Com #65

Press Release

60 Cambridge Residents Picket Resource Capital/Zee Associates Pledge to Defend Long Term Neighbor, Jean Keldysz Against Eviction

When: Tuesday, July 21, 5:30-6:30 pm
Where: Office of Resource Capital Group, 843 Mass. Ave. (Central Sq., near City Hall)

Chanting "Homes Before Profit," 60 members of the Eviction Free Zone and friends of Jean Keldysz protested in front of Resource Capital at their office on Mass. Ave. in Central Sq. Protesters demanded that Resource Capital (Alex Steinbergh) and Zee Associates (Nien-Hsi Hsu) stop attempts to evict Jean Keldysz, who has lived in her home at 14 Allen St. for over 50 years.

Ms. Keldysz has already seen her protected status rent increased from $250 (in late 1996) to $700, an amount she was able to pay because she got a Sec. 8. Now the owner is demanding $900, $100 more than Sec. 8 guidelines for a single person. Ms. Keldysz, through her Sec. 8, has offered to pay $800.

Ms. Keldysz is well known and liked in her community. James Goldberg, a Porter Sq. homeowner and friend spoke at the rally, observing that Jean had attended countless community meetings around affordable housing, not just for her but for everyone. "I've never seen the owner at those meetings," Mr. Goldberg commented. Other neighbors and activists also praised Jean's long time community activism and condemned the eviction.

Protesters expressed their determination to get long term security for Ms. Keldysz. "I want a 5-year contract with my Sec. 8 at $803," declared Jean Keldysz, "That's half the increase the owners want and that's fair. I have paid my dues and I deserve some security in my life, and so do other people in my situation."

The Eviction Free Zone has focused attention on the profits being made by owners like Resource Capital. Speakers cited that the owners had purchased this 8-unit property for only $47,000, converted to condos, and sold the first 2 condos for $366,000.

The EFZ is also asking the Council to pass a new local condominium conversion law. "Jean Keldysz should have been protected by the state condo law," commented Bill Marcotte, an EFZ organizer. "But the owners never gave the protections required under that law. We need to pass an enforceable local ordinance, as the state law allows, and as other communities have done."

EVICTION ALERT

Please HELP US to prevent the eviction of our neighbor, Jean Keldysz. She has received a 30-day notice to quit from the manager of her development, on behalf of the owner, Resource Capital/Zee Associates - Alex Steinbergh and Nien-Hsi Hsu.

We are asking you to help us stop this eviction!

Jean Keldysz

Jean has lived in her current apartment, her HOME,at 14 Allen St., in Porter Sq., since childhood, for 50 years. Jean's rent has gone from $250 (her "protected status" rent in 1996) to $700 today, which Jean can afford only because she received a Sec. 8. But now the owner wants $900, above the limit that the CHA can pay on her Sec. 8. Jean teaches young children and is one of the foremost community activists of the Porter Sq. area. She gives freely of her time and energy to all community causes. We want to keep Jean Keldysz in her home in Cambridge!

Tell Resource Capital/Zee Ass. (Steinbergh/Hsu) to stop this eviction!

Call Resource Capital/Zee Ass. at 491-8315/863-0266

Write to Resource Capital, 843 Mass. Ave., Cambridge 02139 or Zee Associates, PO Box 391303, Cambridge MA 02139

The Campaign to Save 2000 Homes, supported by the Cambridge Eviction Free Zone, is determined to help our neighbors protect their homes. We have sent letters to many large owners asking them to "do what Harvard did". After public pressure, Harvard, the City's largest landlord, agreed to limit increases for "protected status" tenants to 5% per year and sell some units to the City as permanently affordable housing. This agreement sets an important precedent. It balances real estate profit of owners with a concern for the community's affordable housing needs. The profits of large owners have gone way up since the end of rent control. People like Jean should not be forced out of their homes just to make more profit for big real estate investors.

About Resource Capital and Allen St.

In these eviction alerts, we usually try to provide some research on the profits made by the owner. Our research shows that this 8-apartment complex was purchased by Resource Capital for $47,010, with a further mortgage of $130,000 in 1995. It was converted to condominiums that same year. The first two condos alone (a total of 3 original units) sold for a total of $366,000! The owner of this building is a major buyer, seller, and owner of real estate in Cambridge. To threaten Jean Keldysz just to make a little more profit is unnecessary and immoral.

Together, we can protect our homes and our community.
Cambridge is for all people, not just the well off.

Campaign to Save 2000 Cambridge Homes / Cambridge Eviction Free Zone
For more information, call 868-2900 or write to 11 Inman St., Cambridge, MA 02139.

La historia increible de 59 Norfolk St. y 6 Porter Rd.

Los Hogares no son como panqueques. No se puede darlos la vuelta para ganancias faciles.

por Bill Marcotte

¿Que haces cuando el dueno de su hogar les dice a todos que tienen que salir en 30 dias? ¿O pide otro grande aumento de renta? Los inquilinos en estos edificios se organizaron en asociaciones de inquilinos, llamaron a los inspectores de la ciudad para documentar las violaciones del codigo de vivienda, y se unieron para negociar con el dueno para la seguridad de largo plazo y renta razonable.

Los duenos, Sidney y Norman Gross, habian sido duenos de estos dos edificios controlados desde hace 24 anos. Justo cuando les iban a llevar a la corte por no mantener los edificios, vendieron los edificios el 2 de marzo por $1 million a una entidad que se llama Porter-Norfolk Trust, encabecido por Leonard Aronson.

Aronson reunio con los inquilinos diciendo que le gustaria vender los dos edificios a una organizacion sin fines de lucro; pero 3 dias despues se aparecio una noticia anunicando una subasta publica para los edificios. Aronson habia vendido una "opcion a comprar" a un tal Todd Schaeffer a quien otros han acusado de dar la vuelta (vender un edificio rapidamente por una ganancia) en otros casos.

Durante la subasta el 7 de abril que fue protestado por los inquilinos, la opcion a comprar fue vendida a Joseph Yous por $1.35 millones; dieron la vuelta otra vez a los edificios.

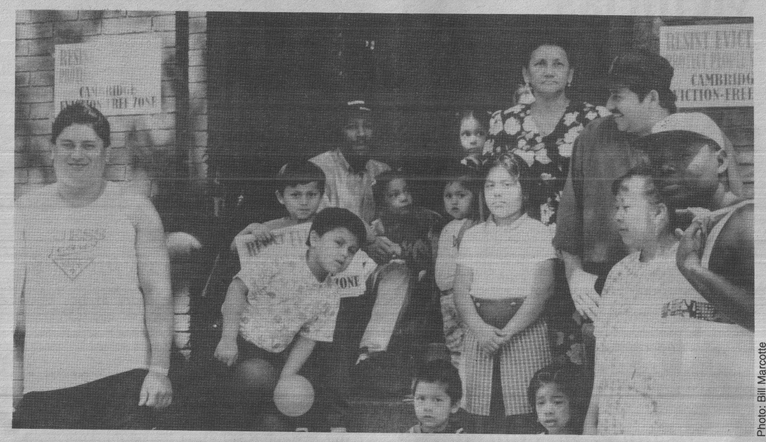

Photo: Bill Marcotte

Miembros de Norfolk St. Tenants Association/Manm Norfolk St. Tenants Assoc.

Despues de mucha presion publica por parte de los inquilinos (manteles en las ventanas, cartas a los bancos) los bancos negaron dar hipoteca a Yous, y aparentemente los edificios se han vuelto a Aronson. Pero todavia no sabemos exactamente quien es el dueno de los edificios. Los hermanos Gross tienen la hipoteca de $990,000 por el Sr. Aronson. Mantenga atencion. La historia se cambia cada semana.

Durante toda la confusion los inquilinos se han mantenido absolutamente determinados a quedarse en sus hogares. Siguen inspirando a todos nosotros en Cambridge que entendemos el crisis de vivienda.

