson said, their rental policies should be monitored by officials.

"At least by looking through their records we will see how people get apartments and perhaps put to rest the complaints one way or another," Wilson explained.

Wilson said he had written to Mayor Steve Cappiello to appoint such a committee and if the mayor chooses not to, he said he would take the matter up with the full council.

Hoboken may be model for subsidized housing

J.J 8/18/82

By James Kopchains

Hoboken may soon be the site for a new approach to subsidized housing and, should it succeed, it could have a major impact on such housing in cities across the United States.

The city council is expected today to approve filing an application for a $500,000 Federal Urban Development action grant which would be used in building 20 new two-family homes for low- and middle-income families.

"It's all a rather novel approach to the housing," Peter Guarino, a Hoboken Community Development Agency official, said. "I don't think it's been tried yet in the country."

The homes are planned for the city's urban renewal area on Grand and Adams Streets between Observer Highway and First Street and also on Jefferson Street between First and Second Streets. The anticipated price for the homes is between $70,000 and $80,000, which Guarino said could be partially financed through low-cost loans.

Future of runoffs up to the voters

Aug-19-82

By James Kopchains

Hoboken voters will decide the fate of runoffs in municipal elections as a result of the City Council's 5-to-1 vote yesterday. A referendum will go on the November election ballot that would abolish runoff elections in the city and give victory to the candidate with the most votes.

The referendum, should it be approved by the voters, would abolish runoffs, except in the case of a tie vote. At present, a candidate in city-wide and ward elections needs to receive more than 50 percent of the votes cast to avoid a runoff.

If no candidate gathers enough votes, the top two finishers in the election then meet several weeks later in a runoff election.

"We are turning the final decision on this over to the people," Council President Walter Cramer said. Cramer said he was for abolishing the runoffs because of the cost, which City Clerk Anthony Amoruso has estimated as $35,000 in a city-wide race and $7,000-to-$8,000 in each municipal ward.

In casting the lone dissenting vote, Councilman E. Norman Wilson Jr. said he felt that the runoffs were needed despite their cost because they help to determine the true vote of citizens toward a candidate.

Without a runoff, Wilson said, it would be possible for a candidate to win an election without the support of a majority of voters. For this reason, he said, the expense of runoff elections may be well worth the cost.

Meanwhile, Cramer and critic Thomas Vezzetti continued their war of words at yesterday's meeting, this time with Cramer expelling Vezzetti from the council chambers and forbidding him to speak at any future meetings.

Cramer's ouster of Vezzetti came during a public hearing on the runoff referendum.

At the council meeting in July, Vezzetti charged that Cramer did not live at his listed residence at 819 Willow Ave. and used a city car to drive to his real home at the Jersey Shore. Both of those charges were vehemently denied by Cramer.

See VOTERS — Page 25.

New approach to housing

Continued from Page 1.

9/24/82

According to Guarino, each of the houses constructed would be sold to an individual owner who would live in one of the apartments. The other apartments would have its rent subsidized with federal Section 8 housing funds.

A successful project, Guarini said, could have impact in other cities and the way they construct Section 8 housing.

"Normally, one owner, the developer, would construct the houses, then rent them out under Section 8," Guarino said. These developers would usually build structures with 50 to 100 or more units, he said.

Caparra Home Development Co., a non-profit corporation, is involved in planning and constructing the homes with the help of Applied Housing Corp., which Guarino said is donating its time as a joint venture consultant with Caparra.

Guarino said Caparra is an off-shoot of the Hoboken civic group "United for Progress," which Guarini said was planning the project to help ease the problem of families being displaced by landlords in the city.

The eventual cost of the project is expected to be about $2 million, according to Guarino, with most of the funding to be raised by private funding.

Guarino said he hoped to have the application in the mail to Washington by the end of this month. A decision would then be expected in the middle of October, he said.

Hearing slated on runoff law

Aug 17-82

Public hearings on two controversial ordinances are expected to draw a large crowd at tomorrow's Hoboken City Council meeting.

The council has scheduled hearings on amendments to the city's anti-littering ordinance and also on placing a referendum abolishing runoff elections in the city. Both hearings are scheduled near the beginning of the council's regular meeting at 10 a.m., which follows a caucus at 9 a.m.

The anti-littering measure has come under attack from landlords almost immediately after it was introduced at the council's meeting last month. Under the change, the owners of property would be responsible for cleaning out the street gutters daily up to 18 inches from their curb line of all litter and debris or be subject to fines.

Concerning the run-off referendum, the council is expected to vote on including it on the November congressional election ballot. If approved it would abolish all run-off elections in municipal elections.

At present, a candidate needs more than 50 percent of the votes cast to win a municipal election. If this goal isn't reached, a run-off election is held between the top two finishers.

If approved, the referendum would give an election victory to the candidate with the most votes.

One councilman E. Norman Wilson Jr., has already said he is opposed to the ordinance, while several others have said they haven't made any decision on it.

Y JOURNAL.SEPTEMBER 24, 1982

Tenants seek rental cut in Hoboken

The tenants' organization at a Garden Street apartment house in Hoboken will be asking for a rent decrease at Tuesday's city rent stabilization board m eeting.

The 1145 Garden Street Tenants Organization has been requesting the decrease because it said the landlord, James Monaco, had included several "one-time" cost items as opesrating expenses on his hardship rent increase application last year.

Among the items were a new circuit breaker box at $1,200 and new electronic smoke detectors at $1,050, according to a letter to the board by Mark Farrell of the organization.

In addition, Farrell said the cost of repairs to the building's old boilder — $771.75 — had been paid in full and would nto be a recurring expense since it was replaced by a new boiler.

Other business at the meeting, which begins at 9 p.m. at City Hall, will include a despute between the landlord and a tenant at 500 Blooomfield St.

The dispute centers on one of the apartments at the building which the landlord claims is ac-

Hoboken moves on arson fo

Aug 20-82

By Earl Morgan

A group that included city officials, officials from state, county and federal agencies and community-based organizations met in Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello's office to begin the creation of an arson task force.

John Lynch of the Federal Emergency Management agency conducted another meeting last night that included representatives from the Hudson County prosecutor's office, the state attorney general, the federal Firearms and Tobacco agency, the director of the city's police

the frequency" of incendiary fires in the city.

The task force is being formed in response to the number of fires that have plagued the mile-square city in the past three years and have also resulted in the death of a number of residents, many of them children.

Lynch said for the task force to work, all segments of the community will have to be involved. Lynch said in areas where the task-force approach has been tried, arsons decreased considerably.

Following the slide presentation, the group began to identify the people and agencies they felt should compose the task force. Lynch suggested the group be kept to a maximum of fifteen.

Agencies identified for task

Hoboken pier bill is po

Y JOURNAL-SEPTEMBER 24, 1982

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The tenants' organization at a Garden Street apartment house in Hoboken will be asking for a rent reduction when a city rent stabilization board m eetingresumes next Tuesday's city council meeting.

The 146 Garden Street Tenants Organization has requested the decrease because it said the landlord several 'one-time' items as operating expenses on his hardship rent increase application last year.

Among the items were a new circuit breaker box at $1,200 and new electronic smoke detectors at $1,050, according to a letter to the board by Mark Farrell of the organization.

The dispute at the building, the apartments of which are usually designated as a residential loft rather than a residential unit. As a result, the landlord isn't covered under the city's rent laws.

In addition, Farrell said the cost of repairs to the building's old boiler — $771.75 — had been paid in full and would not be a recurring expense because it was replaced by a business at the street level, which begins at 9 p.m.

Other items which will be heard at City Hall, will include a request for a rent increase despute between the Infield St. a tenant at 500 Clinton on one of

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Hoboken moves on arson force

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John Lynch of the Federal Emergency Management agency conducted another meeting last night that included representatives from the Hudson County prosecutor's office, the state attorney general, the federal Firearms and Tobacco agency, the director of the city's police department, representatives of the city fire department and community organizations including the Hoboken Housing Coalition.

The meetings held during the day, according to Mayor Cappiello, were with other agencies including representatives from the state Department of Insurance. The mayor said the representatives agreed to cooperate and applauded the city's initiative in moving to create the task force.

The group that met in the mayor's office last night viewed a slide presentation given by Lynch explaining how his agency recommends structuring an arson task force, explaining that the primary goal is to "reduce the frequency" of incendiary fires in the city.

The task force is being formed in response to the number of fires that have plagued the mile-square city in the past three years and have also resulted in the death of a number of residents, many of them children.

Lynch said for the task force to work, all segments of the community will have to be involved. Lynch said in areas where the task-force approach has been tried, arsons decreased considerably.

Following the slide presentation, the group began to identify the people and agencies they felt should compose the task force. Lynch suggested the group be kept to a maximum of fifteen.

Agencies identified for task force membership are the city's Community Development Agency the Board of Education, the state Department of Insurance, the police and fire departments arson squads, housing developers and the housing coalition.

More names may be added to the list when the group meets again in September.

Hoboken pier bill is passed

The U.S. Senate last night passed a bill to return 50 acres of Hoboken waterfront pier property to municipal control. The property has been controlled by the federal government since being confiscated during World War I and is leased to the Port Authority.

The bill was introduced by Sen. Bill Bradley and is the companion to legislation passed earlier this year by the House of Representatives with the backing of Rep. Frank J. Guarini.

The House version of the bill sought to simply return the property to Hoboken. The Senate bill envisions selling the property to Hoboken at "fair market value."

Because of the difference in the bills, the Senate version will have to be reconsidered by the House. Guarini said last night that he will agree to the Senate version with the provision that the $68 million the city lost in taxes while the property was in federal hands be offset against the fair market value.

Guarini said he foresees no problem with having the House approve the final version of the bill when it reconvenes after Labor Day.

The waterfront property, which is on River Street, running North from Newark Street, is leased to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey until 2002. It is not being used at present.

Guarini and a spokesman for Bradley say the return of the property will be a boon to the city and its ongoing revitalization.

The property was originally confiscated from a company based in Hamburg, Germany, by an order from then-president Woodrow Wilson as the United States warred against Germany.

The waterfront property is designated Piers A, B and C and affords a postcard view of the Manhattan skyline. Hoboken officials hope to attract commercial and residential developers to the site.

Rents on a rampage despite Hoboken law

By Randolph Diamond

It was last August when the Hoboken City Council passed a revised rent leveling ordinance designed to put a damper on the spiraling rents in the city. But, one year later not only has a damper not been put on the rents, they are rising at a faster rate than ever before.

A survey by The Jersey Journal of local real estate brokers and landlords shows one-bedroom apartments, for example, going on the average for $500 and $550 a month and in some cases even more than that. Only a year ago those same apartments could have been had for $400.

Tenant leaders say the city's lack of enforcement of the new revised ordinance is one of the main reasons the ordinance hasn't worked.

"The ordinance is a sham," said Terri Ratti, one tenant leader.

"The city never put the machinery in place to enforce the ordinance," she said.

Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello admitted the city never hired staff members who, he had said last year, would make sure all landlords registered with the city clerk's office as required by the revised law.

In fact, City Clerk Anthony Amoruso admitted 17 percent of the 2,500 or so landlords in Hoboken had not registered in his office. Amoruso said he and the other three staff members in his office just hadn't had the time to follow up on the 17 percent. He said many of them were corporations and his office members were too busy to track down the principals of those corporations in order to give them a summons for not complying with the law.

The revised ordinance continued the practice of allowing landlords a yearly 7½ percent increase that was contained in the old ordinance. But it also allowed landlords a 25 percent increase when an apartment became vacant.

Cappiello said last August since the city was going to allow a sort of vacancy decontrol by allowing the landlord to raise the rent 25 percent when an apartment became vacant he was going to insist on strict enforcement of the registration clause and high fines of up to $500 for those

See RENTS — Page 26.

advantage of a substantial rehabilitation clause in the old ordinance.

Under that clause landlords are allowed to get off rent control for 13 months and charge whatever rent they want if they do renovations equal to the assessed valuation of their building. Sister Norberta noted that many of Hoboken's buildings are assessed at only a fraction of their real value — some less than a third of it — so, in reality, a landlord does not have to spend that much to get off rent control.

Ray Fiore, president of the Hoboken Board of Realtors, agreed that landlords had taken advantage of the substantial rehabilitation clause. He said he knew dozens and dozens of landlords who had gotten off rent control in the last few months using that clause.

But Fiore said he personally felt the clause was a good thing limits hardship increases to a 25 percent increase in rent and also prohibits a landlord who buys a building from getting a hardship increase for the first 12 months, he or she owns it.

Fiore said the increase in landlords taking advantage of the substantial rehabiliation clause is due to the tightening up of the hardship clauses.

"The landlords have just found another loophole," said an angry Miss Ratti.

Hoboken Councilman Robert Ranieri said the city council has launched a review of the revised ordinance and would be open to tightening up the substantial rehabilitation clause.

Cappiello said he feels the city council may not have to do anything to the substantial rehabilitation clause because a revaluation now taking place of all property in Hoboken will raise the assessed value of all buildings.

Rents still rising despite revised law

Continued from Page 1.

landlords who didn't register.

The high fines, however, were never imposed. Landlords who registered their rents early this year after getting a summons to appear in court were only hit with fines of on the average $10 by municipal court Judge Rudolph Naddeo. The landlords were supposed to have registered by Sept. 30 of last year.

Sister Norberta, a member of Hoboken's Rent Leveling Board, said she feels one loophole in the law is a major reason for the rents being increased. She said numerous landlords are taking advantage of a substantial rehabilitation clause in the old ordinance.

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But Fiore said he personally felt the clause was a good thing because it was encouraging landlords to upgrade the housing stock in Hoboken.

