TOWER TALK @ PARK TOWER CONDOMINIUM

August-October 2008



JULY 4TH 2008 CELEBRATION AT PARK TOWER

If you missed the festivities this year, you most certainly missed o n something out big. With many Park Tower residents and guests attending, it was a fine social event with great food and friendly faces. There were over a dozen volunteers and staff to make sure everyone was happy. We had great music provided by our building manager, Tim Patricio, who doubled as our DJ. The Cycle and Saddle Club's pyrotechnics

were aweinspiring with a particularly impressive finale that left everyone gasping with surprise.



By Vince DiFruscio



Office 773-769-3250

Fax 773-769-0047

Doorman 773-769-3083

Garage 773-271-8859

Market 773-275-9130

Cleaners/Recv. Room 773-784-3353

Health Club 773-769-1513

RCN Service/Billing 312-955-2500 New Services 866-308-5556



Behind the scene in the kitchen Danielle Kennedy, Bea Stieber, and Amy Diaz made last-minute preparations.





Among the volunteers and staff were (from left to right): Danielle & Chastity Kennedy, Steve Riley, Harriet Dominique, Bea Stieber, Scott Schmidtke, Amy Diaz, Ruth Posternack, Don Yuratovac, Marguerita Bailey, and Sheldon Atovsky. Not pictured are Georgie Nowak, Nancy Ledvina, Lorraine Meyers, Marian Shaw, Tim Patricio as our DJ and Lionel, who worked the grill.



Ruth Posternack, Scott Schmidtke, and Nancy Ledvina assisted behind the serving table.



Lorraine Meyers manned the front desk to greet residents and guests to the party. (Photo courtesy of Marian Shaw)



D.J. Tim Patricio had the music scene covered.



Ruth Posternack, Nancy Ledvina, Harriett Dominique, and Sheldon Atovsky made sure everyone's plates were full.

Our Building Crossroads of Culture

Chicago is America's most diverse city. Not only do we have more neighborhoods than any major city, but today, It's like looking at stripes in a caftan-there are many ethnic groups in one neighborhood. On the North Side alone, 200 different languages are spoken. The writer herself is "in on" Chicago's "Sister Cities" program which welcomes international visitors. Our building, Park Tower, is a miniature United Nations. So, get to know each other better.

By Marian Shaw





A New Face at Park Tower

Jacquie Kozinski started working here at Park Tower a few months ago. She welcomes the opportunity to work here and embraces the challenges of the position.

Jacquie is familiar with the area, having lived and worked in the area previously. Working at Park Tower, she says, "...is returning to an old neighborhood".

Jacquie enjoys lifting weights and the physical and mental benefits of working out. She goes to the gym 5 days a week. She's also a big fan of 80's music ("I torture my co-workers with that") and is a serious aficionado of Hello Kitty memorabilia. She has a room dedicated to her Hello Kitty collection as well as a display within her car.

Jacquie applies the Golden Rule when interacting with residents; "I like to greet those who enter the office with a smile and make them feel comfortable". So be sure to share a smile with Jacquie when you next meet her and welcome her to our building.

By Vince DiFruscio

0-0-0-0-0-

LAUNDRY ROOM

The Laundry Room has been remodeled. Painting and new machines have been provided to make your laundry experience more pleasant . Enjoy the newly decorated space.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

August 6th—Board Meeting
August 21st—Health Club
September 8th—Board Meeting
September 18th—Health Club
October 16th—Health Club
October 20th—Board Meeting
October 22nd—Budget Meeting

Board Meetings start at 7:30 p.m. in the Party Room.

Park Tower's Party Room: Make It Yours

So, you want to throw a cool shindig, a grand soirée, a memorable fête, but you cannot or don't wish to use your home. What do you do? Put our party room on the 2nd floor to use!

Any Park Tower resident may reserve the party room. To do so, contact the management office. An \$80 fee and a completed party room request form will hold the room for you. This fee is refundable if cancelled with 3 or more business days notice. Nonowner residents must get their unit owner's signature on the request form.

A week prior to the rental, the management office must have all of the following:

- The \$80 rental fee and completed party room request form.
- A \$200 security deposit which is held against any damages to the room.
- A guest list which is copied for the front desk. There cannot be more than 75 guests.
- If alcohol is provided at the event, a fee will be charged for a security officer to be on duty, \$30 per hour with a 4-hour minimum.

