



# TOWER TALK @ PARK TOWER CONDOMINIUM

February–April 2009

## 2009 PROPOSED RESERVE PROJECTS



The following projects are planned for implementation during the 2009/ 2010 budget year:

Annual sealing of the plaza terrace: this will need to be done each year until the flooring is replaced.

2nd floor roof repair: specific areas over the mall are targeted.

Replacement of hallway carpets: this is the beginning of a 5-year project.

Replacement of the door staff desk station.

Riser repairs: Insulation of one tier of risers; study to determine scope of other riser repairs.

Replacement of rubber flooring around pool: the rubber is debonding and disintegrating in several areas, most noticeably around the attendant desk and the hot tub.

Additional handicap accessibility into and around building: areas under consideration include the entrances from 2P and access into the laundry room.

Bike room rehab and expansion: (updating the equipment will increase the number of spaces from 170 to 250)

Cooling Tower Platform: walkway to make maintenance and repairs easier

Branch Lines: continued replacement of in unit kitchen and bath branch lines

Pool Mechanicals: replacement/ repair of pumps and motors

Exterior Inspection: curtain wall inspection of reported leaks

Entry Sign: replacement of Circle Drive Park Tower Sign

The Board of Directors approved an increase of 5.6% for the 2009-2010 assessments which is lower than the recommended 6.5% increase made by the Budget Committee. The 2009-2010 Budget was approved at the February 16, 2009 Board Meeting.

All owners are welcomed to attend Board meetings.

By: Vince DiFruscio

## WHAT'S A LOCK BOX



Park Tower has a lock box located in the lobby near the low rise half glass wall. You may use this box to drop off assessment payments or leave requests for maintenance services, Management collects items from the lock box each morning. This is another way for owners to communicate with management.

By: Betty Terry-Lundy

## BOARD MEETINGS

March 9, 2009

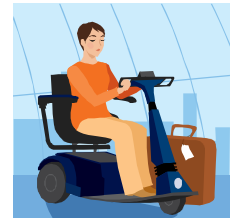
April 13, 2009

May 11, 2009

7:30 p.m. in the  
Party Room

## MOTORIZED CART POLICY

Park Tower is an all inclusive building designed for comfortable living for all of its residents. A new policy has been approved related to motorized carts and their operators in an effort to ensure a safe environment for everyone.



This new policy has been implemented to ensure that all residents are safe in common areas of the building. The following motorized cart policy is effective as of January 2009.

- All operators of motorized carts will need to submit a physician's form indicating the need for such assistance.
- The type of motor cart must be indicated on the physician's form.
- A horn or bell must be attached to each motorized cart.
- Motorized carts must be battery operated.
- All motorized carts must have tires designed for indoor use.
- Operators of motorized carts must travel at the speed of pedestrians.

This policy has been implemented for the safety of all Park Tower residents.

By: Betty Terry-Lundy

## CONTACTS:

**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

## BUS TRACKER AT PARK TOWER

Last year, the CTA introduced a system for tracking buses as they travel through the city streets. Using GPS devices, the bus locations appear on a map, as they move along the route. A list shows their "estimated arrival time" at any bus stop.

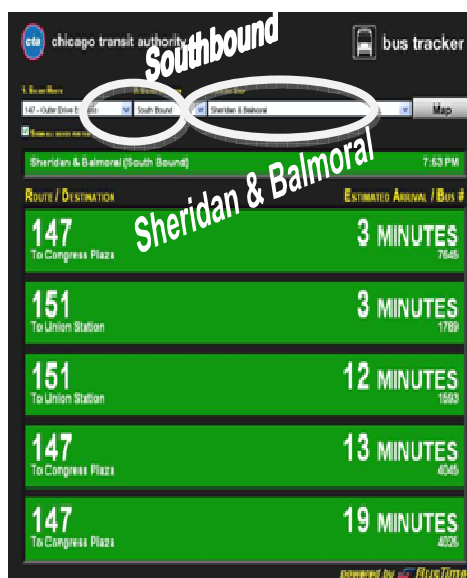
And NOW that's in our LOBBY – for your convenience – compliments of the Park Tower Association!

By February, there should be a TV SCREEN in the lobby, showing our SHERIDAN & BALMORAL bus stop, and bus arrival times. That way, you can wait inside until the buses are nearby, then step out just minutes before they arrive. (That's great when weather is bad!)

If you have a personal computer you can display the same information at home – and you can customize it.. You simply select the Bus Route #, N or S Bound, and the desired Bus Stop.