Ironically, under the old rent leveling ordinance landlords had only to put in renovations equal to 50 percent of the assessed value of their building to get off rent control. When those limits were in effect very few landlords were taking advantage of the substantial rehabilitation clause as opposed to the flood of landlords doing so now.

The old rent leveling ordinance made it easier for landlords to get a hardship increase if they showed they weren't making a profit on their building. The revised ordinance limits hardship increases to a 25 percent increase in rent and also prohibits a landlord who buys a building from getting a hardship increase for the first 12 months, he or she owns it.

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JJ 9/30/82

Fire captains' hearing dissolves in chaos

By Randy Diamond

A hearing for five Hoboken fire captains charged with neglect of duty for refusing to comply with an order that they have firemen make safety checks of a building an arsonist tried to torch was called off yesterday — but not before sheer bedlam broke out.

First 50 firemen and superior officers who came to witness what city officials had said would be an open departmental hearing against the men refused to leave Public Safety Director James Giordano's office when told the city had closed the meeting to the press and public.

William Bergen, the president of the Hoboken Fire Officers Association, then said the 50 men would not leave and would have to be physically removed after Giordano asked them to leave his office.

Only after a direct order from fire chief James Houn and the firemen's union's lawyer David Solomon told them that they should comply did the men leave.

Then Solomon and Berger's lawyer, Carl Schaeffer, and Giordano got into a shouting match over the city's position that Bergen not be allowed to sit in on the hearing.

The shouts got louder and louder as Solomon found out that the city wouldn't budge on its position and that they also wouldn't sign subpoenas for two witnesses he had subpoenaed.

"We're not going to have a kangaroo court," Solomon screamed as he stormed out with Bergen. "I never seen anything like this."

Meanwhile firefighters outside Giordano's office were screaming.

See FIRE — Page 12.

did not obey the order to inspect the building the arsonist had hit and forward all information to the Hudson County prosecutor's office for them to take criminal action shows that he could not be a fair trial judge.

The charges against the five firemen date back to the evening of July 31 when the five firemen refused a direct order from Deputy Fire Chief John Sheehan to check a building at 715-717 Clinton St. as part of the city's "Arson Alert" Program. Sheehan had ordered Capts. Eugene Failla, Gerard Peterson, Robert Moore, John Lisa and Michael

yesterday's departmental hearing be open to the public and Giordano had originally complied. Giordano said yesterday that he changed his mind at the last minute because he felt if the hearing was open to the public it would be "a three-ring circus."

Giordano admitted he had told Solomon that he would be glad to sign subpoenas for two of the witnesses Solomon had subpoenaed — a New York City fire marshal and a former arson investigator for the city of Newark — but decided not to do so after advice from Schaeffer.

Schaeffer said the witnesses

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Hoboken Pictorial 9/30/82

ATTENTION LANDLORDS

Beginning October 1, 1982, until May 1, 1983, Heat of 68° must be provided in all Multiple Dwelling Units in Hoboken from 6:00 A.M. to 11:00 P.M.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH

Patricia M. Mitten
Health Officer

James Farina
Director of
Health & Welfare

Fire captains' hearing ends in chaos

Continued from Page 1

City Law Director Lawrence Florio then came out of his office and said the city was ready to proceed with the hearing. But Solomon said he wouldn't participate under the city's conditions and said he would seek a court order.

The order, he said, which he would seek in Superior Court would not only ask that Bergen be allowed to sit in on the hearing and that the city sign the subpoenas of his witnesses, but that Giordano be disqualified as hearing officer for the case. Solomon said Giordano's statements in the press that he would bring charges against the fire captains if they did not obey the order to inspect the building the arsonist had hit and forward all information to the Hudson County prosecutor's office for them to take criminal action shows that he could not be a fair trial judge.

The charges against the five firemen date back to the evening of July 31 when the five firemen refused a direct order from Deputy Fire Chief John Sheehan to check a building at 715-717 Clinton St. as part of the city's "Arson Alert" Program. Sheehan had ordered Capts. Eugene Failla, Gerard Peterson, Robert Moore, John Lisa and Michael Waldich to have firemen check the five-story building hourly following an early morning arson attempt in which a liquid accelerant and burnt newspapers were found on the second and third-floor stairwells of the building. The building did not suffer major damage from the arson attempt.

Bergen said at the time the fire captains refused the order because they felt they would have been risking their men's lives.

"No city in the country sends a fireman into a potentially explosive situation unarmed and untrained . . . to possibly confront an arsonist," said Bergen.

Bergen had asked that yesterday's departmental hearing be open to the public and Giordano had originally complied. Giordano said yesterday that he changed his mind at the last minute because he felt if the hearing was open to the public it would be "a three-ring circus."

Giordano admitted he had told Solomon that he would be glad to sign subpoenas for two of the witnesses Solomon had subpoenaed — a New York City fire marshal and a former arson investigator for the city of Newark — but decided not to do so after advice from Schaeffer.

Schaeffer said the witnesses were free to testify at the hearing but that doesn't mean the city has to accept their testimony. He said, however, the city would have to accept it if they signed the subpoenas.

The city lawyer said Bergen was not allowed to sit in on the meeting because the firemen already had legal representation with Solomon being there.

But Solomon claimed it was illegal under the National Labor Relations Act for union representatives to be excluded from disciplinary hearings. Bergen said never in the history of Hoboken had the city ever tried to do anything like that.

"This whole thing is a disgrace," said Bergen. "The city doesn't want to look bad so they are trying to have an unfair hearing so they can cover up."

Solomon said he felt the city's action against the fire captains was a ploy to divert the attention of the residents of the city. "Hoboken looks bad because of all of the deaths in the fires they had," he said. "So they are trying to put the attention on the firefighters. In other words, they are looking for a fall guy."

Giordano said Solomon's comments were ridiculous and said the city only wants the fire captains to do their job.

The fire captains are still on duty receiving full pay pending the outcome of the departmental trial. Penalties could range from a reprimand to dismissal.

Hoboken Reporter 9/30/82

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The Dispatch,
Monday, Sept. 20, 1982

4 homeless

3 injured in fire

HOBOKEN—An early morning fire in a four-story building at 653 First St. yesterday totally destroyed a second-floor apartment, injuring three persons and leaving a family of four homeless.

The blaze broke out at 8:41 a.m., filling the building with thick smoke and destroying the apartment occupied by Miguel Peralta, his wife and two young children, Deputy Chief Richard Tremitiedi said.

The cause of the blaze is undetermined, but arson is not suspected, Tremitiedi said. An investigation is scheduled for this morning.

The evacuation of the eight-family building was hampered by thick smoke that quickly filled the stairwells, officials said.

Three tenants, including a 2-year-old girl, were treated at St. Mary Hospital for minor injuries and smoke inhalation. All three were released, a hospital spokeswoman said.

Tina Rosa, 2, was cut by shattered glass. Marlene Sanichez, 34, injured an elbow. A third man, whose identity was not available yesterday, was also injured in the blaze, an official said.

Peralta's apartment was "totally" destroyed in the blaze and the family of four has relocated with relatives, Tremitiedi said.

The two-alarm blaze was brought under control in 25 minutes, and none of the other apartments was damaged, a fire department spokesman said. —Bill Gyves

22 THE JERSEY JOURNAL, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1982

Neighbors call building eyesore

Continued from Page 1

What galls Mrs. Carnevale most, is that the fire escape at 414 Madison is exactly the same type of escape her building had. And the city is making no attempt to replace its escape.

The building is listed as owned by the city on tax records. According to the records, the city took ownership of the building in June of 1980 for failure to pay taxes.

Now the building remains "in limbo", according to Mayor Steve Cappiello and city business administrator Edwin Chius. Chius said the building has been scheduled for demolition, but held up as the city is waiting for funds to demolish the building and relocate the few Hispanic families who live in the building.

Chius said the building was to be sold at a recent city land sale, but was prevented by residents in the neighborhood who said they were interested in buying and rehabilitating the building. However, he said that the costs of rehabilitating the building were too high.

But people in the neighborhood said the building has now become an eyesore.

The building at 414 Madison is now under state violation for housing code violations, according to Jude Fitzgibbons, a Hoboken housing inspector.

Mrs. Carnevale said her building is actually owned by her son, Michael, and another family, but managed by her.

JOURNAL, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 1982

Fire escapes got 'em burning mad

A crackdown ordered by state housing inspection officers on fire-escape regulations has Hoboken landlords crying "unfair."

Hugh Hothem, president of the League of Hoboken Homeowners, called the crackdown "the product of officials who all must live in the suburbs" at a recent meeting of the league.

According to Hothem, the regulations governing fire escapes do not seem to take into account urban areas like Hoboken where the buildings and their fire escapes may be as much as 80 to 100 years old.

Michael Curcio, the city's chief housing inspector, said his inspectors have been citing landlords throughout the city for their fire escapes after receiving word from the state regarding the crackdown.

Most of the violations concern the stairwells between the platforms of the escapes, Curcio said. The state regulations require that each step be made of one solid piece of metal rather than the slats and rods that now make up the steps in most of the buildings.

Also, the regulations require that the stairs come down at a 45-to-60 degree angle between each platform. Many buildings' escapes have their stairs at about a 40-degree angle, he said.

Hothem said the regulations may make sense in the suburbs where most of the fire escapes on the newer buildings meet the code, but in Hoboken many of the escapes were made before the code.

"As a result, a lot of owners are forced to make expensive corrections on perfectly good fire escapes," Hothem said.

Hothem said he knew of several homeowners who had to make major repairs on their buildings' escapes to meet the code. The repairs cost them several thousand dollars.

Rules don't apply to city-owned eyesore

Sept 2
9/2/82
J.J



Photo by Steve Golecki

Edwin Robles checks out the rundown condition of the city-owned building at 414 Madison St., in Hoboken which has become a neighborhood eyesore and the source of complaints.

By James Kopchains

To Lucille Carnevale, the whole situation is just unfair.

It's not that Mrs. Carnevale has any qualms about having to install more than $4,000 worth of fire safety improvements at the building at 412 Madison St. in Hoboken. She just wants to know why the house next door, 414 Madison, that is owned by the city doesn't have to do the same.

"I've had all sort of pressure to fix up the fire escapes and install electric smoke alarms, but nothing's being done next door," she said in the drizzle yesterday outside her building.

"They gave me until Friday to finish the fire escape. I had to get an extension," she said.

See NEIGHBORS — Page 22.

10/6/82 the dispatch

You can go home again

Repairs on 223 Madison nearly done

By BILL GYVES
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—After two weeks of temporary exile at a Jersey City Holiday Inn, the eight families who live at 223 Madison St. may be back home within two days.

Joseph Lecowitch, executive director of the Hudson County Red Cross, said yesterday an "optimistic" estimate would have the tenants back at 223 Madison St. this afternoon. But he said it is more likely that they will return home tomorrow morning.

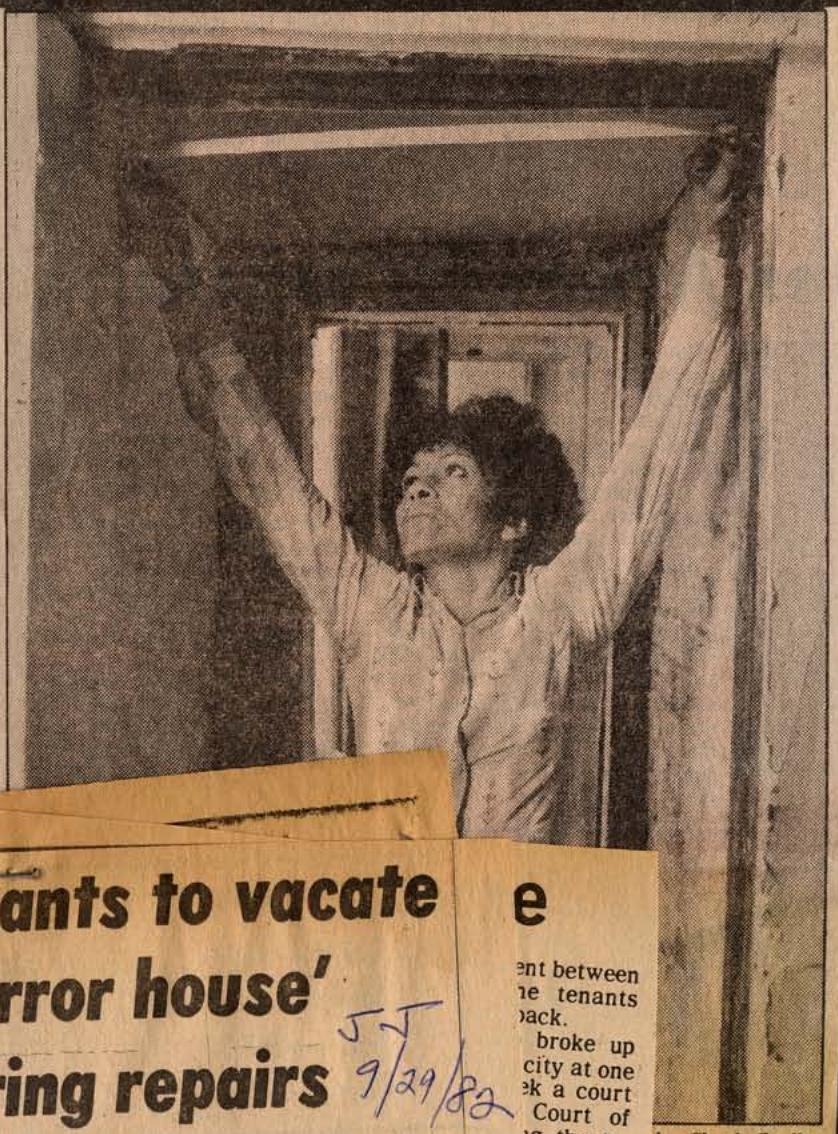
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by Chuck Zoeller

St., Hoboken, ... as she helps

Tenants to vacate 'horror house' during repairs

9/29/82

By James Kopchains

The eight families living without gas or electricity at 223 Madison Street in Hoboken have agreed to leave the building until the landlord completes all needed repairs.