Lutte Pour une Justice de logements Prise de conscience.

Je veux relater ici un fait personnel qui nous est arrivé à Cambridge, Massachusetts. [C'est aussi l'histoire de milliers de locataires après la fin du controle de lojement.]

Le fait concerne tous les habitants de la cité qui sont confrontés à un jeu purement diabolique entre les proprietaires et les locataires. Celà s'est passé en janvier de cette année, lorsqu' un matin nous recevions une lettre de notre proprietaire stipulant que nous devrions payer une augmantation de loyer.

Nous avions catétégoriquement refusé et pensé que cela était un abus. Il réclamait plus d'argent que les reparations qu'il devait entreprendre dans l'immeuble.

Nous avons reçu le soutien d' "Eviction Free Zone". Nous avions combantu jusqu'aujourd'hui. Donc je lance un appel aux frères et soeurs, amis et voisins a fin qu'ils prennent conscience de la situation actuelle, à fin qu'ils ne soient pas l'ojet de ces tractations dans le future. Merci.

– Gabriel Mondon.

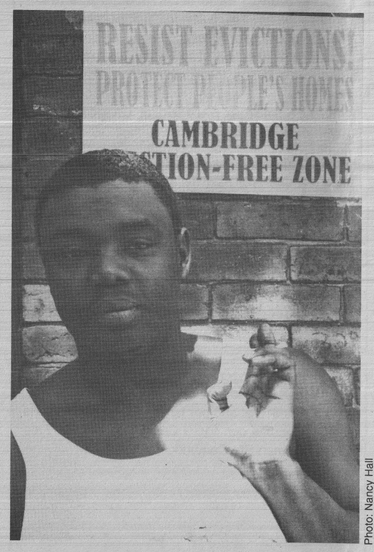

Photo: Nancy Hall

Gabriel Mondon, lokatè 59 Norfolk St.

Luta Pela Justiça de Habitação

Meu nome é Domingas Ribeiro.

Duas palavras rápidamente para encorajar aqueles que como eu tem problemas com os seus apartamentos e senhorios.

No principio eu estava um pouco descrente com os problemas que surgiram depois que o senhorio (Sidney Gross) anunciou que vendem a casa. Mas depois que nós

os moradores do prédio, organizamos com a ajuda duma organização (Cambridge Eviction Free Zone) tudo mudou para melhor.

Quando a pessoa tem problemas com a sua casa e pensa que tem razão, é bom a pessoa procurar saber os seus direitos, pedindo ajuda a uma organização certa como nós fizemos e assim as coisas irão para a frente . É preciso acreditar em si próprio e lutar pelos seus direitos.

– Boa sorte Dominga

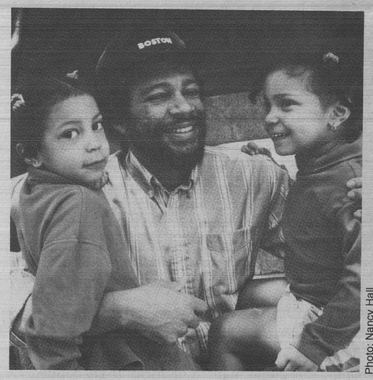

Photo: Nancy Hall

João Paulo, Alysha y Patricia, inquilinos de 59 Norfolk St.

Lucharemos Por La Justicia de Vivienda

Mi nombre es Carlos Urquiza.

Y vivo en la 59 Norfolk St., Cambridge. Junto con mi familia desde hace cuatro meses hemos venido. Luchando junto con los vesinos para que no nos despoyen de nuestras viviendas. Antes nosotros teníamos mucho miedo a que eso sucediera pero ahora los sentimos muy fuerte con esta organisacón que los respalda en todo. Nosotros de estamos my agradecidos a todos ellos.

– Carlos Urquiza

Plis pase 3000 Ayisyen mobilize devan Kongrè Meriken.

pa Muradieu Joseph

Jou kite lendi 23 Mas 1998 la, Ayisyen toupatou nan Etazini te fè yon leve kanpe pou apiye yon lwa yon Represzantan Florida, te ekri an favè imigran Ayisyen yo.

Youn nan rezon ki enspire lwa sa ase paske gen yon lwa Repibliken yo ekri pou bay amnisti ak lot nasyonalite. Menm, lwa sa a pa mansyone Ayisyen. Devan diskriminasyon flagrant sa a Ayisyen yo kanpe pou bare konplo rasis yo e yo jwenn sipò nan men kèk demokrat ki toujou ap veye twou vid pou yo kapab gen plis vwa nan eleksyon. Sèl defans nou se mobilizasyon pou veye move kou.

23 Mas, Kominote Ayisyen an te yon lòt fwa ankò montre solidarite li. Anpil moun ki te patisipe nan manifestasyon an se moun ki gen rezidans legal nan peyi isit, men yo te santi yon obligasyon moral pou yo pote kole ak xòt k ap viv nan kè sote. Se pou sa anpil moun te fè deplasman pou yo ale devan kongrè Meriken. Te genyen solidarite bò kote Eviction Free Zone ki te bay Komite Kreyòl plis pase 300 dola pou vwayaj la. Cambridge Economic opportunity Committee (CEOC) te bay patisipasyon pa li tou nan gwo evenman sa a. Nou panse rezilta mach la pap prantan pou li pote fri. Annatandan n ap rete mobilize jouk nou pote laviktwa.

EFZ
Community Voice

Summer 1998

Newspaper of the Cambridge Eviction Free Zone - el Periodico de la Zona Libre de Desalojo - Jounal Zon Lib/Komite Kreyol

Resistance wins victories

Every day low and moderate income tenants faced with large increases or evictions contact us. They want to know their legal rights. We have to tell them that, without rent control, the law sides very strongly with big property owners. Frankly, investor's profits are more important under the law than your home.

But the struggle didn't end just because the law is against us. In some ways, it got even stronger. With the support of the Eviction Free Zone, hundreds of tenants have organized tenant associations. **They have successfully fought evictions and negotiated lower rent increases.** You will see many examples of these struggles presented inside.

How have they done this? Here are just a few important lessons.

Know the rights you do have. Yes, an owner can increase your rent to whatever he wants. But he still has to enforce the increase or evict you if you don't pay it. That can be time consuming and expensive. Tenants can raise counterclaims (sue the landlord) for current or past code violations, harassment, etc. If a landlord makes a mistake on procedure, they sometimes have to start over. This gives you bargaining room.

Stand firm. Most big owners count on tenant fear. If you agree to pay what you can't afford or simply move out when the eviction notice comes, the landlord wins easy. As soon as you decide to fight back, you can almost always negotiate a better deal.

Get help. That means legal advice, from the EFZ or from a lawyer. But it also means the social support of people just like you who are facing the same situation. We can help!

Go public. Many people are shy about making their case public. Don't be. Real estate profits are huge (see the article in this issue). To seek to evict people just to make a little extra profit is plainly immoral. Most people agree with that. Our public letters and demonstrations have been effective ways of saving people's homes.

Organize. Everything described above is easier if you do it as part of a tenant association supported by the EFZ. There is strength in numbers. And join the EFZ itself!



Photo: Skip Sichel

Caravan for Housing Justice moves through Davis Square - July 1997.
See pages 4 & 5 for more!