HEALTH CORNER

A healthy life is attainable with a few consistent life style changes. First, improve your eating habits. Eat fruits, vegetables, and remember your vitamins. The Park Tower market and the King Vitamin store can put you on the right track. Secondly, exercise in the convenience of the Park Tower building at the Health Club or in instructor lead classes.

GROUP AEROBICS

Tuesday and Thursday nights 7:15-8:15pm in Park Tower Party room—Taught by AFAA Certified Group Aerobics Instructor and Personal Trainer.

Here are a few basic rules for using the Party Room:

- Guests may not be charged admission and liquor may not be sold to guests.
- The host must be in attendance at all times.
- Live bands and/or loud noises are not permitted.
- The party must end by 11:00 p.m. and the room cleaned by midnight.
- A complete list of rules can be found in the Park Tower Rules & Regulations manual.

One last thing: it's important to clean up after the celebration. Leave the room as you found it. If additional cleaning is required, it will be done by Park Tower staff at your expense: \$25 for the first 30 minutes and \$10 for each additional 15 minutes.

By Vince DiFruscio

RCN UPDATES:

By Mike Magliane

There are a lot of improvements underway! And some enhanced channel changes will be coming tentatively in September, 2008.

NEW RCN CONTACT NUMBER - 312-955-2500

In response to many requests, RCN has a special local contact number for Park Tower Residents. **Call 312-955-2500** for any type of question, technical or billing matter, problem, etc. regarding your TV, Internet or phone service with RCN. The number is staffed with **local people** from **8AM to 9PM-Mon. thru Fri.** and **10AM to 9PM-Sat. & Sun.** (At all other times of the day, you will be automatically connected to the original national number 800-RingRCN.)

RCN's MISSION - Repair and Replace

RCN started on a mission in June, 2008 and will continue through July-August-September 2008 until every unit in the building is checked. They are inspecting for two things:

- Checking Internal Wiring behind wall plate: RCN technicians are looking for any sign of alteration to the wiring behind the wall plate and are fixing it at no charge. That area is "common riser area," and is "hands off" to residents. (NOTE: If you are planning any future rehab work that involves the wall holding the incoming cable wiring, you or your contractor must contact RCN for guidance or assistance. Any "unofficial" tweaking of that internal wiring can degrade service to your TV and other floors above and below.)
- Replacing inferior quality Coaxial wires: Technicians found some inferior wires were used to connect the cable boxes to TVs. Inferior wires can pass interference into the rest of the wiring, and RCN is replacing them with new wires at no charge. (If you have or buy any coaxial wires, please do NOT install them unless they say RG-6 Quad Shield or Type RG-6QS on the wire or packaging)

RCN Channel Upgrade & Converter Box/Card Requirement – tentative Sept. 2008

A mailing was sent earlier saying there will be an upgrade in July 8th, 2008. That has been postponed tentatively until **September, 2008**. There will be **three upgrades**:

1) To continue to receive RCN cable (Sept 2008), you will need one of the following:

A) Standard Converter BOX & RCN Remote will be required – if your TV is currently connected directly to the wall fitting. If you don't have a box already, ask RCN to send you one free, so you will be ready for the change. This box provides all the basic channels, but does not provide HD. It will work on new or older TVs. (Note with the box you

get: better picture quality, more channels, music channels, interactive Information about the show you're watching, an interactive menu guide showing programs a week in advance, Video on Demand, Pay per View plus features on the included RCN remote control.) (Picture shows standard box & remote.)

Up to TWO standard converter boxes are available at No Charge – they are included with your basic cable service. (A third or additional standard converter box(es) will cost \$5.95 each per month, and would be billed to you directly, separately from assessments.



B) Optional Digital Converter CARD – (card only, not shown, uses the TV's Remote.) Some newer TVs have a slot the size of a credit card, which will accept a RCN Cable Card. The card will give access to the current channels and the new basic package including the new HD channels. If you have or buy a new High Definition (HD) TV with a card slot, you can use this card. On one hand, the card is convenient, because you can use your TV remote to change channels. However, the TV using the card, will be missing the special cable features (namely the interactive show information and channel guide, VOD & Pay per View, etc. described above with the box.)