On Monday, the same tenants refused to leave when city officials tried to evict them. Yesterday's decision came after a full day of heated meetings and negotiations among the city, the tenants and the landlord of the building.

In agreeing to leave the building, the tenants have been assured by the landlord, Luis Mieles, and their attorney, Ramon Irizarry, that they will be allowed to move back once the repairs are completed.

City Construction Code Official Albert Arezzo said an inspection on Monday showed that the building did not have an operational furnace or hot water heater.

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In addition, Arezzo said his inspectors found several fire-safety code violations. On the basis of this inspection, Arezzo said he had ordered the tenants removed for their own safety.

Once the tenants are removed, Arezzo said he expected that it would only take about three days for Mieles to complete all the necessary work. After it is completed, he said he would return the building to Mieles who could then bring the tenants back.

Yesterday's decision represents another chapter in the controversy surrounding the building. The building, which has already been declared officially vacated and boarded up several times by the city, has been occupied by the tenants for the past several months who have claimed they have no other place to go, since they were forced from their homes in other areas of Hoboken and other Hudson communities.

Irizarry and Mieles had worked out an agreement to solve the problem on Sept. 17, but the agreement fell apartment when assistant City Attorney Thomas Calligy advised the mayor not to sign the document because he did not have the power to enforce it and when Mieles failed to meet a deadline set on Thursday by Arezzo to have certain work performed on the building.

The agreement would have had the tenants staying at the building while the repairs were completed. The city would help by giving Mieles the permits necessary to complete the work and ensuring the tenants would be allowed to remain there after it was finished.

See TENANTS — Page 2.

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State and city inspectors repeatedly had tried to have the building closed, citing several safety violations.

An agreement finally was reached, however, and the tenants boarded a Hoboken Board of Education bus the afternoon of Sept. 23 for the trip to the Jersey City Holiday Inn.

The agreement gave tenants the option of helping with the renovation work. Five or six of the tenants were observed yesterday assisting the workers.



Photo by Chuck Zoeller

CASILDA QUINONES, a tenant at 223 Madison St., Hoboken, measures a doorway in the building for sheetrock as she helps with building renovations yesterday.

...enants to vacate

Continued from Page 1

At a morning meeting with Calligy, Irizarry and other city and tenant representatives, Arezzo said he would not remove the eviction notice on the building, but he would agree to allow Mieles to repair the violations, then bring the tenants back.

"The building doesn't have to be 100 percent perfect," Arezzo said, "but it has to meet minimum fire standards, at least."

At one point, Calligy walked out of the meeting after a heated argument with Irizarry as to whether the city could be involved in any agreement between the landlord and the tenants about bringing them back.

The meeting also broke up several times, and the city at one point was about to seek a court order from Superior Court of Hudson County ordering the tenants forcibly evicted. However, after discussion with the tenants, Irizarry agreed to have them leave provided that security is provided at the building to guard their possessions. Besides police patrols, Arezzo said two of the tenants will be allowed to stay in the building overnight to guard the premises.

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CASILDA QUINONES, a tenant at 223 Madison St., Hoboken, measures a doorway in the building for sheetrock as she helps with building renovations yesterday.

A deadly pattern: Hoboken fires hit apartment houses

By Ernest Tollerson
and Michael E. Ruane
Inquirer Staff Writers

HOBOKEN, N.J. — Josephina Tamayo could see the heavy-set woman leaning out through the smoke billowing from the fourth-floor window.

In Spanish, the woman screamed again and again for help as the heavy smoke poured from the four-story apartment building. A body lay motionless on the sidewalk below her.

Ms. Tamayo, 47, who came to America from her native Ecuador 17 years ago, understood the woman's cries, but she stood across the street in a housecoat and could do nothing.

As minutes passed, the woman in the window on the top floor of the building was gradually overcome by the smoke. Suddenly she slumped, pitched forward and tumbled out the window. Her body struck the sidewalk and bounced once.

Ms. Tamayo said she, her father and an aunt, who lived in the building next door, stared in horror. "It was terrible," Ms. Tamayo said. "Terrible."

There were many cries in Spanish here Friday morning when fire raced through the Pinter Hotel three blocks from the Hudson River waterfront, killing 12 people. The cries came from women who dropped their children to police officers and passing cab drivers, and later from others who watched dead friends and relatives carried in body bags from within the blackened shell.

The blaze killed six children — including one who was 1 month old — two teenagers, three women and a man. All were Hispanic.

The victims came from among 12 families: 38 people living in 12 small apartments on the second, third and fourth floors over a bar and restaurant at 14th and Bloomfield Streets.

The fire in the apartment building — across the Hudson from midtown Manhattan and with the illuminated top of the Empire State Building clearly visible at night — brought the number of those killed in fires in Hoboken to 55 in the last 2½ years. Officials said that 26 of those have died in fires since September.

An arson fire on Jan. 20, 1979, killed 21 people — 17 of them members of the same Asian-Indian family — in a tenement on Clinton Street, on the other side of town from the site of Friday's blaze.

In Friday's fire, Hoboken Police Lt. Frank Turso said, investigators have been seeking to question a man who attacked a barmaid in the bar beneath the apartment building two hours before the blaze broke out.

Turso said the barmaid, Patricia Franklin, 36, told them a man who she had refused to serve earlier in the evening because he appeared intoxicated apparently was waiting outside when she closed the bar.

When she walked outside about 2:20 a.m., the man slashed her on the arm with a knife and then drove off in a car, Turso said. Ms. Franklin went to a hospital. At 4:22 a.m. a passing policeman discovered the four-story brick building on fire.

Police said the fire apparently started on a stairwell between the second and third floors. Investigators found a wastebasket in the building they at first erroneously thought might have contained a flammable liquid.

As of yesterday officials were saying that the fire was of "suspicious" origin because it spread so fast.

"The greatest cause of the [arson] problem is revenge or callousness," Hoboken Mayor Steve Capiello said last week in an interview in his City Hall office.

He noted that many of the arson targets in Hoboken have been apartment buildings with many residents.

Hoboken's 42,460 residents live in a single square mile of sharp contrasts, with crowded graffiti-scarred tenements next door to handsome restored buildings and new restaurants. Some residents say the split personality of the town has in recent years helped add to the fire problems.

Ronald Hine, who has lived in Hoboken for 14 years and has studied patterns of arson there and in New York City, believes there may be an economic reason.

"We have found a strong correlation between multiple-alarm fires where everybody is displaced and conversion to condominiums," Hine said. "I'm not saying that in every case that [condominium conversion] was the motive, but when you look at case after case, you suspect these [arsons] may not have occurred by chance.

"It's a common practice for a developer to ask for a building to be delivered vacant," said Hine, who works with the North Flatbush Arson Research Project in New York City.

"There is tremendous economic incentive to displace tenants," Hine said in an interview in his office in an old movie theater here. "What we have found is that sometimes fire is used to facilitate the process."

Meanwhile, the conflict between past and present, decay and restoration, poverty and prosperity is evident in the neighborhood around 14th and Bloomfield Streets.

On one corner of the intersection stands the Riviera bar, its bricks painted a garish pink, setting off black graffiti signatures: "Colorado Jimmy," "Loco Montez," and "Pint 1981." Winking colored lights line the awning over the entrance.

A block away, at 14th and Washington Streets, is the elegant Madison Restaurant, a pioneering downtown restoration. A sign in one window reads, "Sunday brunch. Noon to 4. Eggs Benedict. Quiche. . . . Unlimited champagne."

Hoboken converting tenements to condos

On every other block in Hoboken there seems to be a sign just put up on one of the apartment buildings: "Condominiums for sale," it says.

And based on the initial success of the first few completed condominium projects, it appears a lot more apartment buildings in the city are going to be converted.

While city officials are happy about the condominium trend because it brings lots of additional tax revenue into the city's coffers, tenant leaders aren't very pleased at all.

They say the development of more and more of Hoboken's buildings for condominiums leaves fewer and fewer apartments for the low-and middle-income residents of the city. In addition, they say, harassment of tenants is common in occupied buildings which landlords wish to convert to condominiums.

Hoboken's first condominium, The Hudson Mews, which was the former Terminal Printing Co. plant, is reportedly almost all sold out. While agents for the condominium were unavailable for comment those familar with the project say all but two of the 24 units have been sold.

The condominium conversion of the printing plant was finished in the early summer. 11 Units in a number of other condominium projects on Washington Street in uptown Hoboken which were also finished in the last few months are also sold out. So is another condominium development on Garden Street in downtown Hoboken.

"The condominium units being built are selling like hotcakes," said one local developer who didn't want his name used.

Another developer, who also asked for anonymity, said any condominium project that has quality construction is selling.

Both developers agreed that more and more buildings will be made into condominiums. Currently there are about 10 open with another 10 in the works.

The condominiums aren't cheap. Prices ranging from $60,000 for a studio to $100,000 for a two-bedroom unit are common. But they are much lower than in Manhattan where condominium units often start for at least $200,000 for a studio.

Marion Lyons, a 25-year-old advertising executive from Manhattan, was walking along Washington Street yesterday looking for a condominium.

"I'm tired of paying rent," said the woman who said she now pays $700 a month for a one-bedroom apartment in Manhattan.

"I want to own a condo but I can't afford those in New York," she said. "So I figure this is the next best thing. Hoboken is so close to New York and the people seem pretty friendly. I'm pretty set on settling here."

Teri Ratti, a Hoboken tenant leader who is also the city's senior citizens social worker, said most people living in buildings being converted to condominiums can't afford to buy in.

"The Hoboken residents who live in the buildings now are the real losers," she said.

While senior citizens living in buildings to be converted to condominiums can't be thrown out, under legislation signed by former Governor Byrne, Ms. Ratti said this would not stop many unscrupulous landlords from harassing the elderly to get them out of the building.

Other tenant leaders say they have already heard of cases where the elderly have been harassed to get them to move out.

The condominium developers, however, claim their efforts are positive for the city, overall.

"We're turning in what most cases were decaying slum buildings into quality buildings," said one of the developers. This is upgrading the city."

Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello said the tax benefits to the city from condominiums are great. The mayor said the splitting up of a building into various condominium units often doubles and triples the value of the property taxes the city collects.

"Instead of collecting taxes from one landlord, "we're collecting them from six or seven condominium owners," he said.

Cappiello does admit some people are being displaced by the condominium boom.

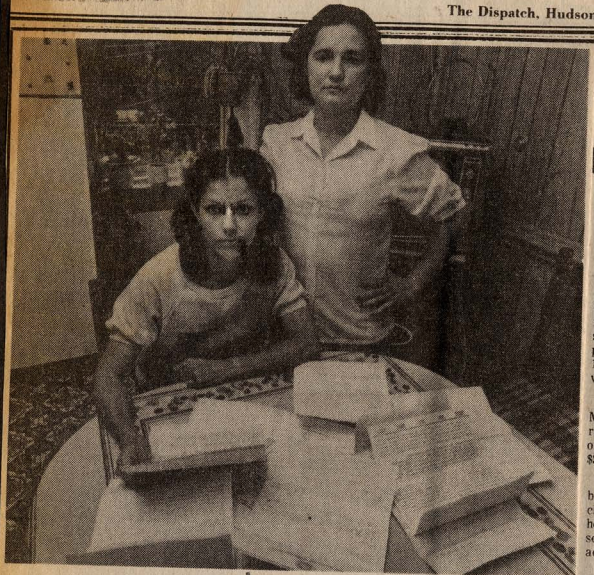


Photo by Chuck Zoeller

HAYDEE MORALES, seated, looks over papers in her capacity as president of the tenants' association at 923 Garden Street in Hoboken as Noelia Ortiz, another tenant, looks on.

or enters probe d landlord fraud

The increase, which became effective May 1, raised the tenants' rents $154, from $196 to $350.

The board ruled the increase was justified under the capital-improvements section of the rent-leveling ordinance, which states that a building may be removed from rent control restrictions if its landlord proves he has performed renovations totalling at least 100 percent of the buildings assessed value.

Mody was granted the rent increase March 23, after presenting to the board receipts for $51,482 in renovation work on the building, which is assessed for $32,600.

But Haydee Morales, president of the building's tenant association, has charged that Mody falsified the receipts he presented to the board, inflating by several thousand dollars the amount actually spent on repairing the building.

Morales yesterday said an investigation conducted by Juan Garcia, a leader of Hoboken's Hispanic community, indicates that the receipts Mody presented to the board frequently conflict with the totals charged by the individual contractors commissioned for the renovations.

Mody reportedly has been in India for several weeks, and no one answered his office telephone yesterday to respond to the charges.

Garcia said yesterday he belives Mody may have superimposed the signatures of the individual contractors onto the receipts before presenting them to the board.

The expenses in question include $2,400 for the building's conversion to gas heat; $4,000 for storm windows; $5,300 for electrical work; $1,720 for painting; $4,900 for a hot water heater and $6,850 for a chimney, Garcia said.

Garcia blamed the board for not fully investigating Mody's expenses before granting him the rent increase.

"I put all the blame on the board," Garcia said. "I don't blame landlord's for trying to get away with everything they can. But clearly there's complicity between the city and the landlord's to displace these people."