Inside

Editorial. . . . . p. 2
Pass Home Rule!. . . . . p. 3
Protect Expiring Use buildings
Kreyòl (p. 10) & Español (p. 11)
EFZ to the Streets!. . . . . p. 4-5
Landlord profits up . . . . . p. 5
Cambridge needs a Living Wage. . . . . p. 6
Kreyòl (p. 10) & Español (p. 11)
Legislation, Tenant Rights, Tenant Assoc. Shorts. . . . . p. 6-7
The amazing story of Porter Rd. & Norfolk St. . . . . p. 8, 12
Kreyòl, Español, Français, Portugues (p. 12)
Voting rights for all. . . . . p. 12
Kreyòl (p. 9) & Español (p. 11)
D.C. March (Kreyòl). . . . . p. 12

The 2000 Homes Campaign

Continuing the Fight for Housing Justice

by Nancy Hall (Marie D'Aoust on quotes)

The EFZ has launched a series of mass campaigns since the end of rent control - the Housing Justice Campaign, the $10 Million Affordable Housing Plan - but perhaps the best known is the Campaign to Save 2000 Homes, that began in August, 1996 and has met weekly ever since. Each campaign received the backing of a wide range of community and church organizations.

The 2000 Homes Campaign was organized primarily to defend "protected status" tenants (about 1500) and Sec. 8 tenants (about 550) in formerly rent controlled buildings—thus the number 2000. ("Protected status" was a 1-2 year extension for low income tenants established by Weld to phase out rent control. It ended Dec. 31, 1996.) But from its onset, the Campaign excluded no one. We know many eligible tenants who never applied for protected status and many others who didn't qualify for the painfully low income guidelines. And given high Cambridge rents, even moderate income people are in trouble.

Our first public event was to march in the 150th Anniversary Parade September, 1996, and followed this with a Town Meeting where over 200 people came out. We demanded that large landlords sell some units to the City at affordable prices, limit increases for low income tenants to 5%, to 10% for moderate income and continue all Sec. 8 contracts. The legislative demands included the transfer tax, a local condo law, money for legal services, among others (see story this issue).

The Campaign pursued a two-legged strategy to: 1) defend those resisting increases by organizing and putting direct pressure on landlords, and exposing their windfall profits; and 2) demand new City policies for affordable housing. The first step in defending tenants facing eviction has usually been to send a "Campaign letter" directly to a landlord. These letters are "cc'd" to community and religious leaders, and to councilors, making it clear to the owner that this case had become "public."

As tenants faced court appearances we created "eviction alerts." Each alert describes the tenants who are resisting evictions or large increases and describes the profits the owner has made and wants to make. These alerts are distributed in the community and asks friends to write or call landlords to protest. Also, we never let anyone connected to the Campaign go to court alone.

From the beginning, the Campaign has gone back into the streets and back to City Council over and over again to demand affordable housing and to confront large landlords trying to evict tenants just for profit (see "EFZ takes it to the streets").

In January, 1997, we organized an extraordinary series of Concerts for Housing Justice. Hundreds of good educational flyers were distributed at these events. Members of the music industry helping out told us they had never seen such a response from bands willing to work for free.

2000 Homes Campaign continued on page 4

We need social ownership of housing and some form of control on evictions and rents

by Bill Cavellini

If nothing else is clear now, a year and a half after all controls (even temporary) are gone from Boston area rents, it should be evident to everyone ... political pundits, analysts, economists, politicians, social service delivery agencies, etc.... that large landlords will not exercise self control... but once let loose, will act like a flock of vultures driven by an insatiable greed. They haven't lost their moral compass; they never had one. What should now also be crystal clear is that no legislative effort, short of massive federal government intervention and funding can protect low and moderate income tenants in their inner city homes. The private market will not build affordable housing and the local public sector's attempts to increase the affordable housing stock are no where near enough.

Cambridge, Boston and Brookline's affordable housing stock is diminishing by the hundreds every week as whole buildings get converted to commercial uses, rentals become condos, and formerly rent controlled and protected status tenants reach the limit that they can pay after a series of rent increases and run out of belt-tightening solutions.

Amidst the housing crisis . . . tenants fight back

The Eviction Free Zone's (EFZ) two-pronged (organizing and legislative) fightback against landlord greed has been very effective. Hundreds of tenants have delayed, diminished and defeated huge rent increases... while remaining in their homes. The EFZ, mainly through the Campaign to Save 2000 Homes, is responsible for assisting tenants and tenant organizations to win these victories. But, what happens after the one-year, two-year, and five-year agreements are exhausted. A new round of confrontational fightbacks... one building, one landlord at a time??? Can this new round be successful without new just-cause eviction protections???

Legislative approaches have been stalled and are too small in scope

Inclusionary zoning has passed the City Council, but less than 50 units of affordable housing per year is expected from this requirement on new housing construction. The real estate transfer tax is wallowing in limbo at the State House. We're working hard to pass the home rule petition to protect expiring use buildings, which hangs in the balance (see article page 3). Without the transfer tax the City will not have a continuing stream of major revenue to fund its efforts to buy and rehabilitate formerly rent controlled housing. But, even if it were to pass against tremendous odds, the pace of acquisitions achieved with these limited local funds will not keep up with the spread of speculation and greed that is now rampant in Cambridge.

Some form of rent and eviction controls is required to deal with the housing crisis

No group of people are in a better position to make a case for the establishment of controls on evictions and rents than those of us on the front lines. No group has been through what we have been through. Many of us will be under the gun again when our temporary, negotiated settlements expire, in a year or two. Many of us, who now live in socially-owned, permanently affordable housing, know what it's like to be on the brink of moving out of Cambridge due to escalating, unaffordable rents. Many of us have been in court, Thursday after Thursday, trying to do something about the pain and anxiety of hundreds of tenants over the last two and a half years.

We've been to the City Council, lobbied the legislature, picketed landlords' homes in the suburbs, camped out on the City Hall lawn, and rallied and marched in the dead of winter. We know what's possible with these strategies and what is not. Against the flood of avarice and greed, we have attempted to create a counter flow. Much has been accomplished. There is, once again, a dynamic, grassroots, tenant movement in Cambridge. The momentum must be carried over into a campaign for legislation that guarantees no evictions without just cause, limits on profit taking from high rents and resales, and limits on condominium conversions.

What is Social Ownership?

The Eviction Free Zone fights for permanently affordable, "social ownership." Public housing, non-profit ownership, "limited equity" tenant ownership, or other deed-restricted ownership are all examples. The most important feature of social ownership is that it can't be bought and sold for profit.

Most of the average tenant's rent goes to profit of one form or another. Besides the cash flow (rents less expenses and mortgage), the rent includes money to pay off the old owner's profit on sale. It includes profit to the bank, as well as regular deposits of "principle" to the current owner. Because of this, in a hot housing market, rents keep going up despite the fact that expenses may not go up that fast. In socially owned housing, after an initial mortgage for the purchase is paid off, rents may go *down*, even in Cambridge.

Government programs that subsidize the market rather than getting buildings out of the market generally create big problems down the road. Just look at expiring use buildings (see stories this issue). Private owners are cashing in on what was built as affordable housing.



What We Stand For

The Cambridge Eviction Free Zone is a community organization of poor and working class people and our allies. We believe that all people have the right to, among other things, a job, a decent, affordable home, quality health care, a good education, and equal justice for all. To this end, we are committed to working to achieve a democratic city government.

Our goal: Build an independent organization that respects all neighborhoods and communities, stands for the full equality of nationalities, and carries out its affairs in the languages of its members. Without such an independent organization, we cannot defend, strengthen or advance the interest of our communities.

Join the Eviction Free Zone !

Join the Eviction Free Zone organization. The dues are $10/year per family. You will receive this newsletter by mail and be notified of our meetings. Send your name and address along with $10 to the Cambridge Eviction Free Zone, 11 Inman St., Cambridge, MA 02139.

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Layout: Nick Jehlen (781-765-7181)

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In kind support provided by CEOC.

La resistencia ha ganado victorias

Todos los días inquilinos de ingreso bajo y moderado nos contactan con problemas sobre aumentos de renta. Tenemos que decirles que, sin el control de renta, la ley está muy al lado de los dueños de propiedad. Francamente, las ganancias de inversores son mas importantes bajo la ley que tu hogar.