Up to TWO digital converter cards are available at No Charge – they are included with your basic cable service. (A third or additional converter card(s) will cost \$1.50 each per month, and would be billed to you directly, separately from assessments.

Note: If you are currently paying extra for an HD box or DVR, you also qualify for two additional free standard converter boxes for additional non-HD TVs and two additional converter cards. (If you consider swapping an HD Box for a free card, you will lose the above features; but the options are there to consider.)

2) New Channel LineUp (September 2008) - most upper channels will have a new number series. Basically everything you find now from 23 to 100, will move to 101 and higher. A list was mailed and can be requested from RCN. Your RCN Remote GUIDE button will make it easy to find everything, including newer stations. New packages with Movie, Family, News, Sports and International channels are available at additional costs.

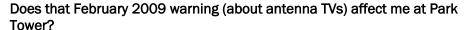
3) Expanded HD Channels included in Basic Package (September 2008) –



If you bought a High Definition (HD) TV and are paying additional for RCN's HD Box or DVR (see picture above) or an HD Card (in your HD TV) your expanded Basic Service will include about 31 channels in HD. Other Premium HD channels, HBO etc. will be additional costs. (Your package groupings and prices may change.)

How to get Stereo Sound with your TV using Video Inputs vs. Channel 4 with your Standard RCN converter box.

Does your TV have a vacant set of three INPUTS on the back (a Yellow, Red and White?). If so be sure to use a 3-Wire Audio/Video Cable* to connect to your cable box to get Stereo sound (left and right audio) and a slightly better picture. Instead of using Channel 4, you'll switch your TV to VIDEO INPUT (1, 2, or 3). It makes a great difference – with a fuller richer sound. *(About \$10 at Walgreens)



Probably 99% of Park Tower residents can ignore that warning, because we already have our new or old TVs connected to our RCN cable service. We're OK, but we'll be seeing those ads for 4-6 more months. (Those ads pertain to TV that is broadcast through the AIR and picked up by "stand alone" TVs that need antennas.)

If you know a resident with a TV somewhere, using an antenna with no cable connected to the wall, who only gets a couple fuzzy stations, or if you know someone on a farm, or in the country, or in a house without cable service - THEY may have to get a converter to convert the AIR signal for an old TV, or upgrade their TV. (A friend of mine has a tiny TV on a kitchen counter. He didn't want wires connected, and was fine with getting only 1 or 2 channels by jiggling the antennas. The Feb 2009 change might affect him.) By Mike Magliane

CONTINENTAL AIRPORT EXPRESS

Did you know you can have door-to-door airport transportation to and from Chicago Midway and O'Hare airports? Call Continental Airport Express at 312-454-7800. You will need the following information to make your van reservation:

- Departure and arrival times
- Airline and flight numbers

Round trip transportation is approximately \$39.00 per person. This is a great way to save on your gas and taxi expense. I used this service for a recent trip. The driver was professional, friendly, and on time. On your return transportation trip, just stop at the airport transportation desk to request a van. Enjoy your travels.







Park Tower 2nd Floor Patio Deck

The deck is ready and the chairs are waiting. Grab your sun tan lotion, towel, earphones, a book, a beverage in **non-glass container**, a snack and hit the deck. You can bring prepared food, but cooking and heating of foods is NOT allowed. Take any elevator to Floor 2. Walk down the short zig-zag hallway, then enter the deck through the glass door on the right. You'll find a variety of chairs, tables and benches-many in shaded walkways. Relax with all the flowers and greenery!

By Mike Magliane



VACATION MAIL HOLD

You can pick up a "mail hold" form in the Management Office to have your mail held until you return from your vacation. This can make your vacation worry free.



STATE OF THE ECONOMY

The high price of gasoline has changed the way many of us get around lately. You may have switched to the CTA or a bicycle to avoid filling the tank as often. But you may not have thought about the cost of energy you use at Park Tower, since it is included in your monthly assessment. The price of electricity and gas has soared in recent months, so how are we going to manage the bigger utility bills?