Three of the seven families who were living in the building prior to the May 1 rent increase have been forced to leave, Garcia said.

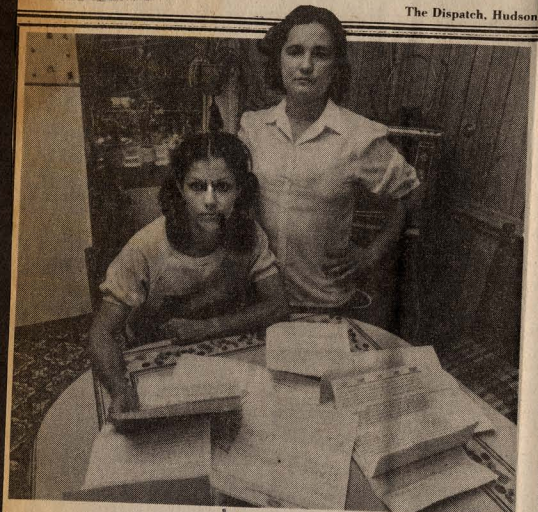


Photo by Chuck Zoeller

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Prosecutor enters probe of alleged landlord fraud

By BILL GYVES
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—The Hudson County Prosecutor's Office has entered the investigation into charges that the landlord of a Hoboken apartment building submitted fraudulent receipts in order to secure a 78-percent rent increase the city granted him, according to a highly placed source in the city administration.

The administration member, who asked not to be named, said the Hoboken Rent Leveling and Stabilization Board, which granted the increase, decided last month at a closed meeting to turn the investigation over to the the prosecutor's office.

Barry P. Sarkisian, the board's attorney, yesterday confirmed that report.

However, acting Hudson County Prosecutor Charles R. Buckley yesterday refused to confirm or deny the reports that his office was actively invesigating the charges. He said he could not comment on the case.

P.P. Mody, a Union City-based landlord who owns the building at 923 Garden St., was granted the 78-percent rent increase at the March 23 rent board meeting.

The increase, which became effective May 1, raised the tenants' rents $154, from $196 to $350.

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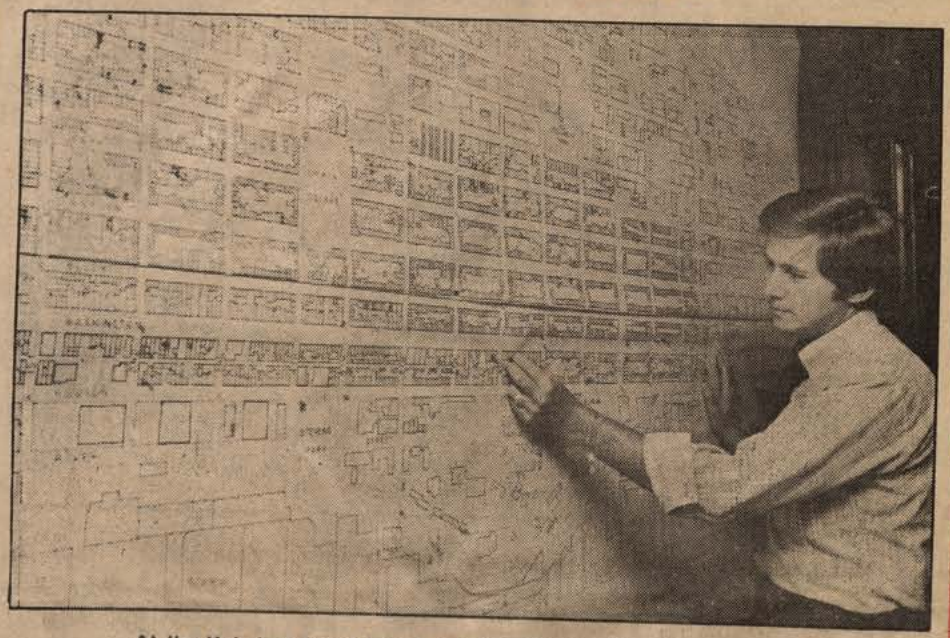
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SJ 10/11/82

Hoboken cops look for clues to arson



At the Hoboken Arson Squad headquarters in City Hall, Sgt. John Howe pinpoints possible arson sites on a large street map of the city.

By James Kopchains

The signs are easy to spot before most arson fires occur.

False alarms, building violations, disputes between landlord and tenants, and substantial renovations can all tip off the alert investigator that the building is a prime target for arson.

In Hoboken, where more than 60 people have died in four suspicious fires in the past year, investigators are keeping careful watch for the signs of possible arson through an Arson Early-Warning System.

Both Sgt. James Behrens and Sgt. John Howe, of the city's arson squad, have been checking all information on city buildings since August, looking for clues warning of future arson. Also members of the federal Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms department are at work investigating the fires.

Central to their work is a huge map of the city in their office. Dotting the map are clusters of yellow, red, green, blue and black-headed pins.

"We have pins for buildings where false alarms were registered, where actual fires occurred, buildings with housing violations, rent control disputes, tax liens, and places that have filed for substantial renovation," Behrens said. "When we see two or three pins clustered around one building, we put an arson alert on it and watch it very closely."

Behrens said he receives reports every morning from the city's fire, building, and tax departments, files them, then places the proper pins on the building's location on the map.

"What the map does is give us an easy way to see an arson pattern developing," Howe explained.

A building is considered a good target for arson if two or more warning signs are found at the site, according to Behrens. For example, when a landlord files for substantial renovations the squad will watch the building

See HOBOKEN — Page 27.

Hoboken cops look for arson clues

Continued from Page 1

to see if the landlord is in a hurry to have the tenants removed so he can start the work.

Both Behrens and Howe admitted that the map is of little use should a person decide to set a fire for revenge or out of anger.

"There's just no way to predict it when a guy is jilted by his girlfriend or gets thrown out of a building and then goes back and sets a fire in revenge," Howe said.

Unfortunately, both men said it appeared the fires set in the past year all seemed to be at least partially prompted by revenge.

Behrens said the squad still considered it a top priority to try to find the arsonists in the fires, but some of its focus has been shifted to prevent any more such fires.

"When you take a look at these," Behrens said while taking out a file of photographs of the victims, "you'll understand why we have to do it."

SJ 10/12/82

The Dispatch, Hudson/Bergen Counties, N

Hanging out

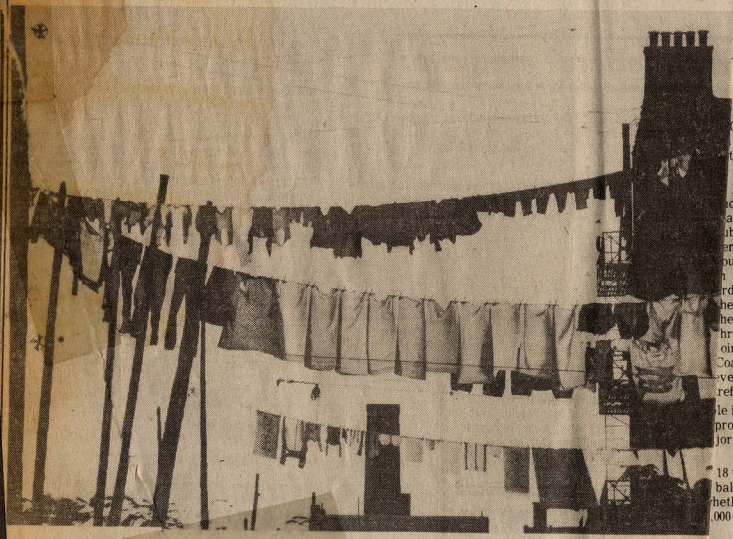


Photo by Ted

Laundry hangs out to dry off Ninth Steet in Hoboken.

opposes plan runoff votes

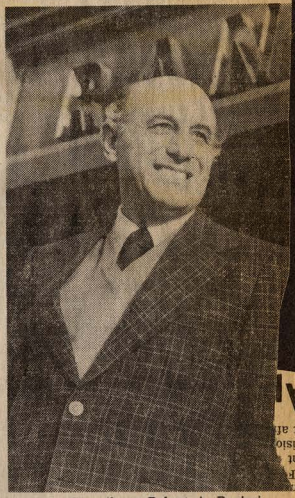
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Councilman Robert A. Ranieri
'Democracy costs money'

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The Dispatch, Hudson/Bergen Counties, N.J. Monday, Oct. 4, 1982

Hanging out

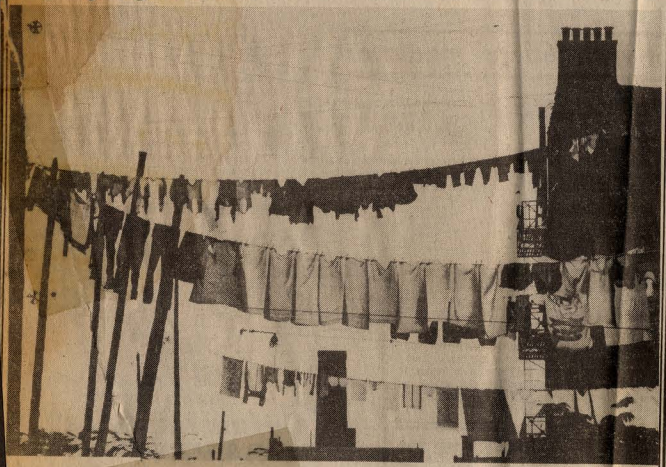


Photo by Ted Boswell

Laundry hangs out to dry off Ninth Steet in Hoboken.

Ranieri opposes plan to end runoff votes

By BILL GYVES
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—Councilman Robert Ranieri has become the third member of the City Council come out against the referendum placed on the Nov. 2 ballot seeking the elimination of runoff elections in the city.

Ranieri joins Councilmen E. Norman Wilson and Nunzio Malfetti in publicly denouncing the council's approval in August of an ordinance placing the referendum on the ballot. The three councilmen join the Hoboken Coalition to Save the Runoff, composed of several community groups, in opposition to the referendum.

'The fundamental principle of democracy is rule of the majority'
— Robert Ranieri

"The fundamanental principle in a democracy is rule by the majority. If this proposal is approved, it will endanger majority government," Ranieri said.

The City Council voted Aug. 18 to place the referendum on the November ballot. The referendum asks the voters whether or not they wish to continue spending $35,000 for each runoff election.

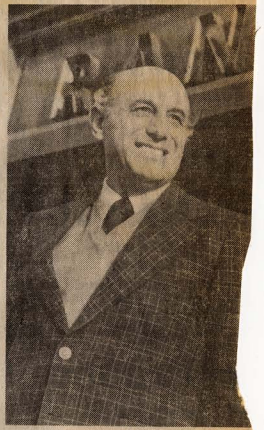
Currently, a candidate must win 50 percent of the vote, plus one to win a municipal election.

Council President Walter Cramer and Mayor Steve Cappiello argue that the change would save the taxpayers' money.

But critics counter that the proposal is being placed on the ballot because the Cappiello administration's political strength is dwindling, and the elimination of the runoff would let an incumbent stay in office without a majority of the vote.

"True democracy is expensive. It costs money," Ranieri said. "But if you want a democracy you have to spend the money."

Ranieri was not present at the Aug. 18 vote on the ordinance. Wilson and Malfetti both voted against the referendum.



Councilman Robert A. Ranieri
'Democracy costs money'

Last week Wilson expressed his opposition to the referendum, saying, "The elimination of the runoff strikes at the very heart of democracy. (The change) almost guarantees rule by the minority beholden to the special interests of the political organization, rather than the public."

Anthony Russo, one of many community leaders in the Hoboken Coalition to Save the Runoff said yesterday, "It is absurd for us Hobokenites to even consider voting for this dictatorial referendum. The mayor and majority of his council are actually attempting to chip away at the heart of democracy by asking voters to support this proposal."

Hoboken shuts off phone on housing complaints

J.J 10/11/82

Hoboken tenants who want to complain of housing violations will now have to come to the housing inspection office to make their complaints.

Jude Fitzgibbons, the city's senior housing inspector, said the inspectors will no longer answer calls about violations on the telephone and then make an inspection.

"From now on, I will instruct the callers to come into the office and fill out a formal complaint against the landlord," Fitzgibbons said. "I'll also ask them if they had first contacted the landlord about the problem before making a complaint.

Too often, Fitzgibbons said, persons will call the office and complain of violations, but when inspectors arrive there they find that no such tenant lives at that address.

Also, he said the tenant sometimes does not give a clear idea to the inspector of what the violation really is.

"If a person will come in and sign an official complaint we'll know exactly what we should be looking for and we can set up an appointment with the person to come in and perform the inspections," Fitzgibbons said.

Hoboken site owner hit with subpoenas

B 11/18/82

The Hoboken Rent Levelling Board has filed subpoenas with the owner of 923 Garden St. for all financial records regarding the substantial rehabilitation rent increases given to the building in Mav.

The building has been the center of a growing controversy focusing on the rent increases granted it under the substantial rehabilitation clause in the city's rent levelling ordinance. Tenants in the building have claimed that the landlord, P.P. Mody of Union City, deliberately forged several bills submitted for work done on the building in order to receive the rent increases.

Rents at the building were raised as much as 78 percent after the board approved the application. As a result, five of the ten tenants living in the building were forced to move, according to the tenants.

The board has set a hearing for Nov. 30 to review the original information in the application. In addition, the Hudson County Prosecutor's office is reportedly also conducting an investigating of the records.

Local The Dispatch, Hudson/Bergen Counties, N.J. Thursday, Nov. 18, 1982

Applied Housing denies favoring rich

By BILL GYVES
Staff Writer

EN—Applied Housing Associates, for investigation by the City Council impropriеties in its huge subsidized-eration, yesterday rejected the allega-nfounded.