Pero la lucha no ha terminado simplemente porque la ley está en contra de nosotros. En algunas maneras, la lucha se ha enfortalecido. Con la ayuda de la Zona Libre de Desalojo, cientos de inquilinos han organizado asociaciones de inquilinos. **Han resistido desalojos y han negociado aumentos más pequeños.** Va a ver muchos ejemplos de estas luchas presentados en estos artículos. ¿Como lo han hecho? Aquí hay unas lecciones importantes.

Hay que saber los derechos que sí tienes. Sí, un dueño puede aumentar su renta a cualquier cantidad que quiera. Pero todavía tiene que enforzar el aumento o desalojarte si no pagas. Este proceso puede ser caro y puede tomar mucho tiempo. Inquilinos pueden contra-demandar al dueño por violaciones del código de vivienda, hostigamiento, etc.

"El poder no concede nada sin demanda. No lo ha hecho nunca, y no lo va a hacer."

– El famoso abolicionista, Frederick Douglass

Mantenerte firma. La mayoría de los dueños esperen que los inquilinos tengan miedo. Si firmas un aumento de renta o sales cuando la noticia de desalojo viene, el dueno ya ha ganado. Tan pronto como decides luchar, casi siempre puedes negociar algo mejor.

Consigue ayuda. Esto quiere decir consejo legal, o de la ZLD o de un abogado. Pero tambien quiere decir el apoyo social de gente como ti que enfrentan la misma situación. ¡Podemos ayudar!

"Si luchas, tal vez pierdas. Si no luchas, ya has perdido."

– Mantel hecho para una huelga en Alemania

Lucha públicamente. Mucha gente está timida sobre la publicación de su caso. Pero las ganancias de los dueños son enormes (ver el artículo en este ejemplo). Tratar de desalojar a la gente solo para aumentar las ganancias es inmoral. La mayoría de la gente están de acuerdo con esto. Nuestras cartas públicas y manifestaciones han sido efectivas en salvar los hogares.

Organízate. Todo ya explicado resulta mas fácil como parte de una asociación de inquilinos apoyado por la ZLD. Hay fuerza en los números. ¡Y únate con la ZLD también!

Todos Pagan Impuestos; Todos Deben Votar

por Natalie Smith

La Zona Libre de Desalojo está planificando a renovar la Campaña de Derecho a Votar. Con esto intentamos ganar el derecho de inmigrantes a votar en elecciones locales por el Comité de Escuelas sin tener en cuenta si son ciudadanos o no. Otras ciudades como Nueva York y Chicago ya tienen leyes similares. La idea se base en el hecho de que todos, incluyendo a los inmigrantes, pagan impuestos para apoyar las escuelas. Muchos niños de inmigrantes asisten las escuelas en la ciudad, pero actualmente los padres de estos ninos no tienen voz. Excluir a algunos padres en las decisiones de la escuela no es justo ni a los niños ni a los padres.

¿Por qué es importante a la ZLD el derecho a votar? Porque muchos de nuestros miembros son inmigrantes. Tenemos que enfrentar asuntos que afectan a nuestros miembros porque al fin afectan a todos nosotros. De 1992 a 1994, una coalición grande - como 30 grupos y 300 individuales - estaba unificada para apoyar la idea. Cuando "Question 9" (el control de renta) llegó al voto, dejamos la campaña para defender la vivienda razonable. En nuestro retiro de 1997, la cuestión mas importante para los miembros fue asuntos de los inmigrantes. Así que hemos regresado a la Campaña. Hemos recibido una veca de la fundación "Haymarket Peoples Fund" para contratar a un(a) organizador(a). El meto es involucar a todos en las escuelas y luchar por la igualdad.

Si tienes interés en esta campaña, llama la ZLD al 868-2900.

Cambridge necesita un aumento de pago

Lucha por un Pago Vivible

por Natalie Smith

Actualmente la ZLD está involucrada en una Campaña de Pago Vivible. Esto es algo que discutimos en nuestro retiro de 1997. Representantes de la ZLD, el Sindicato de Carpinteros Local 40 y la asociacion de abogados "National Lawyers Guild" y otros individuos han asistido reuniones del comité desde enero. Ya hemos tenido la primera reunión de la coalición de la ciudad y tenemos el respaldo de más de 30 grupos en la ciudad.

La cantidad que queremos para un pago vivible es $10 por hora (sin beneficios). El pago afectaría a todos los obreros que trabajan por compañías con contratos con la ciudad o reciben subsidios de la ciudad. Esto sería muy importante en la lucha por justicia por todos los trabajadores.

Hay una nueva tendencia de compañías a querer trabajadores temporales que tienen salarios más bajos y contratos más breves. Estos contratos muy cortos son casi como trabajo diario. Pasar una ley de pago vivible es buena manera de combatir estas tácticas que roban el trabajador de su pago y su poder. Es muy importante que todos los trabajadores incluyendo a los de parte-tiempo y temporales consideren los sindicatos como manera de mejorar las condiciones de trabajar. El marcado libre en sí no da un pago justo.

Pasar la "Home Rule Petition"

la única cosa que proteje inquilinos de uso vencido.

por Sarah Boyer

El Comité de Inquilinos de Uso Vencido sigue trabajando para asegurar que la legislatura del estado pase el proyecto de ley H4257, la "Home Rule Petition". La Petición daría a la ciudad el poder de regular "vivienda involucrada con el gobierno" si pierda sus regulaciones. Este puede pasar si el dueño de uno de estos edificios paga la hipoteca subsidiada o decide no renovar su contrato de Sección 8.

La petición daria a la ciudad el poder de regular las rentas para dar a los inquilinos ancianos, menos capacitados, y de bajo ingreso una preferencia para estos apartamentos cuando están libres. La legislación protegería a los inquilinos que ya viven en los edificios y también preservaría los apartamentos como vivienda razonable para siempre.

Jane Casey, una inquilina en Walden Square, expresó los sentimientos de muchos de nosotros cuando dijo, "Estaría desolada si tendría que salir de mi ciudad nativa solo porque no tendré suficiente dinero para vivir aquí."

Nuestra petición pasó por los consejeros de la ciudad con un voto de 8-1 en 1996 (solo Galluccio votó que no). Tiene el apoyo de la entera delegación a la legislatura estatal. Se reportó positivamente del Comité de Vivienda. Pero necesita el apoyo del lider de los diputados, Thomas Finneran, para pasar la Camara de Diputados. Tiene que pasar antes del 31 de julio.

FAVOR DE ESCRIBIR al Speaker Finneran (direccion: Honorable Thomas Finneran, Speaker, House of Representatives, State House Room 356, Boston, MA 02133). ¡POR FAVOR HAGALO HOY!

Que Representamos

La Zona Libre de Desalojo es una organización comunitaria de gente obrera y pobre y nuestros aliados. Creemos que todo el mundo tiene el DERECHO a, entre otras cosas, un trabajo, un hogar adecuado a un precio razonable, cuidado de salud de alta calidad, una buena educación, y la justicia para todos. Para llevar este fin a cabo, tenemos el compromiso de trabajar para lograr un gobierno municipal democrático.

Nuestra meta es construir una organización independiente de toda la gente que respeta todos los vecendarios y las comunidades, que representa la igualdad total de las nacionalidades, y que elabora sus asuntos en los idiomas de sus miembros. Sin una organización de esta índole, no podemos defender, fortalecer o satisfacer los intereses de nuestra comunidad.

¡Unase a La Zona Libre de Desalojo!

La cuota es $10 al año por familia. Llene el formulario abajo y mandelo con $10 a Cambridge Eviction Free Zone, 11 Inman St., Cambridge, MA 02139.