The Board held a workshop on June 30 to gather the latest information about where energy prices are headed and options we have to address the costs. They invited representatives from our current providers, Midwest Energy and Exelon, as well as consultants from Prospect Resources and Cost Containment International. Our providers described current market conditions, what to expect in the near term, reviewed out current energy purchase strategies, and described options for the future. The consultants described the expertise they can offer to help make informed decisions in this complicated field.

We learned we have made some wise choices with our current energy supply contracts. Our fixed price electric contract through May of 2009, is at a slightly lower price per kilowatt-hour than ComEd currently offers. Cool weather has so far reduced the volume of power we had expected to use this summer for airconditioning.

Political uncertainty in the Middle East and the beginning of hurricane season has attracted speculators to place bets on where oil and natural gas prices are headed. Over a year ago we locked in 60% of our expected gas supply for this year at about 96¢ per therm, and 30% for next year at 83¢; unfortunately, futures prices now average \$1.40 and \$1.24 per therm for those same periods. Since we use over 600,000 therms every year, we could face a budget shortfall over \$100,000 if prices remain that high through the winter.

(State of the Economy continued)

The price of natural gas is extremely volatile – it could drop very quickly as it did last year, if hurricanes don't disrupt the supply, and warm weather and an industrial slowdown reduce demand. While we hope for the best, management is looking for ways to contain utility costs, such as energy efficient lighting, and asks everyone to do their part as well.

Here are a few things we all can do to reduce the total amount of energy we use:

- Don't waste hot water: you can call maintenance to fix dripping faucets, wash clothes in cold water, and don't wash dishes under a running faucet – fill a dishpan or use a dishwasher.
- Close blinds to keep your unit cool in the summer you may want to enjoy the view when you are home, but take a minute to close the blinds if you are going out for the day.
- Install a thermostat residents who have done this say it makes a big difference the blower is regulated automatically so you keep a comfortable temperature at all times. Open windows in the winter waste heat, so again, use the blinds to keep an even temperature on sunny days.

By Robert Pierce

TO PLACE YOUR AD IN THE PTCA NEWSLETTER Contact the Management Office at 773-769-3250

Size and Cost: 2X2 inch = \$25.00 Business card 3 1/2X2= \$40.00 1/4 page = \$75.00

Ad prices are subject to change at the discretion of the Condominium Board.

RECYCLE Updates - New Vendor!

By Mike Magliane

Flood Brothers Disposal Co. has replaced Waste Management as our new disposal company for trash and Recyclables. Here are their guidelines for what to RECYCLE:

OK TO RECYCLE – take to 2P, 1P Laundry or 1P Garage Recycle Dumpster Mixed Paper items: Newspaper – Magazines – Cardboard & Chipboard – Telephone Book

Commingled Glass, Metal & Plastic items: Steel Cans – Aluminum Cans & Foil – EMPTY Aerosol Cans – – If GLASS: only Clear, Green & Brown bottles & jars. If PLASTIC: only bottles such as soda bottles, milk & water jugs, most juice bottles, and detergent bottles marked with the Recycle Symbols 1 or 2. Also Plastic Loop Six-Pack Rings

DO NOT RECYCLE – put in regular trash.

Plastic Bags – Bottle Caps & Jar LIDS (metal or plastic) – Full or Partiallyfull Aerosol Cans - Window Glass, Light Bulbs, Mirrors or Drinking glasses. Plastics marked with the Recycle

Codes 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7 on the bottom – and no Plastic Bottles used to hold motor oil or similar products.



PARK TOWER ON THE MOVE

Necessary repairs and enhancements to maintain and beautify the building are in the plans for the near future.

- Terrazzo Wash and Seal: The terrazzo will be washed and sealed to prevent leaking.
- Entry Concrete: The concrete in the entrance way of the building will be repaired.
- Garage Drain: An additional drain will be installed on the P1 parking level to eliminate puddling or standing water.
- Garage Fire Door Covers: The covers of the fire door in the garage will be replaced.
- First Floor Carpet: The carpet on the first floor (around the elevator bank and in the elevators) will be replaced. We thank the Home Improvement Committee for their work on this project.
- New Deck Furniture: Two new tables and chairs were purchased for the deck in June. Please enjoy the comfortable seating the next time you use the deck.
- Channel 95 and 195: Channel 95 and 195 is up and running again. Tune in to this channel for Park Tower announcements.
- A Park Tower website through Draper and Kramer will be available soon.

