

# 201 NEWS

FALL  
2019

THE NEWSLETTER OF 201 WEST 16TH STREET

## Welcome

**10C – Matthew Metalios** Matthew is head of business development for Veronis Sulher Stevenson, a private investment firm based in Manhattan.

## New Board Member

Please welcome **Chris Ryan** of 6A as our newest board member. Chris has been an owner at 201 for 16 years. He found his way to 201 in part because of our building's retained pre-war charm and our liberal pet policy. Chris has a dog named Leo and two cats named Bogart and Capote. (Chris is a big film buff so no coincidence that his pet names are a bit "cinematic.") While the board is losing one native New Yorker (Manhattan-born Barbara Brazong, see story in this issue), we are gaining another because Chris grew up in Queens.

## Quick Hits

### Lockers

For the first time in a number of years, we have multiple lockers for rent in our very convenient locker farm in the basement. If you are interested in renting a locker, call our superintendent, **Cristian Covaci**, at 212 255-2544, or email him at [super@201west16.org](mailto:super@201west16.org).

### Radiators

In keeping with manufacturer recommendations, we are beginning the process of replacing the steam traps on each of the radiators in the building. We will be starting on the E and F lines, working vertically. Our superintendent will give ample notice to residents indicating the date and time of the replacement. According to our engineering consultants, this will help keep heat production and distribution as efficient as possible.

## Board Member Retirement

The longest serving board member in the history of 201 retired effective October 1. **Barbara Brazong's** service to the building started even before we were converted to cooperative ownership; she and several other rental tenants were part of the tenant committee that negotiated certain terms and conditions of the '83 to '85 conversion of the building from rental to cooperative by Francis Greenburger and his company Time Equities, Inc. Barbara was a valued board member for over 33 of our almost 35 years as a cooperative and has served under every president of the 201 Board since our inception. Barbara, never known to suffer indecision on building matters, also has a terrific memory and has been our resident historian on details large and small, hysterical and sad, important and arcane. Every large-scale initiative that the cooperative has undertaken involved the planning, supervision and support of Barbara.

From all of us, a heartfelt "thank you" to Barbara (Babs to many in the building) for your dedication, hard work, perspective and storytelling. The last 33 years would have been a bore without you!

## Real Estate Taxes

Everyone knows our oft repeated opinion of the outrageous, rapacious taxation by the City of New York, including the way they camouflage increases. The City regularly and blindly raises the taxable value of property. That way they don't have to go to Albany to ask for permission to raise taxes, and they run for re-election on the false claim that they have not raised taxes.

The facts speak for themselves. In the last 15 years, real estate taxes due from 201 to the City increased by 247%. In the same period, maintenance charges at 201 have increased by only about 48%. Where did the rest of the money to pay the taxes come from? Reduced staffing, board driven operational efficiencies, improved plumbing, more efficient boilers, and ancillary revenues earned outside the maintenance stream.

What does the board do about it? Every year we file a formal protest against the increased assessed value of the building. The City ignores this, as they get thousands of these protests every year. Finally, when they think they cannot put us off any longer (and our tax attorneys ratchet up the pressure) they settle, not on something we would all consider fair, but something that makes more economic sense for us to accept versus taking further legal action. We believe we have finally reached the point where they are ready to make a settlement offer. If so, we will provide an update in our next newsletter.

## More Quick Hits

### Cardboard

The way we shop has changed – and most packages arrive in cardboard boxes. We are now overrun on many days with cardboard for recycling. We ask that you break down/collapse the cardboard before you place it in the recycling spot in the stairs. If you need help with that, contact Cristian at 212 255-2544 or super@201west16.org.

### Laundry

If you experience any issues with the laundry equipment in the basement, please notify our super at 212 255-2544 or super@201west16.org or drop a note under his office door. You can also leave a note with the doorman. We will act upon it immediately.

### Rooftop Terrace

As you enjoy the “Indian Summer” on our rooftop terrace, keep in mind that residents live below and can hear any loud (and even not so loud) noises. Please keep voices low and other noise to a minimum. Never let anything fall from the roof. And there is never any smoking or vaping allowed.

### Mail

If your mail has been a bit out of sorts lately, it might be because our longtime (more than 30 years!) mailman **Marcos** has retired. Since his retirement, the Postal Service has rotated several new people through the route that includes our building. We hope to get a permanent replacement soon who will be more familiar with our building.

### Smoke Detectors

The approach of fall is a reminder that we will soon be setting the clock back and it's also a great time to replace the batteries in your smoke detectors, which should be done annually.

## New State Rules

The last Albany legislative session produced substantial new protections for tenants, some darn good, some not so good. In the rush to adjournment, the law was poorly drafted in a substantial number of areas. For instance, though the law is meant to apply to rental apartments (controlled, stabilized and market rate), the wording does not adequately address the major difference between the leases cooperatives issue to shareholders based on a stock purchase (proprietary leases) and the landlord/tenant leases issued for rental apartments.

The Council of New York Cooperatives and other organizations are lobbying for a fix to the legislation so that cooperatives are not disadvantaged due to the new laws. The reason this effort is so important is that the net effect of the changes when applied to cooperatives will be more turn downs and higher maintenance charges because of the unique way that cooperatives are managed. The law does not reflect the fact that a board of directors volunteers to manage a building for the owners of shares in a cooperative, not for a building full of rental tenants.

To remain in compliance until any modifications to the law are instituted (there has already been some progress on that front), we will make a change in allocation of the administrative fees charged by 201 and Tudor for apartment re-sales and apartment sublets in our building. Effective immediately, these charges will be payable solely by the shareholder, not the prospective owner or subtenant. We are paying close attention to the developments in this new law and will keep you informed on any further changes to our policies and procedures that may be required.

---