Nombre _____

Dirección _____

Teléfono _____

Pase Home Rule Petition

Se sèl bagay ki ka pwoteje expiring use tenants.

pa Sarah Boyer

Komite lokatè expiring use yo nan Cambridge kontinye travay di pou lwa ki rele home rule petion H4257 an kapab pase lachanm. Petisyon sa a pwal pèmèt City a regilarize bilding gouvènman an te ede bati yo si yo vin deregle. Sa kapab rive jounen jodi a si yon pwopriyetè deside peye tout lajan yo te prete li pou li konstwi apatman yo oubyen si yo deside refize kontra seksyon 8 yo. (Li atik sou Huron).

Petisyon an ap bay Cambridge dwa pou li kontwole lwaye ak degèpisman sa va pèmèt granmoun ak lokatè ki pap fè gwo lajan e ki elijib yo kapab jwenn apatman yo vle lè yo vid. Nonsèlman lokatè ki abite nan kay sa yo koun ye la aap jwenn pwoteksyon anba lwa sa men tou kay nou abite ladan yo pwal rete kay pou lwe a bon mache pou tout tan.

Gen anpil moun yo fòse kite kite City a paske yo pagen pwoteksyonankò e pri kay ap monte bwa. Se sa ki f`e li pi enpòtan ankò pou nou sove bilding yo rele "expiring use" yo.

Gen yon lokatè yo rele Jane Casey, ki abite nan Walden Sq. Li eksprime santiman anpil nan nou lè li di: Kè m t ap dechire si se pou mwen ta oblije kite vil kote m te pran nesans lan e kote m te grandi a, poutèt mwen pa gen ase lajan pou m vi la".

Petisyon pou regle kay nou yo deja pase nan City council pa yon majorite 8-1 nan sezon otòn 1996 (se sèlman Galluccio ki te vote kont li).Lwa sa a gen sipò delegasyon state house.Gen anpil lejislatè ki anfavè li. Nou konnen sena a pwal vote pouli. Men nou bezwen sipò prezidan chanm nan Msye Thomas Finneran pou li kapab pase. Lwa a dwe vote 31 Jiyè.

NOU VLE OU EKRI Pòtpawòl Finneran(Honorable Thomas Finneran, Speaker, House of Representatives, State House Room 356, Boston MA 02133. TANPRI EKRI JODI A MENM!

Sou Kisa Nou Kanpe

Zòn Degèpisman Entèdi nan Cambridge la se yon òganizasyon kominote ki fòme de pòv ak travayè ak alye nou. Nou kwè ke tout moun gen DWA tou, pou jwenn yon travay, yon bon kay ki nan yon pri akseptab, bon laswenyay, yon bon edikasyon, ak jistis. Pou nou ka rive la, nou angaje pou nou travay pou nou rive a yon gouvenman demokrat pou vil la.

Objektif nou se pou nou bati yon òganizasyon endependan ak moun ki respekte tout katye ak kominote yo, ki kanpe pou egalite total pou tout nasyonalite yo, e ki bay sèvis yo nan lang manb yo pale. San òganizasyon endependan sa yo, nou paka defann, ranfose e fè enterè kominote nou yo avanse.

Vini Manb Eviction Free Zone!

Fre anyel la se $10 pa fanmi. Ranpli fom sa'a voye'l ak $10 ban nou nan Eviction Free Zone, 11 Inman St., Cambridge, MA 02139.

Nom _____

Adrè s _____

Telefon _____

Rezistans pote laviktwa

Chak joulokatè k ap touche yon ti tchotcho e ki ap fè fas ak gwo ogmantasyon lwaye ak degèpisman kontakte nou. Yo bezwen konnen dwa yo. Nou dwe fè yo konnen san kontòl lwaye, lwa a panche anfavè gwo pwopriyetè yo. Anverite, pwofi envestisè yo gen plis enpòtans anba lalwa pase kay n ap viv yo.

"Si ou pa mande pouvwa, ou pap janm jwenn li. Sa pa t janm fèt e sa pap janm fèt."

– Gran abolisyonis, Frederick Douglas

Men lit la pat sispann paske lwa a kont nou. Okontrè li vin pi djanm. Gras ak sipò Eviction Free Zone, gen anpil moun ki òganize yo nan mitan asosiyasyon. **Yo goumen ak anpil siksè kont degèpisman e yo negosye ba pri pouogmantasyon lwaye.** Wap wè anpil ekzanplit sa yo nan mitan jounal la. Kouman yo fè sa? Men kèk nan leson enpòtan.

Aprann konnen dwa ou. Wi sè vre yon mèt kay gend dwa pou li ogmante pri lwaye jan livle. Men fòk li kapab aplike ogmantasyon an oubyen li mete w deyò si w pa peye. Sa kapab pran anpil tan e li koute kòb. Lokatè gen dwa pou li trennen mèt kay yo lajistis si gen bagay nan kay la ki pamache byen oubyen si mèt kay la ap rann ou lavi di, e latriye. Si mèt kay la erè nan pwosede ki etabli yo, li dwe rekòmanse tout bagay. Sa bawou espas pou ou layite e pou fòse li negosye.

Kanpe djanm. Laplipa mèt kay yo konte sou laperèz lokatè yo pou yo aji. Si ou dakò pou w peye plis pase ou genyen, oubyen kite kay la san reziste, Mèt kay la genyen san traka. Depi ou deside reziste, ou gen plis chans pou rive ak yon bon antant.

Chache èd. Sa vle di konsèy legal nanmen EFZ ou byen yon avoka. Men sa vle di tou sipò sosyal nanmen moun ki nan menm sitiyasyon ak ou. Nou kapab ede w!

Leve pye ou, pran lari. Gen anpil moun ki jennen lè yo dwe ekspoze sitiyasyon yo an piblik. Piga. Pwofi gwo propriyetè yo anpil (gen yon atik sou koze sa a nan nimewo jounal sa a).Pou yon moun degèpi yon lòt jis paske livle fè pwofi se yon bagay ki imoral. Gen anpil moun ki dakò ak pawòl sa a. L´t tou louvri nou yo ak manifestasyon nou yo efikas anpil nan ede sove kay lokatè nou yo.

"Si ou batay ou kapab pèdi. Si ou pajanm batay ou pèdi davans."

– Banner pandan grèv konstrktè bato Alman yo nan lane 1980

Organize. Tout sa nou sot eksplike piwo a kapab reyalize si ou fè sa kòm asosiyasyon ki sipòte pa EFZ. Ansanm nou fò, sitou lè w ap mache ak EFZ.



Photo: Nancy Hall

Cambridge bezwen ogmantasyon

Goumen pou salè ki pou pèmèt nou viv

pa Nathalie Smith

Jounen jodi a EFZ antre nan batay pou pou yon kanpay anfavè ogmantasyon salè pou travayè nan Cambridge. Se yon desizyon ki te pran nan retrèt anyèl nou nan mwa jen ane 97 la. Rankont komite travay ki kòmanse an janvye ane sa a te reprezante pa EFZ, Sendika Chapantye lokal 40 ak Asosiyasyon Avoka ak lòt individi. Kon ye la nou gen rankont ak gwoup nan tout vil la e nou gen plis pase 30 gwoup ki apiye nou.

N ap goumen pou salè minimòm nan rive $10 pa è san yon pake benefis. (Nou panse sa t ap twò difisil pou nou swiv). Living Wage la pwal bon pou tout travayè k ap travay nan Konpayi ki gen kontra ak city oubyen ki jwenn èd nan men city a. Sa se va yon gwo deklarasyon, e se komansman pa nan lit pou jistis n ap mennen nan plas kate moun ap travay.