Do Not Call Me

When my phone rings and there is silence, I give a fraction of a second to hang up. That



silence usually means a computer connection and a recorded call. But - suppose the ring comes in the middle of the TV World Series, you let voice mail take it and wonder afterwards - it could have been genuine - or a return, perhaps to a call you yourself made?

You can weed out the telemarketer calls by directing the Federal Trade Commission to put you on the Do Not Call list. Sign up at the FTC website, www.donotcall.gov. or call 1-800-382--1222. Your phone number will stay on the Do Not Call list unless you direct the FTC to remove it. It is not necessary to register cell phone numbers since telemarketing to them is illegal. Of course, not all telemarketing calls can be stopped, nor should they be confused with genuine mix-ups same name, but different party or same phone but different name. I have found this works for the latter situation, call the number they ask; the other party will usually say, "If you are not the correct person, say so, and we shall take you off the list. (It works.) But that's all you should say to them! By Marian Shaw

AYNOT SALONS HELP WANTED!

- ♦ Hair stylist
- **♦** Shampooist
- Nail technician
- Massage therapist

Call 773-728-6486

Get Hot Coffee, Fresh Baked Pastry and do Dry Cleaning – on the way out the door! It's here in the Park Tower Mall...at 7AM!

DRY CLEANING & LAUNDRY: Go to the 1st floor Receiving Room and Dry Cleaners. Unload your pile of clothes with Jim or Sue. They'll give you a receipt, and the clothes will be back in 3 days. (Sometimes you can get same day service. Those items must be in by 8AM and will be back by 6PM). They're open from 7AM to 7PM Mon-Fri, 8:30AM to 1PM Sat. (Closed Sunday and some holidays.)

COFFEE & FRESH PASTRY: Continue past the receiving room into the mall to your left, to the Park Tower Market. Go straight to the back aisle where you'll find self-serve hot beverages and fresh Cuisine de France pastries and breads...baked fresh daily.

Fresh KOKOS coffees include: Hazelnut, Coffee House Dark Roast, 100% Columbian, Decaf House Blend, plus a Cappuccino machine that makes French Vanilla, English Toffee and hot chocolate. There's also hot water with Lipton or Black Tea bags plus condiments. (A small 12 oz. is \$1.00, the large 16 oz. is \$1.50. Gotta try it, hard to beat!)

Cuisine De France pastry & bread: The self-serve display case features fresh daily-made pastry and bread (thanks to Jeremy and Kathleen.) Choose from bite-size puffs from 35¢, assorted strudel, danish & turnovers (39¢ to \$1.39) various types of muffins (\$1.49), or a giant apple strudel (\$2.79) that serves 4-6. After one bite, you might want to sit at the tables in the mall's "skylight café" to savor the freshness, nurse your coffee and check your schedule.

The Park Tower Market is open 7AM to 8PM Monday-Saturday, 8AM to 7PM on Sunday. (Holiday hours are shorter.)



If you're off to work, head out the mall door (near the indoor mailbox) to the street, or take the nearby Mall Elevator to the 1P or 2P* garage. You'll have a head start on the rest of the day!

*(elevator key is required for 2P.)

By Mike Magliane

PARK TOWER MALL BUSINESSES

Appraisal Dynamics, Inc. (mortgage appraisals)
Aynot Salons (office)
Consolidated Information Services (office)
Dralyuk Realty & Lake Shore Realty
Dr. Shirley Roy, MD
Edgewater Plaza Dental
Tony Hollenback, LCSW (therapist)
Kings & Ornaments Vitamin Outlet
Lettuce Us Entertain You (offices)
Park Tower Cleaners and Receiving Room
Park Tower Market





FROM THE PROPERTY MANAGER'S DESK

Very recently we experienced fairly serious problems with the garbage chute. These problems have caused some leaking and damages on a handful of floors. We are not certain what exactly caused these problems, but we do know what could. Very heavy items, glass, metals, and construction materials - even items that are loose or not securely wrapped, can cause significant damage to the inside of the chute. If you have these types of items to dispose of, we encourage you to contact management or the janitorial staff so we can help determine the best steps for removal. If there is any question at all, do not hesitate to consult us or ask for help.