Housing President Joe Barry, whose n is the largest holder of subsidized-nits in the city, yesterday denied hat the corporation is offering its units to wealthy "out-of-towners" and Hoboken's lower-income residents.

Councilman Nunzio Malfetti urged the City Council Monday to investigate the allegations. Council President Walter Cramer presented the case to the council's law committee for consideraton.

Barry said Malfetti's request was motivated by personal differences he has had with the corporation after Applied Housing failed to house "four or five" residents the councilman recommended. Malfetti "vowed to get even" with the corporation, Barry said.

Barry said 87 percent of Applied Housing units are occupied by lower-income Hoboken residents, and 13 percent by low-income residents of other areas in Hudson County.

"Very few, probably less than 1 percent" of the residents in Applied Housing units are wealthy "out-of-towners," Barry said.

Barry said Federal Housing and Urban Development regulations require that the subsidized units be distributed to residents throughout a given region, and not simply in one city.

"Let's hear (Malfetti's) numbers with thes 'out-of-towners,'" Barry said. "We'll share o statistics with the city or anyone."

Councilman E. Norman Wilson, chairman of the council's law committee, said the committee would "entertain" Malfetti's request for the investigation within the next two weeks.

$12M Hartz tract value confirmed

By BILL GYVES
Staff Writer

Hudson County Tax Administrator Stanley P. Kosakowski yesterday confirmed reports that the county Board of Taxation has placed a $12-million value on the Weehawken waterfront property recently purchased by Hartz Mountain Industries.

Kosakowski said township and Hartz officials have been notified through a letter released Tuesday that the board ruled the property is worth $12,049,700.

The figure is nearly three times the amount Hartz has said it will pay for the waterfront tract and $10 million less than township officials have said is a fair market value for the property.

The township and developer have until Dec. 30 to appeal the board's decision to the state Tax Court, Kosakowski said. The appeal process could take up to two years to complete, according to sources, and that decision can in turn be appealed to the Appellate Division of state Superior Court.

Mayor Stanley D. Iacono said Tuesday that he plans to present the question of whether to appeal the decision before the Township Council Monday. According to sources, the council plans to appeal the decison once the question is brought to a vote.

Hartz officials said Tuesday they will not comment on whether they will appeal the board's decison until they review the matter with their counsel.

Kosakowski said it would not be unusual for both sides to appeal the decision.

Applied Housing denies favoring rich

By BILL GYVES
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—Applied Housing Associates, scheduled for investigation by the City Council for alleged improprieties in its huge subsidized-housing operation, yesterday rejected the allegations as unfounded.

Applied Housing President Joe Barry, whose corporation is the largest holder of subsidized-housing units in the city, yesterday denied charges that the corporation is offering its subsidized units to wealthy "out-of-towners" and neglecting Hoboken's lower-income residents.

Councilman Nunzio Malfetti urged the City Council Monday to investigate the allegations. Council President Walter Cramer presented the case to the council's law committee for consideraton.

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'There's a lot of gouging'

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their rents, legal or illegal, without a word.

"I'd say 90 percent of the calls I get a day are from tenants who are being charged too much rent," Mrs. Borg said. "And they're right, there is a lot of gouging going on out there."

According to Mrs. Borg, many landlords are charging new tenants more than the allowed amount of rent increase, but her office and the city's rent control board are not receiving any word from the tenants.

These tenants either do not understand all their rights under rent control in the city, Mrs. Borg said, or they just "don't want to make waves" with their landlord.

"Landlords are only entitled under city ordinance to raise the rent 25 percent over the previous rent when an apartment becomes vacant," she said. "But I've gotten calls from people paying $450 a month when the previous rent was about $150".

Mrs. Borg has been working since the beginning of September with the city's rent control board to handle the backload of material that has swamped the department.

VILLA NOVA
Trade in
YOUR OLD CHRISTMAS

Heat and outside temperature at odds

11/82

New Jersey passed a senior citizen law that was supposed to be of value to the elderly. Instead it has been turned into a nightmare. Where the senior citizen now rents he is harassed: when he looks for a new place to live he is turned down. So, the 45-year law has worked against him.

I live in a building that has 400 apartments. The owners are making an effort to turn it into a condominium or cooperative. At present there are over 100 apartments that are vacant because management will not rent to anyone. There is no place to turn.

Our apartment has a heating problem. The super has told one of the women in our line that a valve was incorrectly put into the heating system that makes it difficult to heat the apartments facing the west. The owners have set up a system of 20 minutes of heat and 40 minutes off. Since the building is over 30 years old the wooden windows are not good enough to keep the cold air from coming into the apartment.

We called the board of health and gave the facts. What they did I did not know. Tuesday, Nov. 15, the outside temperature, according to the radio, was 31 degrees. There was no heat at all in the apartment. At 6:45 a.m. I called the super and about 15 minutes later we had heat. At noon hour the assistant super came up and whirled his thermometer around and told me that the heat was 70 — two above the allowable 68 degrees. By this time the outside temperature had risen about 15 degrees. Every time the temperature in our apartment is checked, it is at the noon hour time when the outside temperature is at its best.

The Board of Health tells me I have to take the temperature in the morning. Why they would take my word for its reading rather than figure out a 70 degree temperature at high noon and 15 degrees higher than the morning report is a mystery to me. They may be deficient in arithmetic or simple logic. Incidentally, the person taking the reading never lets anyone see the temperature. I am writing this letter so if any one of our tenants gets pneumonia and dies, we will know that another government facility has failed.

Irwin Goldman
North Bergen

by Garry Trudeau

11/82

A tragedy

Arson suspected in blaze that

By ROY KAHN
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—Arson has been part of life in the buildings of Olga Ramos.

This weekend, what police officials believe was the fourth arson attack within a year on one of her properties took the lives of 11 persons and left 10 others homeless.

The Saturday morning blaze at 102 12th St. was the city's second fatal apartment house fire this month and sets the death toll for October at nine children and four adults.

Officials do not believe the two blazes are linked, but both were said to have been started in hallways.

County arson investigators at the scene of the 12th Street fire indicated "some kind of liquid accelerant" had been poured into the hallway before the fire was set, turning the core of the tenement into an impassable tower of flame.

On Saturday, police, who said they are investigating three different leads, secured a search warrant for Ramos' home. They confiscated a sweater, jacket, socks and shoes belonging to Reinaldo Negron, 40, who police described as her boyfriend.

Police Chief George Crimmins said the clothing "was just one more lead to follow up."

Officals also are looking into charges by the surviving tenants of gutted 102 12th St., that Ramos had been trying to force them out of the building for about a year, and they believed she would resort to burning them out if necessary.

Ramos has denied making any threats. She explained she has had little contact with the tenants, having left responsibility for the building in the hands of the superintendent, Caridad Capote.

Capote, who moved out of the building two months ago, also denied that Ramos had threatened the tenants.

But the tenants say they were terrified, first by threats Ramos was alleged to have made a year ago — after she failed to get a rent increase — and then by a May 18 arson attempt. It was foiled by Angel Caraballo, a young tenant who discovered three molotov cocktails, one of them lit, in the first-floor hallway.

Jennie Vega, 23, who lived in the building with her two young children, said that since May she has been sleeping at her sister-in-law's home on Hudson Street, fearful that she might be caught in an arson attack.

"When I was in the building, I would sleep with my eyes open," said Vega, who was with her sister-in-law Saturday morning when her home erupted in flames. "The tension was making me sick, and the doctor said I should find another place to go. But I have two kids and apartments are too small. I was looking, but there was nothing around."

See TRAGEDY, Page 15

11/82

A tragedy in Hoboken

Arson suspected in blaze that killed 11

By ROY KAHN
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See TRAGEDY, Page 15

INSIDE

- Memorial service is held for victims. Page 15.
- Hoboken has a history of fatal fires. Page 15.
- Tenant activist claimed by blaze. Page 15.



Photo by Chuck Zoeller

A young boy stands silently in Hoboken last evening during a prayer vigil for the victims of Saturday's fire.



Photo by Ted Boswell

FIREMEN LOWER ONE of the 11 victims of Saturday's fatal fire on Washington Street.

Rescheduling expected in January

Fire captains' hearing postponed

12/28/82

By BILL GYVES
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—For the third time in as many months, the scheduled disciplinary hearing for five Hoboken fire captains who refused in August to enter a building suspected of being an arson target has been postponed.

A city law department spokeswoman said the department expects the hearing to be rescheduled for sometime early in January.

The hearing scheduled this afternoon was canceled at the request of attorney David Solomon, who is representing the captains, according to the law department spokeswoman. The hearing for the captains, charged with insubordination, originally was set for Sept. 29.

That hearing was canceled following a stormy confrontation between city officials and the captains' representatives, in which Solomon accused the city of holding an unfair trial.

The hearing was rescheduled for Nov. 29, but that was canceled when it was learned the date had not been confirmed with Solomon. Solomon failed to appear at the hearing, and the trial could not be held without adequate legal representation for the captains.

The hearing then was rescheduled for today, and was confirmed by both city officials and the captains' representatives.

Hoboken Public Safety Director James W. Giordano, slated to be the arbiter in the hearing, could not be reached for comment yesterday. Solomon also could not be reached for comment.

The charges facing the five captains stem from their refusual Aug. 3 to enter a building at 715 Clinton St. suspected of being an arson target. The order to enter the building came only three days after firefighters found a liquid accelerant and burned newspapers on a stairwell inside the structure.

The five told their superiors an inspection of a suspected arson target should be conducted by armed police officers. They said the inspection was not included in their contract.

The city, however, argued the captains were shirking their responsibilties by refusing to conduct the search. At the time of the incident, Mayor Steve Cappiello labeled their action "a flagrant disregard for human life."

Solomon has said he would appeal a negative ruling made at the disciplinary hearing. Bill Bergin, president of the Hoboken Fire Officers' Union, which represents the captains, has indicated the union expects the hearing to result in a negative decision.

THE JERSEY JOURNAL

Tenants move on deco

A Jersey City tenants group has launched a round of meetings with local assemblymen to enlist their cooperation against five anti-tenant bills now under legislative consideration in Trenton.

Three of the bills were introduced by local state Sen. Edward O'Connor. Of the remaining bills, one known as vacancy decontrol would remove rent control from all vacant apartments statewide. The other would exempt from rent control all newly constructed apartments for a period of 30 years.

Members of the Coalition to Save Rent Control and other concerned citizens have already met with Sen. O'Connor and Assemblyman Joseph Doria of Bayonne. Other assemblymen who have agreed to meet with the group are Joseph Charles and Robert Janiszewski.

"We became deeply concerned about the future of tenant rights," recalled Norbert Herold, Coalition spokesman, "when Sen. O'Connor told us that the pendulum is swinging the other way in Trenton, swinging against tenants." O'Connor, he added, supports the bills which the Coalition opposes.

Herold estimated that there are approximately 100 anti-tenant bills being submitted or alrady under consideration in Trenton.

Support against the statewide vacancy bill (A1924) was promised the Coalition by Doria, said Herold. The legislator also pledged his opposition to the 30-year rent-control exemption rule. While having no position on the three O'Connor bills which facilitate evictions, Doria reportedly off them further.

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THE JERSEY JOURNAL, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1982

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"Since there is presently no limit on initial rents at newly constructed apartments, we agreed that the 30-year exemption on rent control is excessive," Herold said.

The bill (S383) has already passed the Senate and is awaiting an Assembly committee hearing.

The statewide vacancy decontrol bill is still in committee in the Assembly.

"We intend to continue meeting with our legislators because we want them to get to know us and us to know them," Herold explained. "We also want to let them know there's a voting tenant movement here where there wasn't one before."

the dispatch

Thursday, Dec. 2, 1982

Tenants turn against landlord

Call vital services lacking

By BILL GYVES
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—The seven-month battle between city officials and their landlord is still under way, but the tenants at 223 Madison St. apparently have crossed the battle line.

The tenants yesterday filed a formal complaint with the city against the landlord, Luis Mieles, arguing he has failed to provide adequate heat and other essential services.

The tenants said they also intend to begin working with the city in having Mieles removed as the building's landlord, thus having themselves declared the owners under a cooperative-management agreement.

In addition, the tenants are looking to officials to alleviate their heating problem by enacting a city ordinance letting the city purchase heating oil and pass the expense directly to Mieles.

Only 2½ months ago, the tenants rallied behind Mieles at a Municipal Court appearance on multiple safety violations. But Castilda Quinones, president of the building tenant association, said things have changed.

"I think he used us," Quinones said. "When he needed us, we were there. But when we need him, what happened?"

Quinones said the building has been without heat for a month, a situation she says is complicated by the fact that seven windows are missing. She also said the tenants currently are heating themselves with their stoves.

Quinones said no complaints could be relayed to the landlord because before yesterday, Mieles had not been seen for three weeks.

"Sure, today he's around — you know that. It's the first of the month," she said, referring to the date the tenants' rents are due.

The 23 tenants, however, will not be paying Mieles any more rent, according to Ramon Irizarry, an attorney who has been representing the tenants throughout the seven-month battle.

Irizarry said he has scheduled a meeting with city officials for next week to discuss the possibility of working with them to help have Mieles removed as landlord.

Mayor Steve Cappiello said yesterday the city would work to see that the tenants "are not exploited."

"But inasmuch as this is a controversial issue, I wouldn't do anything without the law department's consent," Cappiello said.

Cappiello and other city officials have been embroiled in a battle with Mieles since building inspectors cited 223 Madison St. for several safety violations, and the tenants were ordered out as a result.

City officials argued the tenants were asked to leave for their own safety. But the tenants said they were being harassed because they are Hispanic.