Living wage la aji tankou yon dekourajman pou patron ki espere kontrakte travay sou baz kout tèm. Gen nouvo jefò bò kote anplwaye k ap chache etabli mwayen pou peye mwens lajan pou fòs travay ak kontra ki pa dire lontan. Kontra kout tèm sa kapab tounen travay jounalye. Living wage se yon bon mwayen pou konbat taktk sa a ki retire pouvwa nan men travayè lè li desann salè anba. Li enpòtan anpil pou tout travayè ak moun k ap travay pataym ak tanporè konsidere sendika kòm mwayen pou rann kondisyon yo miyò, piske mache travay poukont pal pa bay yon salè ki jis.

Pass the Home Rule Petition

The only thing which protects expiring use tenants.

by Sarah Boyer

The Cambridge Expiring Use Tenants Committee continues to work hard to ensure the passage by the state legislature of H4257, the Cambridge Home Rule Petition. The petition would allow the City to regulate "governmentally involved housing" if it is deregulated. That can happen now if an owner of one of these buildings pays off their mortgage or decides not to renew their Sec. 8 subsidy contracts. (see article on Huron)

Cambridge would regulate rents and evictions and admissions so that qualified elderly, disabled, or low income Cambridge tenants could have a preference. Not only would present tenants of expiring use buildings be protected by this legislation, but the units that we live in would be preserved as affordable housing for the future.

Many people have been forced to move from the City because their safety net has been torn to shreds and rents have skyrocketed. That makes it all the more important to save the expiring use buildings.

We need you to write!

Speaker Finneran (Honorable Thomas Finneran, Speaker, House of Representatives, State House Room 356, boston MA 02133. PLEASE! DO IT TODAY!

[Ed. note: Our home rule petition passed the City Council by a large 8-1 margin in the fall of 1996, everyone voting yes except Galluccio. It has the support of our entire statehouse delegation. It was reported favorably from the Housing Committee. But it needs the support of House Speaker Thomas Finneran to be pass there. It must pass by July 31.]

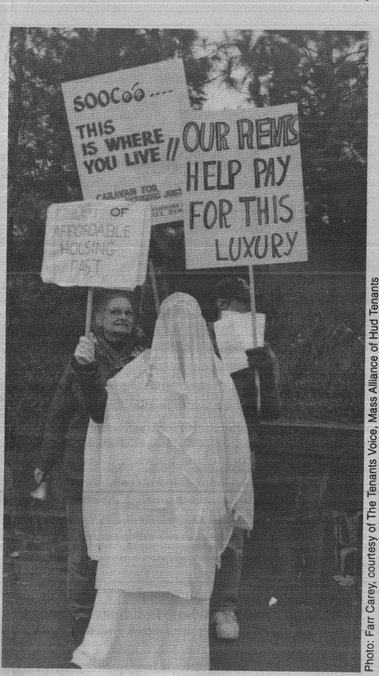


Photo: Farr Carey, courtesy of The Tenants Voice, Mass Alliance of Hud Tenants

EFZ joins protest at Brattle St. home of Simeon Bruner, owner of Piano Factory Apartments, who has deregulated and raised rents there. "Ghost of Affordable Housing Past", whose spectre first appeared at the Scrooge rally, shows up here again.

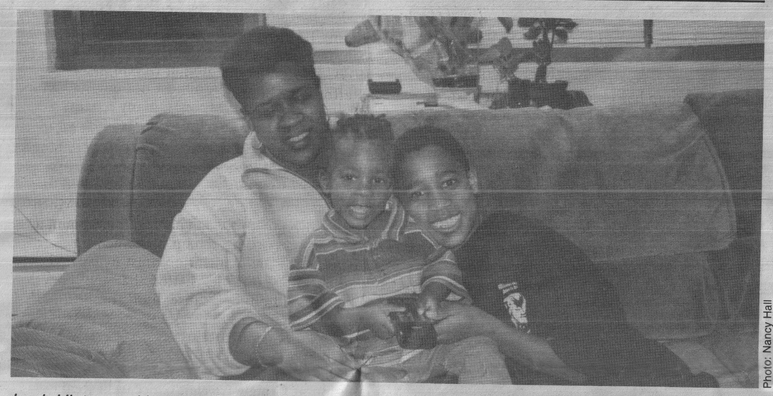


Photo: Nancy Hall

Leah Hinton and her two children want to stay in their home at Huron Towers, where she grew up.

High rents, huge profits at Huron Towers

By Sara Wohlleb

"Making a profit is not a dirty word," said Bill Kargman, General Partner of the owner of 700 Huron Ave. "We made an investment and we deserve a return on our investment." But the heart of the issue is HOW MUCH return does he deserve, and at what cost to the community?

Last year, Kargman made news in Cambridge by deregulating all 248 apartments at Huron Towers. He is now charging $1400 per month and more - for apartments that were once reserved for low and moderate income residents.

HUD has provided "sticky vouchers" to cover most of the rent increase for existing tenants, but the vouchers are not guaranteed for more than 1 year at a time and are limited. For example, if a tenant's income falls due to a layoff, the new vouchers will not cover more of the rent the way a Sec. 8 does. Also, after the first rent increase, future rent increases come from the tenant's pocket. And when a subsidized tenant moves out, the apartment is rented to a new, higher income tenant. The weakness of these vouchers is why only the home rule petition for HUD buildings can protect the tenants and the apartments at Huron Towers.

Is there a point at which profit does become a dirty word? According to a 1997 Boston Globe article, Kargman invested only $1 of his own money in the project back in the 1970s.

Walden Sq. Tenant Council

We've Been Working Hard – Join Us!

by Pam Curtis (Pres.), Josie DeAngelis (VP), Joan Colwell (Tres.), Jane Casey (Sec.)

Our Tenant Council has been very active providing services to the residents. We've had computer classes open to all, an Easter Egg Hunt for the kids, and a cookbook full of residents' recipes.

We've also defended residents' rights. For instance, last year management proposed a rent increase of 8%. We challenged it, got access to the budget, proved they didn't need it, and, through HUD, got the increase lowered to 3%.

Asbestos was a very important issue. Management sent us a notice saying that there was asbestos in the ceilings. They just non-chalantly informed us of this. We called a big meeting, inviting inspectors and environmental experts. We reviewed the process of removal. But we are also concerned that we had never been informed before. Residents have done many things to their ceilings over the years. In fact, management has removed whole bathroom ceilings while residents remained in the apartment! We are worried about the effects. We are aware of many deaths in the development from cancer.

We feel that tenant councils can't walk away when it gets tough. They have to go head on with management sometimes. After all, our rent pays their salaries. But tenants need to come out more and help us. We're here all year round working for them.

Section 8 Tenants Struggling

Section 8, or MRVP, are rental subsidy programs where a tenant pays some of the rent and the government pays some. There is a lot of discrimination against Sec. 8.

But rent control housing in Cambridge was one of the few areas in the state where landlords *wanted* Sec. 8 tenants. At the end of 1996, 550 Sec. 8 households were in formerly rent controlled buildings.

But, after rent control, many landlords didn't want Sec. 8 anymore. Market rents rapidly rose above what the Sec. 8 program could pay. In 1996, the Cambridge Housing Authority went to HUD and got special permission to pay landlords 20% *above* the fair market rent ceiling. Still, it wasn't enough for many owners.

Increasingly, landlords are canceling Sec. 8 or refusing to take it because they want more money. Sometimes, tenants have "vouchers" which allow tenants to pay higher rents, but all out of their own pocket. At Rindge Towers, management arbitrarily decided to decrease the number of their "project-based" Sec. 8's from 338 to about 250. At Huron Towers, new "sticky vouchers" (see related story) give huge added profits to the owner but don't protect the tenant from income loss.

The EFZ has responded by public campaigns demanding that landlords renew existing Sec. 8's and by helping tenants file discrimination cases at the Human Rights Commission. Don't forget, it is illegal discrimination not to take a Sec. 8 if it will pay the rent a landlord is asking. These efforts have won a number of victories.