For your safety, we recommend that you frequently check your smoke detectors to insure they properly function. It is easy to forget and take their presence for granted. But since they rely on battery power, and can stop functioning with age, we advise you to test them on a regular basis. One way you could do this is by scheduling this on the same day of each week or at least each month - for instance every Monday morning - or the first Tuesday of each month. Find a schedule that is suitable and comfortable for you and stick with it.

(continued on page 8)

Open Road Can Be Free

In these golden days, the great state of Illinois has all kinds of historic places to visit; the City of Chicago is booming with year-round festivals...but gas costs over \$4.00 a gallon and maybe you are not into bicycling. However, if you are over 65, public transportation will take you to your favorite place for free within the "collar counties", namely, the RTA service region of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will Counties.

There are two ways to get in on this ride-free program, available for seniors who live in this RTA Service Region.

- 1. If you already have a Senior Reduced Fare Permit card, just show this to the conductor on a Metra train, or insert it in the fare slot on an El station or on a CTA or PACE bus. Double check your Permit; it should say, Regional Transportation Authority at the top, and carry symbols for RTA, PACE, Metra, and CTA, along with your photo. Your present Permit carries an expiration date, and must be renewed by then.
- 2. If you do not already have a Reduced Fare Card, register for the Seniors Ride Free program at any of the places below. Note: The RTA is transferring over to the Senior Ride Free Smart Card - it's faster and easier to board by touching it to the blue target on the bus or rail station turnstile. When applying for the Ride Free program at these sites, show your government-issued picture I.D. or drivers license. Some places may charge for taking your photo for the Senior Ride Free Card. The main RTA office does not charge. You should receive your Senior Ride Free Smart Card in three to four weeks.
- a) RTA main Customer Service Center, 165 N. Jefferson, Chicago. 312-913-3110 For disabled and seniors. Will take photo.
- b) City Hall, Chicago Department on Aging 121 N. La Salle Room 100 312-744-4016 For disabled and seniors. Will take photo.
- c) Southeast Asian Center 5120 N. Broadway, Chicago 773-989-6927 For seniors only. You must supply your own photo, 1-1/2" square.

Current CTA /RTA service/map pamphlets are available at the Culture Center - Randolph St. entrance, first floor to the left - along with reams of info on What Is Going On in Chicago land.

By Marian Shaw

Park Tower Board Member

The Park Tower Annual Board Meeting was conducted on June 9, 2008 to elect two new Board Members. The following individuals will serve as the 2008-2009 Park Tower Board: George Pauley, Carlos Vargas, and Laura Cossa, Sandra Goldberg (returning Board Member), and Lorraine Myers (new Board Member).

All owners are encouraged to attend Board Meetings. You will have an opportunity to ask questions and/or make comments at the beginning of the meetings. Attending meetings will provide you with first-hand information about events and the operation of the building.

Meeting Dates: August 6, 2008 September 8, 2008 October 20, 2008 November 10, 2008 December 8, 2008 January 12, 2009 February 9, 2009 March 9, 2008 April 13, 2008 May 11, 2008 June 8, 2008 (Annual Meeting for elections of board members)



Newsletter Volunteers

Vince DiFruscio Mike Magliane **Bob Pierce Betty Terry-Lundy**

FROM THE PROPERTY MANAGER'S **DESK** (continued)

We are in the process of remodeling the laundry room. One thing I have learned to expect from laundry vendors during a modernization is a discussion on how the community - specifically the laundry room users - can act to help optimize the function and life span of washing machines and dryers. The message has always been universal - less laundry and less detergent. Yes, less laundry and less detergent helps the machines function better - less detergent is easier on the plumbing too. One thing you don't hear though, is that it also helps your clothes and pocket book. First, don't stuff washers and dryers they will not wash or dry appropriately. Also, you can usually use half to a quarter of what the detergent bottle suggests. Using more can actually age your clothes faster and can make them more prone to staining. Try washing a load once without using any detergent - you will know vou are using too much detergent if you see bubbles! We have asked "Universal Laundries" to schedule a couple seminars for our residents once the modernization is complete.

Tim Patricio, Property Manger

The next edition of the newsletter will be for November-December 2008 and January 2009.

> Place ads with the Management Office.