The Philadelphia Inquirer
new jersey/metro



Special to The Inquirer / BOB SACHA

Musician Eugene 'Gene the Plumber' Turonis, who has written a song decrying Hoboken's transformation boom, carries his son

Hoboken's gentrification blues

Sophisticates are changing its village tone

By Ernest Tollerson
Inquirer Trenton Bureau

HOBOKEN, N.J. — Frank Jennes goes down to the docks every day to take care of a rickety old barge that floats in river water as green and thick as some brands of dandruff shampoo.

Jennes, 69, and his longshoremen buddies used to hold cookouts on board and recall the days in 1954 when *On the Waterfront* was filmed here and they rubbed elbows with Marlon Brando and Lee J. Cobb. Nowadays, the barge is filled with jars of rusty nails, chains, a potbellied stove and a purple armchair with cotton stuffing popping through the seams. From time to time, Jennes lets in some of the cats that live on the piers, to prevent the place from becoming an amusement park for river rats.

Down here on the Hudson River, Jennes can pretty much ignore the construction crews that are transforming Hoboken's run-down brick buildings into luxury apartments, condominiums and offices. Hoboken, a working-class town listing under the weight of double-digit unemployment and a weak industrial base, is slowly evolving into an upper-income enclave that could, by the year 2000, become an unofficial borough of New York City.

Jennes' disdain for the rehabilitation boom on shore is as deep as his affection for the barge.

"They don't build anything for the poorer people," said Jennes, who is retired and lives with his wife in a one-bedroom apartment. "I hope they get stuck — all of the owners."

A lot of the 42,460 people in Hoboken these days are suffering from the gentrification blues.

Old-timers fret about spiraling rents and cling to the image of blue-collar Hoboken, which proudly displays a copy of Francis Albert Sinatra's birth certificate in a glass case in the library and which once considered renaming a road Sinatra's Way in honor of the city's native son.

Poor Hispanic tenants worry about holding on to their low-rent apartments, and about getting through this winter without another round of fatal fires.

A colony of artists and urban pioneers who came here in the middle- to late 1960s and who restored 19th-century rowhouses and factories approve of the heightened interest in the city, but some say they are squeamish about the way the robust real estate market displaces the poor.

After the collapse of the marine cargo industry here in the mid-1960s, gentrification was a relatively benign affair. The emigres created a market for fancy restaurants, but they respected Hoboken's traditions and appreciated its village atmosphere.

But that period seems to be coming to a close, as more and more young professionals determined to beat Manhattan's blue-chip housing prices discover that the brick row houses and brownstones here are solid and that the Port Authority

(See HOBOKEN on 2-B)

The Philadelphia Inquirer

2-B J Monday, Dec. 6, 1982 Philadelphia Inquirer

Hoboken sings gentrification blues

HOBOKEN, from 1-B

Trans Hudson (PATH) trains can whisk them to their New York offices in eight to 12 minutes.

And they don't feel that living here is tantamount to exile in the suburbs. Hoboken is just across the Hudson from New York and minutes from the Holland Tunnel. In Hoboken, you can see the sun rise on the twin towers of the World Trade Center, the scalloped arcs of the Chrysler Building and the needle point at the top of the Empire State Building.

Hoboken officials do not have estimates of the number of people who have moved here from New York in the last several years. But the newcomers' presence and their cosmopolitan tastes are reflected in a number of ways.

In the Washington Street business district, the blackboard in the Hoboken Gourmet's window advertises "fresh quiche." The Unicorn bookstore runs a late-afternoon and evening cafe in the back.

The Hoboken Chamber Orchestra is in its second season. The city has a photography gallery and nightspots with jazz and punk rock.

On most Friday nights, Hobokenites can stop in at the Court Street Restaurant and hear Eugene "Gene the Plumber" Turonis sing the gentrification blues to the melody of "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town."

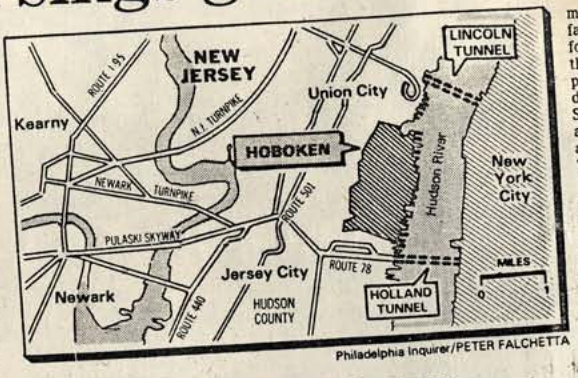
You'd better watch out, you'd better not move
If you live in Hoboken, you're close to the tubes
The bourgeoisie are coming to town
Well, they know where you are living and they want your house
And they'll try to exterminate you
Just like a roach or mouse

Within the last six months, between 500 and 1,000 Hoboken residents in the downtown area have been displaced because their buildings were being converted into condominiums and rental units, said Ivan Silverman, a real estate agent who speculates in property, rents apartments and does small-scale housing-rehabilitation projects. As the houses change hands, the most vulnerable people are those in rooming houses who rent on a month-to-month basis and do not have the protection of a multiple-year lease.

Two years ago, between 10 and 25 of Hoboken's 15,465 housing units were being converted into condominiums, according to city planner Peter Guarino. Today, about 250 units are under construction or are completed. One-bedroom apartments that fetched $300 a month two years ago now rent for $450 or more.

But still, the rents are a bargain by New York standards, and taxes in New Jersey are lower, too.

Paul Weinstein and Wendy Glassman, who were preparing for their wedding set for yesterday, will live in Hoboken, in a $900-a-month apartment with two bedrooms, two baths, skylights and a bidet. They figure a comparable apartment in Manhattan would have cost them $1,500 to $3,500 a month. Their only worry: Will their Manhattan friends cross the river to visit?



Philadelphia Inquirer/PETER FALCHETTA

Weinstein, a Brooklyn-born lawyer who is an assistant to the president of MGM-United Artists, has given up his Greenwich Village studio with a stall shower and "an elegant view of the airshaft." Weinstein and Ms. Glassman, an attorney for a subsidiary of Ingersoll-Rand in northern New Jersey, said they could not face the culture shock of moving to a suburb.

"I don't want to feel that once you pull into your driveway, you've essentially isolated yourself," she said.

They'll take your old apartment and they'll change the ownership
And raise the rent 300 percent
And they're looking for a big fat lip

Mayor Steve Cappiello thinks the newcomers' impact has been grossly exaggerated. "I don't see gentrification," he says. The mayor maintains that despite the growing number of professionals moving to Hoboken, the city will always have a lot of poor people because about 30 percent of the city's housing stock is government-subsidized.

A local tenants group called Por la Gente has been a champion for the rights of the Hispanic poor, who make up 42 percent of the city's residents. But Sister M. Norberta Hunnewinkel, a Roman Catholic nun who sits on the city's rent-control board, says the group is attracting a growing number of white, middle-class tenants.

Anxiety concerning the changing character of Hoboken is not likely to subside. This fall the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey started outlining its plans for an ambitious waterfront project in the city. The Port Authority eventually hopes to reshape other sections of the region's 75-mile shoreline, an area bigger than the ports of Toronto, Philadelphia, San Francisco, San Diego and Oakland combined.

On three idle, downtown piers in Hoboken, port and city officials envision a $500 million development, with up to 1.4 million square feet of office space, a 370-slip marina, a seven-acre park, luxury apartments, restaurants and stores.

Ground-breaking for the project is not likely in the near future. President Reagan recently signed legislation that would allow the city to buy parcels of the designated development area it does not own, and in addition, both houses of the New Jersey Legislature and the New York Senate have approved bills giving the Port Authority the power to oversee the redevelopment. But crucial issues remain to be worked out and could take as long as a year.

Port Authority official Sal Samperi envisions the city, where millionaire John Jacob Astor had a summer home in the early 1800s, as becoming the region's "thoughtville." Said Samperi confidently: "That's what New York and this region are starting to generate. We don't produce a physical product per se."

That vision of downtown Hoboken disturbs many of the residents interviewed. They would welcome marketing, research and computer companies here, but they want to preserve Hoboken's village character.

"I want to keep everything on a human scale," said Martin Andrews, a documentary filmmaker who has lived in the city since 1971.

With a few exceptions, nothing in Hoboken is taller than six stories, and Andrews says he thinks it ought to stay that way.

There are other anxieties about the waterfront project as well. Some people wonder whether Mayor Cappiello and the City Council are equipped to bargain with the Port Authority and developers over such sensitive issues as tax abatements, parkland, and permanent jobs to whittle down Hoboken's 14 to 16 percent jobless rate.

Like its machine-dominated neighbors in Hudson County, Hoboken government runs on Democratic Party patronage, and some born and raised Hobokenites, like Rocco "Rocky" Cavallo, and emigres, like Steve Block, contend that the city is mismanaged as a result.

Block is a member of the school board. He says all six of the other members — or members of their families — are dependent on the city for their jobs. Block says he thinks the traditional patronage system is partly to blame for the high school dropout rate of 30 to 33 percent and Scholastic Aptitude Test scores that are 100 points below the state average.

The fire on 13th Street made me cry and wince
And now so soon a condo
That's a thin coincidence

Jesus Ramos came back to Hoboken the other day to visit his friend Francisco Martinez, who works behind the Marotta luncheonette counter. Ramos and his family were burned out of a $200-a-month apartment on First Street last July. Ramos searched for another place here but couldn't find anything for less than $500 a month. He and his family now live in a $300-a-month apartment on Hull Street in Brooklyn.

Thirty people have died in tenement fires in Hoboken since 1980. None of the investigations to date has resulted in arson-for-profit charges. Privately, though, people who watch the real estate market say that one of the fires may have been set to ease the way for luxury housing.

Juan Garcia, the head of a Hispanic youth counseling service and of a community group called CUNA, contended that the people who were killed in fires and those who have been displaced would be considered victims of human rights violations if they lived in El Salvador or Lebanon. Developing expensive housing, Garcia said, is a way to reduce Hoboken's Hispanic population.

Sometimes, the gentrification blues turn into rage. School board member Block and Hoboken Environment Committee chairwoman Helen Manogue have felt it.

During the last decade, most of the work of Ms. Manogue and her group has involved pressuring General Foods to control particulate emissions from its coffee-roasting plant and successfully opposing a proposal to put an oil refinery on the city's northern waterfront.

In 1981, though, the group's annual house tour of Hoboken's architectural treasures took place shortly after 11 people had died in a tenement fire on Washington Street. Ms. Manogue, a community investment officer for a New Jersey bank and a tenant here, soon found herself fending off crank phone callers who blamed her for the recent frenetic pace of gentrification. They would call at 2, 3 and 4 o'clock in the morning with menacing messages like, "We're watching you. When you go out to a meeting at night, look behind you, because when you come home, we'll be waiting for you."

This fall, when Block announced his candidacy for City Council, his campaign mailing included postage-paid cards that supporters could return. Block said he got back one that said: "Go back to New York. We don't want the gentry in city hall."

Ironbound Voice 1982

Hoboken Residents Fighting For Their Homes

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One example of this, is that one 76 year old man who was paying $182 a month rent was told that his buiding was going to be renovated. He would then have to pay $550 a month in rent!

(There has recently been talk about passing a similar vacancy decontrol bill in Newark).

People in Hoboken are fighting to protect their homes. There have been several community meetings, and a demonstration of over 1000 people calling on the City government to take steps to stop arson and put the vacancy decontrol bill to a popular vote.

"We are not going to le
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The Hoboken City Co
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other people.

"We care about our liv
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continue this fight unti



Ironbound Voice 1982

Hoboken Residents Fighting For Their Homes

In the last 2 months in Hoboken, 15 people have been killed in arson fires.

"The fires are part of a pattern," said one angry Hoboken resident at a recent community meeting held to discuss the issue. "Landlords, banks, and real estate companies want to get rid of poor and working people and make Hoboken a place where only rich people can afford to live."

On Oct. 28, Ana Mercado, her husband, her father and 4 children died in an arson fire.

2 children died in a fire on Park Ave.

And on Saturday, Nov. 21, 2 more people died in a fire at the American Hotel.

The problem has lasted for at least the last 3 years. During that time, there have been 43 reported deaths in arson fires in Hoboken. In each case, dozens of other families have been left homeless. In 1980-81, there have been more than 100 "suspicious" fires in this tiny city. (Hoboken is only 1 square mile in area).

Two of the buildings which had fires recently are supposed to be sold to the same buyer to be turned into luxury condominiums. The buyer is paying $675,000 for the American Hotel. The condominiums will probably be bought by wealthy people who work in Manhatten.

The value of property in Hoboken has risen becaue there is a housing shortage. Many professionals who work in New York can commute from Hoboken. Landlords, real estate companies and banks, know this. They realize they can make higher profits and they are doing everything they can to accomplish that goal.

Last July, the Hoboken City Council gave the landlords what they wanted by passing a vacancy decontrol bill in spite of opposition from Hoboken citizens.

Now landlords there may raise the rent as much as they want any time an apartment becomes vacant. The landlord can avoid rent control - which allows only 1 rent increase each year. So with vacancy decontrol, the landlords force people out of their apartments, so that they can raise the rent.

How Do You Force Tenants Out?

A landlord can get people to move by refusing to make repairs. Building conditions become so horrible that tenants move out in disgust. He can burn people out with



large or small fires. He can raise rents so that they become too high for present residents to live there.

One example of this, is that one 76 year old man who was paying $182 a month rent was told that his buiding was going to be renovated. He would then have to pay $550 a month in rent!