If you have a "web-enabled" cell phone, you can even check schedules around town. (Example: If you're coming home from Millennium Park, and have a "web-access" cell phone, you can check the 147 schedule Northbound, for arrival times at Michigan & Randolph.) The website address is: [ctaBusTracker.com](http://ctaBusTracker.com)

By: Mike Magliane



## FOSTER BEACH PARK UPDATES

The Chicago Park District will develop a natural dune on the north end of Foster Avenue Beach (the area north of the metal barrier). This area will not be groomed by the Park District to allow "wild" plants to grow. You can be a part of the developing project; volunteers will be needed to help remove "weeds" to support the growth of the native plants. You can visit the Montrose bird habitat to see what the Foster Beach area will look like in a few years.

The Foster Avenue soccer fields are due for a make over during the spring of 2009. Two lighted artificial turf soccer fields will be installed in that area.



## FREE SENIOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

The following article appeared in the Chicago Sun-Times newspaper on January 12, 2009.

"Seniors – if you still want to ride the CTA, Metra and Pace for free after April 1 and you haven't signed up for a senior ride "smart card," now's the time.

When the senior free ride program started last March, seniors who already had reduced-fare cards were able to continue using those cards to qualify for free rides. Seniors who didn't already have reduced-fare cards were encouraged to sign up for new senior ride "smart cards" to qualify for the free fares.

Letters started going out last spring giving seniors with reduced-fare cards the opportunity to sign up for smart cards, according to Annah Mitchell, spokeswoman for the Regional Transportation Authority. To get their smart card, seniors have to sign their names and return the letters. There is no charge.

Seniors who don't switch over from reduced-fare cards to smart cards will have to pay the reduced-fare rate, instead of riding free, as of April 2, Mitchell explained. On the CTA, for example, the reduced fare is 85 cents. On a Metra ride from Aurora to Chicago, the reduced fare is \$2.80.

Seniors who didn't get a letter, or may have perhaps ignored the letter and thrown it out, should call the RTA at (312) 913-3110."



## RESERVE STUDY

Park Tower conducted a reserve study to determine the state of the building. Information from the reserve study is crucial in budget planning. This study was completed in 2008 and is available upon request. Contact the Management Office if you would like a copy. Specific upcoming projects based on the reserve study report are presented on page one.

### 2009-2010 ASSESSMENTS AND CABLE

Assessments will increase by 5.6% starting March 2009. This increase is necessary to cover budgeted expenses.

Cable cost will increase to \$19.11 per month.

## PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION

Property taxes can be confusing - not just the formulas used to calculate it - but the variety of exemptions that can reduce your bill. It is impossible to simply compare to a neighbor with an identical unit, because your age, disability, income, veteran status, owner occupancy, and years of residence can all be factored into your eligibility for exemptions. Are you sure you have received all the ones you are entitled to? Four new exemptions were introduced in Cook County in 2007, and the list of current ones is shown below. Additional information is available at [www.cookcountyassessor.com](http://www.cookcountyassessor.com), or by calling (312) 443-7550. If you missed claiming one in the past, you can claim exemptions from prior years (2003-2006) and receive a refund. Check your bills today!

(Continue on page 4)



## CELL PHONE

### NUMBERS

### GO PUBLIC

How many times have you answered your home or business telephone to find a telemarketer on the other end of the line? How do they get your telephone number?

Now, cell phone numbers have been released to telemarketing companies, so you can receive unlimited calls from people you do not know. In addition to receiving unwanted calls on your cell phone, **you will be charged for these calls.** You can avoid the calls and charges by calling the National DO NOT CALL number 1-888-382-1222 to have your phone number blocked for five years.

You can eliminate stress and charges due to telemarketing. Simply call from the cell phone number you want to have blocked. You cannot call from another phone number. You can also go online to register your number at [www.donotcall.gov](http://www.donotcall.gov). Do it now and avoid stress later. By: Betty Terry-Lundy

### PLEASE DRESS APPROPRIATELY

We have received numerous complaints from residents that they have observed individuals not properly attired in the hallways, elevators, lobby, and other common areas of the building.

Inappropriate dress is considered offensive activity. Properly attired means wearing shoes, shirts, and pants. Any shorts worn in the common areas should be proper street clothes - no swimsuits or underwear. Please limit that to your own home, and swimwear is only allowed within the Health Club, and never on the elevators.