Cheryl-Ann Pizza-Zeoli speech on Section 8 - see p. 9

EFZ Takes it

2000 Homes Campaign

continued from page 1

Altogether, 8 concerts were held through March in 7 clubs. We raised about $7000 for legal defense for those tenants whose incomes were not quite low enough for free Legal Services.

As more and more new people continue to show up at Campaign meetings, the nature of the Campaign has grown into a place where people come to share, learn and empower themselves and each other to organize. More and more people are beginning to realize that organized tenant associations are doing the same things unions do at a workplace. Organized tenants deny that the market rent is a fair one, just as unions historically refuse to accept low market-determined wages. Both seek collective bargaining and believe that profits should be a factor in arriving at what's fair.

As rents continue to rise, new waves of tenants are coming to the Campaign, those that struggled to pay earlier increases but are fed up as the rents soar into the 1000's. In a 2-week period in May, 1998, 3 buildings with a total of 150 apartments got increase or eviction notices, came to the Campaign, and began to organize.

The message is clear. People must organize. The market when left unregulated will not bend its profit driven behavior for anything but direct resistance. We are seeing this direct resistance work.



Photo: Skip Schiel

Tent-In at City Hall



Photo: Skip Schiel

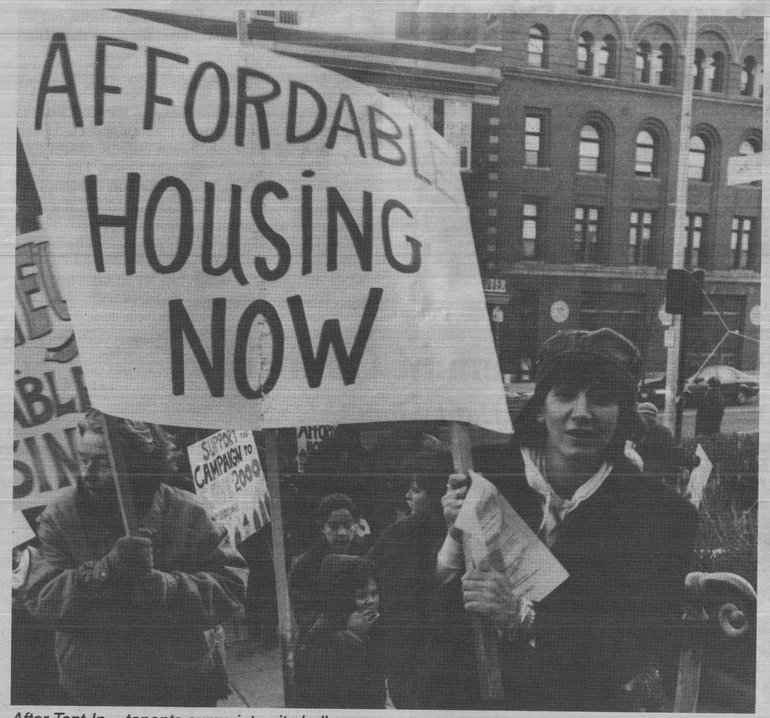
Caravan–Chiccarelli Real Estate

Tent-In at City Hall - March 17, 1997

The City Council had first expressed concern about the future of protected status tenants in the fall of 1996, after the Campaign to Save 2000 Homes first organized. The Council Housing Committee began to consider the whole housing program of the EFZ and the Campaign 2000 during meetings beginning in December, 1996. But by February, 1997, almost nothing had actually been passed. In response, many tenants pitched tenants and occupied the front lawn of City Hall for a whole day on Monday. That night, over 100 people came out to demand action. The transfer fee was passed that night.

Caravan for Housing Justice - July 26, 1997

We decided we were fed up with well-off mostly suburban landlords trying to push our members out of their homes here in Cambridge. So about 75 of us visited their homes, with signs, banners and bullhorns. The "roster of shame" that day included Stu-Lin Realty (at Stuart Rothman's mansion at Craigie Circle), Chiccarelli Real Estate (at landlord's home in Lexington), Billmark Limited Liability Corp. (office in Wellesley and home in Brookline), Kaplan LLC (office in Davis Sq.), and Six-S Realty (we protested at the tenants' home in Central Sq.).



After Tent-In – tenants surge into city hall

What the campaign has meant to me

Some quotes from campaign members

"The Campaign 2000 has been a labor of love for many of us. Back in the summer of '96 I had no idea just how important this work would be to me and how much my life would be changed for the better by it. I know that I would not be in my home now, would not have been able to stand up to my landlord, would not have had the victories I had in court, were it not for the encouragement and support and help that I received. I am also grateful that I was given the chance to help other people in their struggle for housing justice and social justice. I had never spoken up in public before, didn't believe in the power of organizing and public protest, in the incredible power and ability of ordinary people to inspire each other and work together to help bring about solutions for the common problems they face. Together, we have that light and that spirit necessary to help Cambridge remain a truly open and diverse, tolerant and caring, and accessible community for all of our neighbors."

– Bill Marcotte

"A couple of years ago I would not have believed, I was skeptical, that standing up to a landlord and organizing and protesting would help tenants. But now I understand it can work. It takes strength and energy but it does work, and working with tenants in buildings is really inspiring. It's wonderful to see people stand up and say no, I will not accept this, it's not right. In my heart I feel a lot of us tend to accept things and have forgotten to stand up for the things we believe in, and that's what we see these tenants doing, standing up for what's right.

– Marie D'Aoust

"The Campaign gave me knowledge of my rights and inspired me to learn more and most importantly helped me to stay in my home."

– Julie Geanakakis

continued on next page

Profit is the issue

continued from page 5

was $25,000. Today the building is worth well over a million dollars. That means the owner's net worth has increased over 4000%. As of Feb., 1997, there was no mortgage on the building.

Or 14-20 Allen St. A trust involving Steinbergh and Hsu purchased this 8-unit building for $47,010, taking out a mortgage for $130,000 in 1995 to make renovations. The building was then converted to condominiums. The first two condos (3 original units) were sold for a total of $366,000. Just these sales alone represent a 500% return on investment.

It is important to remember that the conditions in many of these housing units were maintained at levels below the minimum health and safety standards set forth by the state. Tenants facing eviction have had to live with major inconveniences in their apartments. Rent increases are not contingent upon big repairs and renovation; rather rent increases are made because the inflated real estate values in the city allow high rents.

The Campaign to Save 2000 Homes has stressed the importance of profits in the current housing crisis. The removal of rent control and the speculation activity of the real estate market have created the potential for incredible profits for property owners. The meaning of the Campaign - of "saving" 2000 homes - is a struggle against property owners who want to maximize their profits at the cost of forcing people from their homes.

Everyone Pays Taxes; Everyone Should Vote

by Natalie Smith

The Eviction Free Zone is planning to restart a **Voting Rights Campaign.** This would seek to win the right of immigrants to vote in local School Committee elections regardless of whether they are a citizen or not. It is being done in some other cities in the US, notably New York and Chicago. The idea is based on the fact that *everyone*, including immigrants, pay taxes to support the schools. Many children of immigrants attend our city schools but currently many voices of constituents of these schools are not present due to a lack of voting rights. To exempt participation of some parents in decision making regarding functioning and structure of schools which affect their children's future is a disservice to them and their children.

Why is a voting rights Campaign important to the EFZ? Because many of our members are immigrants. We must take up the issues that affect *all* our constituents because it does in the end effect each of us. From 1992-1994, a large coalition - about 30 groups and 300 individuals - was assembled to support this same idea. When Question 9 came on the ballot, the coalition was put on hold as defending affordable housing became the number one priority for coalition groups. At last year's EFZ retreat, the top concern among participants was immigrant issues. As we are now in a new phase, we have returned to the Voting Rights issue. We have also been awarded a sum of money from Haymarket Peoples Fund to hire a staff person. The goal is to involve everyone in the schools more fully and to stand for full equality.