(There has recently been talk about passing a similar vacancy decontrol bill in Newark).

People in Hoboken are fighting to protect their homes. There have been several community meetings, and a demonstration of over 1000 people calling on the City government to take steps to stop arson and put the vacancy decontrol bill to a popular vote.

"We are not going to let them murder us and drive us out of our homes," said one resident at a recent rally. "We have a right to live here. We're going to fight to stay here."

The Hoboken City Council seems to be afraid of democracy. So far they have refused to put the vacancy decontrol bill to a vote of the people.

On Dec. 3, over a hundred residents packed a City Council meeting there demanding that the Council take some action to stop the arson. Elizabeth Copeland, a 76 year old resident tried to get the City Council to put the arson problem on their agenda. But the Council wanted to go on with business as usual, even though everbody else in the room watned the Council to do something to stop arson.

"Is this a democracy?" one resident asked as citizens were forced to leave the room by a squadron of policemen in helmets with nightsticks.

Several community groups are working together to save peoples' homes from arson and outrageous rents, including: Emergency Coalition to Save Rent Control in Hoboken, Por La Gente, and New JErsey All Peoples Congress, along with many other people.

"We care about our lives and our homes and the lives of our children. We will continue this fight until we win."



Jersey City People Want To Come Back Home

The neighborhood near Montgomery St. in Jersey City was once home to 360 families, all of whom got eviction notices from the City and the State.

They didn't want to leave.

"I raised my kids here. My kids raised their kids here. This is home to me."

But the neighborhood's residents were forced to leave to make room for the Montgomery-Gateway Apartments where the City and private developers planned to build over 500 apartments for low and middle income residents.

The families who were evicted have organized a group to make sure that their right to return is enforced.

"One of the first things our group did was to survey the size of all the families who wanted to come back into the new apartments," said Lucy Ortiz, one of the members of the steering Committee for the group. "Then we looked at the building design and saw that most of the apartments were not going to be large enough for our families."

Through their meetings, negotiations and pressure, the group succeeded in getting the company to build 4 and 5 bedroom apartments for large families. They also got priority for the displaced people from the area.

The private developers have almost finished construction but the City has been delaying its part of the construction. The group is continuing to push to make sure all the apartments are completed.

"It's hard work, but it can be done," Lucy said. "People can accomplish things if they stick together and don't give up."

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Residentes de Hoboken Lutam Pelas Suas Casas

Nos últimos 2 mêses em Hoboken, 15 pessoas perderam a vida em fogos postos.

"Os incendios são postos sistematicamente," disse um residente irado numa reunião da comunidade onde este assunto foi discutido. "Senhorios, bancos e agencias de venda de propriedades querem deslocar os pobres e a classe operaria e fazer de Hoboken um lugar onde só os ricos possam viver."

No dia 28 de Outubro, Ana Mercado, seu marido, seu pai e 4 crianças morreram num fogo posto.

2 crianças morreram num incendio na Park Ave., e Sábado 21 de Novembro, 2 pessoas mais morreram noutro incendio no American Hotel.

O problema durou pelo menos 3 anos. Nêste espaço de tempo deram-se 43 mortes em fogos postos em Hoboken. Em cada caso dúzias de famílias ficaram sem casa. Em 1980-81 aconteceram mais de 100 incendios 'suspeitos' nesta pequena cidade (a superficie de Hoboken é uma milha quadrada sómente).

Dois dos edificios que arderam recentemente supõe-se terem sido vendidos ao mesmo comprador para serem transformados em condominios de luxo. O comprador está a pagar $675.000 pelo American Hotel Os condominios probávelmente serão comprados por gente rica que trabalha em Manhatten.



O valor da propriedade em Hoboken subiu porque há falta de casas. Muitos profissionais que trabalham em New York podem ir e vir diáriamente. Senhorios. agências de vendas de propriedades e bancos, sabem disto. Sabem que se pode fazer muito dinheiro e estão a fazer tudo o que podem para realizar esse fim.

Em Julho, o Conselho Municipal de Hoboken deu aos senhorios o que eles queriam - **descontrol de rendas** - ainda que os residentes se tenham oposto a essa resolução.

Agora os senhorios podem subir as rendas sem limite sempre que uma casa fique vaga. O senhorio pode evitar o control de rendas que permite um só aumento anual. Assim os senhorios forçam os inquilinos a sair quando querem.

Como se forçam os inquilinos a sair?

Um senhorio pode fazer com que o inquilino saia recusando-se a fazer obras. A condições dos edificios tornam-se tão horriveis que os inquilinos saem em desespero. O senhorio pode queimar gente com fogos grandes ou pequenos. Pode fazer as rendas tão altas que os inquilinos tenham de se mudar.

Um exemplo disto foi um individuo com 76 anos que estava a pagar $182 por mês. Foi avisado que o prédio ia ser renovado. Ele teria então de pagar $550 por mês. (Fala-se em descontrolar as rendas em Newark).

O povo em Hoboken está a lutar para proteger as suas casas. Tem havido reuniões e uma demonstração de mais de 1000 pessoas pedindo ao governo da cidade para tomar as medidas necessárias para por termo aos fogos postos e deixar que o povo vote no descontrol das rendas.

"Nós não vamos deixar que nos assassinem e nos forcem a abandonar as nossas casas," disse um residente. "Temos o direito de viver aqui. Vamos lutar para ficar aqui."

O conselho Municipal de Hoboken parece ter medo da democracia. Até agora nunca permitiran que o descontrol de rendas fôsse posto a voto.



No dia 3 de Dezembro mais de 100 residentes encheram a sala na sessão da camara exigindo que os vereadores tomassem medidas para parar os fogos postos. Elisabeth Copeland, uma residente com 76 anos, experimentou fazer com que os vereadores puzessem o problema na sua agenda. Mas estes quizeram prosseguir os assuntos de costume embora toda a gente na sala quizesse que se tomassem medidas para parar com os fogos postos.

"É isto uma democracia?" um residente perguntou quando a assistencia foi forçada a deixar a sala pela policia armada de capacetes e cassetetes.

Alguns grupos comunitários estão a trabalhar juntos para salvar as casas contra fogos postos e rendas exageradas incluindo: Coligação Para Salvar o Control de Rendas em Hoboken, Por La Gente, e New Jersey All Peoples Congresss, juntamente com muitas outras pessoas.

"Nós cuidamos das nossas vidas, das nossas casas e dos nossos filhos. Continuaremos a lutar até à vitória."

Mais Casas Para As Familias

Mais de 40 pessoas reuniram-se com representantes do Comitê Central de Planejamento, no dia 7 de dezembro com a finalidade de protestarem contra os novos planos de modificação que sofrerá o edificio Essex situado na Rua Orchard.

Membros da Associação dos Moradores da Rua Orchard, um grupo comunitário situado nos arredores do edificio, não concordam com os novos planos pelo fato deles terem **excluido** apartamentos com 4 dormitórios e por terem somente alguns com 3 quartos.

"Fomos dispersos desta área e portanto, temos o direito de retornar para viver nestes prédios," disse o Sr. Andy Cappon. "Muitas de nossas familias tem 3,4,5 crianças. Como moraremos em apartamentos tão pequenos com uma familia numerosa?"

Membros do Comitê de Apartamentos da Prudential tambem não concordam com estes novos planos. "Já tivemos o mesmo problema e portanto, sabemos o quão mal esto sera´ para os moradores," disse um membro. "Tinhamos o direito de voltar para o edificio, porem a companhia não construiu nenhum apartamento com 4 quartos. Agora estão a dizer que não poderemos obter mais apartamentos com aquelas dimensões. Portanto, não deixem acontecer com voçês oque aconteceu conosco."

A Cidade de Newark tampouco está interessada em construir apartamentos para familias numerosas. O Comitê de Planejamento Central é suposto fazer a fiscalização. No entanto, eles tampouco estão interessados no bem estar dos cidadãos. Aprovam todos as modificações sem levar em consideração os interesses dos moradores. Se construindo apartamentos pequenos dá mais lucro porque construir grandes. Eles não querem saber se a familia tem 3,4,5 ou mais criancas.

"um desses construtores disse-me recentemente que não existem mais familias grandes em Newark. Se por acaso existem algumas, são a minoria estúpida por terem tantos filhos."

O Departamento de Planejamento Central tem ignorado tudo que as pessoas tem dito, e tem aprovado planos de qualquer maneira, sem levar em conta os direitos dos futuros moradores. Numa reunião em que estavam presentes varias pessoas de lingua Espanhola e que entendiam pouco o Inglês, gostariam que a reunião fosse traduzida para o espanhol. Todavia, os responsaveis pela reunião não permitiram. O resultado foi que muitos não entenderam absolutamente nada.

"Eles agiram como se não estivessemos presente," disse uma pessoa. "Talvez porque eles querem ver se livres dos residentes de Newark. Querem-nos longe daqui." Todavia estas pessoas não darão o braço a torzer. Disseram: "Lutaremos pelos nossos direitos de permanecermos aqui."

Este grupo destemido estão realmente batalhando arduamente. Como Disseram: "Temos o direito de ter uma casa e um lugar seguro para nossos filhos, como todo ser humano normal."

A. Perez
Accounting Service
51 Fleming Ave.
Newark, N.J. 07105

HD 12/29/82



Rent bills heat up le

By Peter Weiss

A split in the ranks of the Hudson County legislative delegation could be coming soon because of several bills affecting tenants and rent controls.

Three of the bills, introduced by Sen. Edward O'Connor of Jersey City, have drawn protests from local tenant groups, and several other local legislators have indicated they will not support all three bills.

In particular is a bill to allow landlords to evict tenants to make room for members of the owner's immediate family, including parents and children.

But there are two other bills which will definitely not get the support of most of Hudson's legislators, although the Jersey City administration will support them fully.

One would implement statewide vacancy rent decontrol and the other

Political whirl

would give 30-year rent control exemptions for new construction anywhere in the state.

Those bills would help Mayor Gerald McCann out of an embarassing spot.

The administration's own va decontrol bill was thwarted by cessful referendum drive, caused the mayor to withdra proposal rather than risk a defeat polls. Likewise, his proposed e tion from controls for all nev renovated buildings was sty although it did not occupy the spotlight as vacancy decontrol.

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Wilson, who would have run as a

HD 12/29/82

Hoboken pressures rent registrations

With between 30 and 40 percent of the city's buildings still not registered as required under rent laws, Hoboken City Clerk Anthony Amoruso said he will be asking other departments for help.

Amoruso said yesterday he was working on a system to have Tax Collector Louis Picardo reports any sales of buildings to his office. Amoruso said many buildings have been registered under previous owners, but not under the present ones.

Also, Amoruso said he has asked the new Rent Control Administrator Joseph Santiago to continue sending reports of buildings that have not been properly registered. He said that many of the unregistered buildings have been caught when the owners apply for rent increases or when tenants complain about conditions at the building.

Under the city's rent control ordinance, all buildings, except owner-occupied units, must register with Amoruso's office. Failure to do so could result in fines between $100 and $500.

Although the ordinance has been in effect for over a year, Amoruso said only 60-70 percent of all buildings have been registered.

Men take car

Three men, one armed with a gun, took a 1980 car from Felix Hernandez, 58, of New York City, as he was about to get into the vehicle outside of 563 Montgomery St., Jersey City, last night, police reported.

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The administration's own vacancy decontrol bill was thwarted by a successful referendum drive, which caused the mayor to withdraw his proposal rather than risk a defeat at the polls. Likewise, his proposed exemption from controls for all new and renovated buildings was stymied, although it did not occupy the same spotlight as vacancy decontrol.

If the state enacted those measures, the city administration could have its way without taking the heat.

But in rentpayer-dominated Hudson County, it is certain that many legislators are not going to heed the mayor's call.

■

They didn't heed his call last week, regarding the graduated income tax.

The mayor sent hurried word by phone on the day the Assembly was to vote on a graduated income tax, ordering the Hudson delegation to abstain or vote against it. The reasoning was that it might help persuade Gov. Thomas Kean to aid the financially-troubled Jersey City Medical Center.

But the Hudson delegation had already pledged its support to the Democratic leadership. Kean also said he would try to help the hospital regardless of the vote on the graduated income tax. The tax passed the Assembly by two votes.

Assemblyman Thomas Cowan of Jersey City abstained, anyway, leading some observers to conclude that he may be getting ready for the June primary, where one of his 32nd district opponents could be Assemblyman Robert Janieszewski of Jersey City. Now he can brand Janiszewski as pro-income tax.

■

Change-of-government supporters in Jersey City might not admit it publicly, but they probably have the Law Department to thank for getting the referendum on the ballot. If the city lawyers had not objected several times to the submission of obviously insufficient petitions, Community Action for Responsive Efficient Government would not have had the valuable extra time which resulted from court-imposed delays in which to get enough signatures.

But then, McCann probably owes his election as mayor as much to CARE chairman Paul Byrne as to anyone, because of the massacre Byrne helped orchestrate on the public image of former Sen. Walter Sheil, the mayor's rival in last year's runoff.

With only seven weeks to the referendum, the McCann administration is hoping its hastily patched-up differences stay under cover for just a little while longer. Even aide John Vicari, the Jersey City Democratic chairman, has been saying nice things about Deputy Mayor Nicholas Introcaso.

The city's receipt last week of a $40-million federal grant can't hurt the administration politically.

It also counters much of the criticism McCann has received for being too cozy with Republicans on the national and state levels.

Labor Secretary Raymond Donovan, with whom McCann worked on the President's 1980 campaign, was instrumental in getting approval for the grant.

According to one top city development official, the Reagan administration wanted an urban area in which it could showcase its economic programs, and Jersey City provided the best combination of a major city in great need of assistance which had a mayor who would not be loathe to give the Republicans credit.