## MEET JENNY GARCIA



Jenny is new to Park Tower, having started here in December. Born and raised here in Chicago, her family has since moved to be with extended family in Minnesota. She considered moving there as well, but "I didn't like it. It's very quiet there, but I'm used to the city." Jenny comes to us from a history of graphic design; her last job was as Art Director for a local magazine. The job involved a lot of multi-tasking and considerable customer service, so Jenny's becoming quite comfortable with the demands of Park Tower. "I'm really interested in condo associations. There are different kinds of laws from home ownership and a great sense of community. It's like a little city. I will want to buy a condominium some day," so she is able to see how things work from both the management and homeowner perspectives. As for life here at Park Tower, Jenny says the best part is "getting to know the people here. And people getting to know me; people already say hello to me when passing by." She also says that Tim "is very helpful and patient; I think he's a great manager." In her free time, Jenny enjoys hanging out with family and "I like to dance a lot, salsa!"

By: Vince DiFruscio

## HEALTH CLUB MEMBERSHIP

Did you make a New Year's resolution to keep in shape this year? Use our convenient Health Club to keep that promise. Our facilities include a weight room with both free weights and exercise machines, an aerobics room, 2 racquetball courts, locker room and sauna, our indoor lap pool and the outdoor wading pool, and the north sun deck. Members may also become part of aerobics classes and other classes as they are announced. Be aware that there are now 3-month memberships available, ideal if you want to try out the club for a brief period or only use the club for a short while.

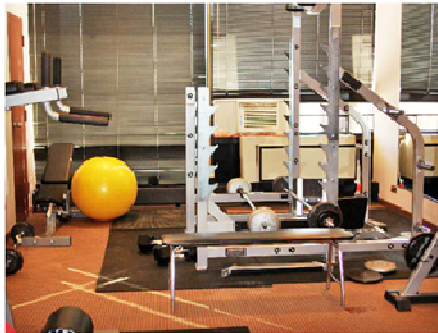
The rates for Park Tower residents are:

	Single Member- ship	Double Membership (2 residents in same unit)	Family Membership (parents & kids in same unit)
3 months	\$95	\$170	\$195
6 months	\$145	\$205	\$280
1 year	\$220	\$315	\$435



Each member may bring a guest by using a guest coupon. Coupon booklets are available at the management office; \$30 buys a set of 6. A guest may accompany a member for free on Saturdays after 2PM. So come on down to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor pool and ask David or any other member of the health club staff to show you around.

By: Vince DiFruscio



## PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION continued...

All of the Exemptions are listed below with eligibility requirements:

**Homeowner Exemption** – the property is owner-occupied and is the principal residence.

**7% Expanded Homeowner Exemption** – automatic for those eligible for the Homeowner exemption – this is additional relief in effect through 2008; it will be phased out unless new legislation passes.

**Long-Time Occupant Exemption** – owned and occupied the unit since January 1, 1997 and household income less than \$100,000.

**Senior Citizen Exemption** – over 65 years of age.

**Senior Freeze Exemption** – over 65 and income less than \$50,000 in 2006.

**Disabled Persons Exemption** – State disability ID, or proof of SSI or VA disability payment.

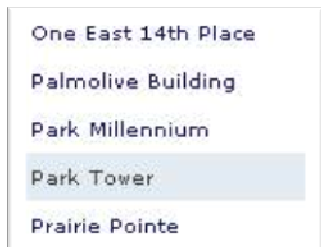
**Disabled Veteran Exemption** – at least 50% service-connected disability documented by the VA.

**Returning Veteran Exemption** – Returning from or still on active duty - Discharge papers or deployment orders from Department of Defense.

By: Robert Pierce

## PARK TOWER is ONLINE... for our computer users!

On your browser, type in [DKCondo.com](http://DKCondo.com) then click "Managed Associations."



Find "Park Tower" and click on it.

A general information page will appear.

You find links to phone numbers, office holiday schedule, sales and leasing information packets, etc.

Owners may enter the detailed section, by clicking "Resident Login" and entering their name and last 8 digits on your assessment statement, per the instructions.



That gives you access to the "nitty gritty," financials, office calendar, and other detailed Park Tower Information.

Residents can post ads – like those in the laundry room – under "Building Classifieds."

See "Newsletters" for color copies of this and recent newsletters.

If you need "forms" or info when the office is closed, you might find them here.

It's definitely worth exploring.

By: Mike Magliane

**DKCondo.com**

## PLANNING CONDO UPGRADES & REMODELING? CONTACT THE PARK TOWER OFFICE FIRST, SO YOUR CONTRACTOR DOESN'T GET TURNED AWAY!

It's a great feeling to own a condo in Park Tower, and to be able to decorate, upgrade or rehab it to your personal tastes.

If you're planning on having someone paint, install carpeting or flooring, replace cabinetry or plumbing, or if you're planning any major construction rehabs...it's VERY important to contact the Park Tower Office **in advance**.