■

Hoboken Councilman E. Norman

HD 12/29/82

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Three men, one armed with a gun, took a 1980 car from Felix Hernandez, 58, of New York City, as he was about to get into the vehicle outside of 563 Montgomery St., Jersey City, last night, police reported.

Hoboken pressures rent registrations

With between 30 and 40 percent of the city's buildings still not registered as required under rent laws, Hoboken City Clerk Anthony Amoruso said he will be asking other departments for help.

Amoruso said yesterday he was working on a system to have Tax Collector Louis Picardo reports any sales of buildings to his office. Amoruso said many buildings have been registered under previous owners, but not under the present ones.

Also, Amoruso said he has asked the new Rent Control Administrator Joseph Santiago to continue sending reports of buildings that have not been properly registered. He said that many of the unregistered buildings have been caught when the owners apply for rent increases or when tenants complain about conditions at the building.

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HD 12/29/82



Rent bills heat up legislators

By Peter Weiss

A split in the ranks of the Hudson County legislative delegation could be coming soon because of several bills affecting tenants and rent controls.

Three of the bills, introduced by Sen. Edward O'Connor of Jersey City, have drawn protests from local tenant groups, and several other local legislators have indicated they will not support all three bills.

In particular is a bill to allow landlords to evict tenants to make room for members of the owner's immediate family, including parents and children.

But there are two other bills which will definitely not get the support of most of Hudson's legislators, although the Jersey City administration will support them fully.

One would implement statewide vacancy rent decontrol and the other

Political whirl

would give 30-year rent control exemptions for new construction anywhere in the state.

Those bills would help Mayor Gerald McCann out of an embarassing spot.

The administration's own vacancy decontrol bill was thwarted by a successful referendum drive, which caused the mayor to withdraw his proposal rather than risk a defeat at the polls. Likewise, his proposed exemption from controls for all new and renovated buildings was stymied, although it did not occupy the same spotlight as vacancy decontrol.

If the state enacted those measures, the city administration could have its way without taking the heat.

But in rentpayer-dominated Hudson County, it is certain that many legislators are not going to heed the mayor's call.

■

They didn't heed his call last week, regarding the graduated income tax.

The mayor sent hurried word by phone on the day the Assembly was to vote on a graduated income tax, ordering the Hudson delegation to abstain or vote against it. The reasoning was that it might help persuade Gov. Thomas Kean to aid the financially-troubled Jersey City Medical Center.

But the Hudson delegation had already pledged its support to the Democratic leadership. Kean also said he would try to help the hospital regardless of the vote on the graduated

Wilson, who would have run as a reformer against Mayor Steve Cappiello two years ago, but for health problems, must now be surprised to find himself labeled an old-line pol.

But that is what has been happening since school board member Steven Block announced his is seeking Wilson's seat next year.

Block was appointed by Cappiello, but has since split with the mayor. His plans to run were not changed by a visit from former Council President Martin Brennan, who may be seeking to avenge himself against Wilson next year. Wilson upset Brennan in 1979.

■

The problems being experienced by the North Hudson Council of Mayors in holding on to its members could be the result of former Union City Mayor William V. Musto's legal problems. Although Musto still influences events there, now that he is no longer a mayor or state senator there may be no one with the clout or magnetism to hold the alliance together. Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello has his hands full riding herd on his fellow members of the county board of freeholders.

HD 12/29/82

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IJ
11/22/82

More than 125 fire deaths in 4 years!

By Randolph Diamond

More than 125 men, women and children have died in fires in Hudson County in the last four years.

Many of those deaths were in suspicious fires and almost all occurred in Jersey City and Hoboken.

In the last year, there have been 37 fire deaths in the county and at least 25 of them were in fires officially described as "suspicious."

Last Wednesday in Jersey City there were seven fire deaths. Six of them were in a fire not found suspicious. The seventh death was murder and arson, police declared.

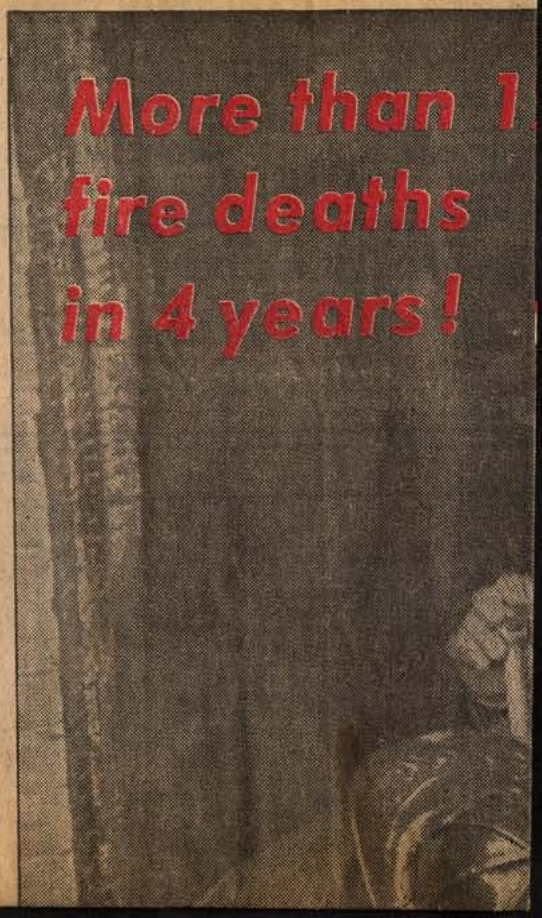
However, Hudson County's Arson Squad, which consisted of four full-time staff members, was disbanded last year after federal funds ran out.

The squad's former members now work in the prosecutor's office in various capacities.

Jack Hill, an assistant prosecutor who was a member of the Arson Squad, says they are available to do investigations of suspicious fires.

But the arson specialists no longer conduct educational programs; nor do they supervise training programs for law enforcement personnel; nor do they engage in long range anti-arson planning.

"We're only basically reacting now," said Hill. "It's certainly not as desirable as our former program."



More than 125 fire deaths in 4 years!

Continued from Page 1

The part-time Hudson County arson experts are just beginning that process.

"It will take us years to feed the data into the computers," said Hill. "The only way to shorten the process is to hire people to work specifically on that project and we don't have the budget for that."

In Hoboken, 48 persons have died in suspicious fires in the last four years. Two Hoboken detectives are assigned full-time to an arson prevention program.

They don't have computers. They have to keep their records by hand and they have to do their planning by intuition and instinct.

"It goes like this," one detective said, "Is the building being sold? Does it have lots of building violations? Have there been previous arson attempts? If the answer is yes to any of those questions, we try to have firemen and police keep an eye on the building.

"That may not be the best way to determine arson susceptible buildings, but it's the only way we have at the moment."

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"We're only basically reacting now," said Hill. "It's certainly not as desirable as our former program."

But the prosecutor does have some long range anti-arson plans. A newly acquired computer will be programmed with information about various Hudson County buildings to determine which ones would be susceptible to arson.

This is similar to an anti-arson program in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn prepared by Ronald Hines, a Hoboken resident.

Using computers and a grant from the Ford Foundation, Hine has been able to pinpoint Flatbush buildings susceptible to arson.

"It took two years to develop the programming necessary to feed information about 1,200 buildings into the computer," said Hine. "We have pinpointed 10 buildings that look like they are in the greatest danger of being torched.

"We are working with the landlords and tenants of those buildings to have the city fire marshal inspect them."

See MORE — Page 27.



Landlord's fraud case put off

By BILL GYVES
Staff Writer

HOBOKEN—A hearing scheduled for a landlord accused of submitting fraudulent receipts in order to secure approval from the city for a 78-percent rent increase for his building at 923 Garden St. has been postponed at the request of the landlord's attorney, who said he has not seen his client in six weeks.

George B. Campen, who is representing Union City landlord Prataprai P. Mody, filed the postponement request Wednesday with the rent-leveling and stabilization board. The board granted Campen a three week extention, setting a Dec. 23 date for the hearing that was orginally scheduled for Tuesday.

Campen, in an interview, said he has not had any communication with Mody since the landlord left the country six weeks ago for a trip to India. But, Campen said, Mody is expected to return early next month.

Last month, the Hudson County Prosecutor's Office joined the board in investigating charges that Mody submitted several fraudulent receipts in order to secure the rent increase under the substantial rehabilitation section of the city's rent-leveling ordinance.

The section states that a building may be removed from rent controls if its landlord can prove he has performed renovations totaling at least 100 percent of the building's assessed valuation.

The board granted Mody the 78-percent increase in March, after he submitted receipts for $51,482 worth of renovations. The increase raised tenants' rents $154, from $196 to $350, and reportedly forced three of the building's seven families to leave the structure.

But a memo from Business Administrator Edwin Chius said an investigation later indicated that Mody padded the $51,482 figure by submitting receipts with inflated totals.

Six contractors have been subpoenaed to appear at Mody's hearing. In addition, Mody and several of his tenants are expected to testify at the Dec. 21 hearing.

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HOBOKEN—The Hoboken Rent-Leveling and Stabilization Board has reversed its March decision granting a 78-percent rent increase to a landlord later found to have submitted fraudulent receipts to get city approval.

Prataprai P. Mody of this city has been under investigation by both the board and Hudson County Prosecutor's Office on charges that he submitted to the city several fraudulent receipts for renovation work that was never done on his building at 923 Garden St.

City officials charge that Mody submitted the receipts to secure approval for the increase under the substantial rehabilitation section of Hoboken's rent-leveling ordinance.

The ordinance states that a building may be removed from rent-control restrictions for 13 months if its landlord can prove he has performed renovations totaling at least 100 percent of the building's assessed value.

In March the board reviewed the receipts submitted by Mody and granted him the increase, which raised rents at 923 Garden St. $154 each unit — from $196 to $330 — effective in May.

But at a marathon six-hour meeting Tuesday night, the board rescinded its March ruling and ordered Mody to return the rents to their former rate prior to the hike starting in February.

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The Dispatch, Hudson/Bergen Counties, N.J. Thursday, Dec. 23, 1982

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Mody did not testify at the hearing.

Exceptions to the ruling will be rents for four tenants who moved into the building after the hike became effective.

George B. Campen, an attorney representing Mody, said yesterday that he planned to appeal the board's decision to Hudson County Superior Court.

According to sources, Mody remains under investigation by the Hudson County Prosecutor's Office, which entered the probe in October.

Hayden Morales, president of the building's primarily Hispanic tenant association, could not be reached yesterday for comment. But Juan Garcia, a leader of Hoboken's Hispanic community, said the tenants were not entirely happy with the board's ruling.

Garcia has criticized the city for not thoroughly investigating Mody's receipts prior to granting approval for the rent hike in March.

"The board has whitewashed the fact that the city was involved in this. Now the city comes out looking good," Garcia said.

"Mody ends up winning in the long run anyway. He hasn't been fined, and he got rid of three Hispanic families," who had been tenants in the building, Garcia said.

The rent hike reportedly forced three Hispanic families to leave because they could not afford the $350 monthly rent.

Rent board reschedules hearing

JJ 11/26/82

The Hoboken Rent Levelling Board has postponed a special hearing for Tuesday on the controversial substantial rehabilitation rent increase at 923 Garden Street.

The hearing has now been rescheduled for Dec. 21 at 7 p.m., according to Edwin Chius, the city's business administrator. He said Tuesday's hearing was posponed at the request of the attorney for the landlord, P.P. Mody, who said his client was outside of the United States at this moment and would not be able to return for the hearing.

Meanwhile, the board approved three substantial rehabilitation rent applications. Chius said the buildings approved were at 839 Willow Avenue, 706 Willow and 127 Washington Street.

Low-income housing set to start in Hoboken

JJ 12/22/82

With financing almost completed, construction work on 54 new units of low-income housing at 8th Street and Willow Avenue in Hoboken could start by the beginning of next month.

The construction will end over two years of applications and delays in getting the funding for the project, which will call for the substantial rehabiliations of seven adjoining brownstones between 800-812 Willow Avenue.

Sal Santiello, of the City's Community Development Agency, said he expected that financing arrangements could be completed with the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development by Dec. 7 and construction could begin immediately after.

Santiello said the work is expected to be finished by September of next year.

Once opened, the apartments would be available to families meeting federal income guidelines under federal Section 8 financing.

According to Santiello, the houses in the project will be completely gutted and rebuilt. Some small work is already being done to prepare the site, he said.

Rent board meet

The Guttenberg rent control board will hold its regular monthly meeting tonight at 8 p.m. in the council chambers at town hall.

A decision will be rendered on whether or not to call back a rent increase awarded to the owner of 431 70th Street. Town officials have reviewed the case based on complaints that the rents were increased beyond what they were supposed to have been.

Landlord gets hike despite violations

NORTH BERGEN—The township commissioners voted yesterday to grant a 5-percent hardship rent increase to a man the state has called one of the 10 worst landlords in New Jersey.

Robert Severino, owner of 235 75th St., is listed by the state Department of Community Affairs as one of the 10 worst landlords in New Jersey. He applied for a $14,000 capital-improvement rent increase in May to fix the building's elevator and install smoke alarms.

This building is one of 80 Severino owns in Hudson County.

The commission acted on the advice of Township Attorney Dennis Oury, who said that no formal objections had been filed by tenants despite the fact that two tenants protested the rent increase at the Oct. 21 Township Commission meeting.

Severino has been hit with 30 building code violations by the township as the result of an inspection conducted in late October.

He has 21 days left of a 30-day period to fix these violations. If they persist after the deadline, the building code calls for a total daily fine ranging from $50 to $500.