Did you know a contractor could be **turned away** if you:

- didn't reserve adequate elevator time?
- didn't have proper Insurance papers?
- didn't get office approval of major construction involving "common" building elements?
- didn't plan work M-F 9am-4:30pm?

To have your upgrade plans go smoothly, contact the Park Tower Office in advance of scheduling any upgrade work. They will assist you and:

- reserve elevator time if needed
- advise you if Contractor Insurance forms are needed prior to entry
- provide you with forms\* if needed for advanced projects
- arrange a meeting with maintenance to review or approve the specs and building codes for plumbed or electrical items, or construction changes. (Sometime Maintenance coordinates with your contractor to do plumbing upgrades to the common water lines at n/c)
- recommend contractors for some types of work – based on prior successful installations in the building

If you need simple work done, like installing carpeting, ask the office about the Insurance Forms the installers will need – before they can enter the building. Also, be sure to arrange an early time with installers, as no work can be done after 4:30PM.

If you're planning any rehab work, visit the office and they'll provide a **\*packet of information** the **"Association's Remodeling Policies and Procedures."** This describes specific types of work and gives specific guidelines and requirements. You'll need to review the forms, sign them if required, and return them with a written description of work to be done. This will start the process and assure your work will be done in an orderly fashion. More importantly, it eliminates wasted trips, unhappy contractors and repeat visits.

Call Management Office at 773-769-3250 or email [ParkTowerCondo@draperandkramer.com](mailto:ParkTowerCondo@draperandkramer.com).

By: Mike Magliane & Tim Patricio

## IDEAS THAT WORK

Park Tower opened its doors to residents as a rental building in the early 1970s and became a condominium in 1978. Over the years owners and residents have made great contributions to the improvement of our building with their innovative ideas. We benefit from these ideas today. Here are some of the suggestions that have been made over the years to make living more convenient.

- Laundry room library
- Notice board in the laundry room
- Improved lighting in the mall
- Holiday parties
- Holiday donation collections (food and toys)
- Push door handles on levels P1 and P2
- Widening of handicap ramps in the garage area
- Recycling bin locations in the laundry room, on P2, and now by the mailboxes
- Bus tracker

Suggestions that benefit everyone can be placed in the lock box or submitted on the website. Owners have access to the Park Tower webpage. Simply login and enter your password which is the last 8 digits of your account number. The Board of Directors will determine what ideas and suggestions will be implemented.

By: Betty Terry-Lundy



## The Ins and Outs of Guest Parking

So you've got friends coming over and don't want them to deal with the hassle of finding a parking space on the streets. Use our garage to house your guests' cars while they visit.

The cash rates for our garage are as follows:

Up to 1 hour:	\$8.50
1 – 3 hours:	\$10
3 – 6 hours:	\$11
6 – 8 hours:	\$13
8 – 24 hours:	\$16

However, it can be cheaper for your guests to park here if you take advantage of Park Tower's parking stickers. They can be purchased in the management office or at the Park Tower Market. A roll of 5 costs \$35. To use the stickers, just attach one to your guest's parking coupon (anywhere on either side). The first sticker is good for 6 hours; a second sticker will bring the value up to 24 hours.

By: Vince DiFruscio



**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.**

## RECYCLING MAIL IS EASIER!

Watch for new bins marked *PAPER* near your mailboxes. Now your unwanted general mail, magazines and other papers can go straight from your mailbox to the *PAPER* bin for recycling.

If you have other trash, coffee cups, food wrappers, etc., please use the container marked *WASTE*.

### Other RECYCLE REMINDERS:

1) **PLASTIC BOTTLES OR JARS** - with a recycle code 1 or 2 (in the triangle): use the mixed recycle bin on 1P or 2P.

2) **GLASS BOTTLES OR JARS, and TIN or METAL CANS:** use the mixed RECYCLE bin on 1P or 2P.

3) **PAPER, CARDBOARD BOXES** - Cereal & food cartons, newspapers, shipping boxes: use the **PAPER RECYCLE** bin on 1P or 2P.

4) **FOOD CONTAINERS, TO-GO BOXES, PLASTIC WRAP & OTHER PLASTIC CONTAINERS:** use the **TRASH** bin or garbage chute. (These items are *not* recycled.)

5) Note: for those lite-weight plastic **GROCERY SHOPPING BAGS:** Jewel Food store has a collection bin for all plastic handled shopping bags. Although they're handy for tying up trash for the garbage chute, if you get overwhelmed, try to discard them at the Jewel (and not in our trash.)

By: Mike Magliane