If you are interested in this Campaign, call the EFZ at 868-2900.

Derecho a Votar p. 11

Excerpts of Testimony to City Council May 18, 1998 on Sec. 8 Cuts

by Cheryl-Ann Pizza-Zeoli

Federal housing programs are coming under increasing pressure in the contest to balance the budget by cutting domestic spending.

Last month Congress rescinded $2.35 billion from the $3.7 billion tenant-based Sec. 8 reserves account as part of a FY98 supplemental funding bill. Secretary Cuomo has argued that the rescissions will [affect] 400,000 families nationally. In Massachusetts, about 15,000 households will be put at risk of losing their rent subsidies if the money is not replaced during the FY99 appropriations process....

It is also worth noting that the House Budget Cmte., in their fiscal blueprint, is proposing a reduction in housing spending in the amount of $3.9 billion... Lawmakers have drafted a list of proposed cuts in social welfare programs totaling $19 billion.

Federal budget cuts over the past three years have led to a 5.9% decrease in new housing assistance in New England. It isn't surprising that the waits for federal housing assistance are long and growing. The average household receiving a Sec. 8 rent subsidy for the first time in FY96 waited 30 months in New England.

I would ask that the City Council join with low income Cambridge residents in lobbying members of the Appropriations and Budget Cmtes. We need to challenge the terms of political discourse, and make the case that Sec. 8 housing assistance is an irreplaceable community resource, and not merely housing for the poor.

"Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will."

– The famous abolitionist, Frederick Douglas

"If you fight, you may lose. If you don't fight, you have already lost."

– Banner during 1980s German shipyard strike

Tout moun peye taks, tout moun fèt pou vote

tradiksyon atik pa Natalie smith

Eviction Free Zone ap maniganse yon plan pou li rek`omanse kanpay pou dwa vot. N ap chache mwayen pou imigran jwenn dwa pou yo vote nan eleksyon komite lokal pou lekòl menm si yo pasitwayen Ameriken. Gen anpil lòt vil nan peyi a ki adopte prinsip sa a tankou Chicago ak New York. Lide a baze sou lide tout moun menm imigran peye taks pou sipòte lekòl yo. Gen anpil pitit imigran ki nan lekòl nou yo, jounen jodi a anpil vwa nan kominote a pa reprezante akoz dwa moun yo pagenyen pou yo vote. Pou retire patisipasyon kèk paran nandesizyon k ap pran sou fonksyonnmen estrkti lekòl jis paske yo pa sitwayen se pa yon bagay kirann sèvis ak kominote ak elèv oubyen paran.

Pouki sa kanpay sou dwa vot la enpòtan pou EFZ? Paske anpil nan manm nou yo se imigran. Nou dwe debat tout sijè ki gen efè sou kontityan nou yo paske alafen l ap afekte nou tout. Soti lane 1992-1994, yon gwo tèt ansanm apeprè 30 gwoup e 300 individi te rasanble pou sipòte lide sa a. Lè yo te deside vote kesyon 9 tèt ansanm nan te pran yon kanpo paske defann kay bon mache te parèt pi enpòtan. Pandan retrèt EFZ lane pase a Pigwo pwen kite domine asanble a se te pwoblèm imigran Kòm nou nan yon nouvo faz, nou retounen ak dwa vot la. Nou jwenn lajan nan men Hay Market People's Fund pou nou anplwaye yon moun. Bi nou se poun nou entegre tout moun nan zafè lekòl pi plis e pou nou kanpe pou egalite.

Si ou enterese nan kanpay sa a, rele EFZ nan 868-2900.

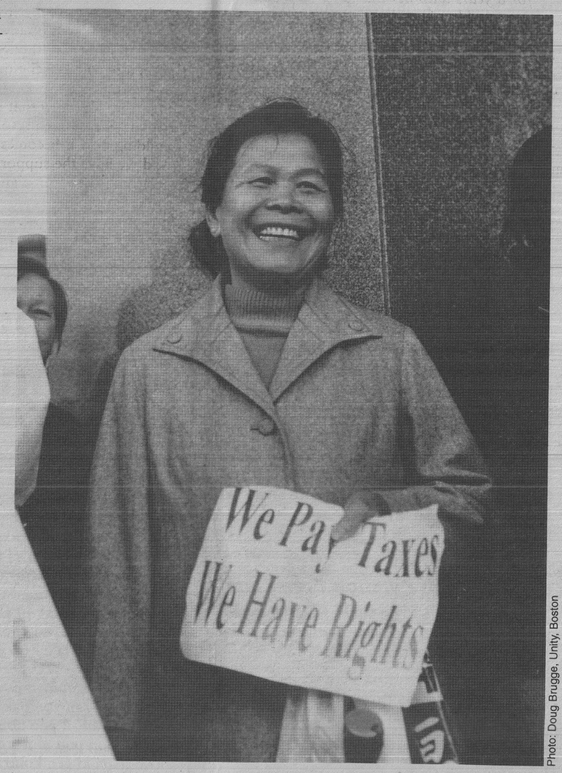


Photo: Doug Brugge, Unity Boston

The amazing story of 59 Norfolk St. and 6 Porter Rd.

Homes are Not like Pancakes. You can't just flip them and flop them for quick profit.

by Bill Marcotte



Photo: Bill Marcotte

Members of the 59 Norfolk St. Tenants Association

What do you do when your landlord tells everyone to move out in 30 days? Or asks for another big rent increase? The tenants in these buildings organized into tenant associations, called in the city inspectors to document the many serious code violations, and joined together to negotiate with their landlord for long term security and affordability.

Their landlords, Sidney and Norman Gross, owned these two rent control buildings for 24 years. Just when they were about to be prosecuted for failing to make repairs, they sold the buildings on March 2 for $1 million to something called the Porter-Norfolk Trust, headed by Leonard Aronson for some unnamed beneficiaries.

Aronson met with the tenants saying he'd like to sell both buildings to a city non-profit; but 3 days later a notice was posted for a public auction of both buildings. Aronson had sold for an undisclosed sum an option to buy to Todd Schaeffer, who is facing indictments for land-flip schemes.

At the auction, held at the Logan Airport Ramada on April 7 and protested by the tenants, Schaeffer's option to buy was sold and the buildings were once again flipped (sold quickly for profit), this time to Joseph Yous, who paid $1.35 million for his 30-day option to buy. After ongoing tenant pressure - signs in the windows, letters to banks - Yous was unable to get a mortgage and the building has apparently returned to Aronson. But there remains some confusion as to who actually owns the buildings. The Gross brothers are personally holding the mortgage of $990,000 for Mr. Aronson, 99% of total value.

Stay tuned. The story changes weekly.

During all this the tenants have remained absolutely determined to stay in their homes. They continue to inspire all of us in Cambridge who understand and care about the housing crisis. *(see quotes below)*

Messages of hope from your neighbors and friends at 59 Norfolk Street and 6 Porter Road

"When we started, 5 months ago, we were afraid of being evicted. But being together now, working together, makes us much stronger. We believe we are doing the right thing, for ourselves, our children, our neighborhood, our future. Believe and trust in yourself. You are stronger than you think. You have hope when you fight for what you believe."

– Domingas Ribeiro, has lived at 59 Norfolk for 8 years with her husband John and 3-year old twin girls.

"By forming a tenant association you feel there is hope. Last Thanksgiving when our landlord told us to move out in 30 days, we felt alone, but we are not alone. There is strength in numbers. If your landlord tells you to move out, you don't have to panic. You can organize. We are still here in our homes."

– Bob Simon, has lived at 6 Porter for 25 years, with his wife Ruth and two children.

"Don't be afraid to talk with your neighbors. They live in the same place, share the same concerns. Taking the first step is hard, but you can work on the problem together and that's so much easier."

– Sandy Martin, has lived at 59 Norfolk for 9 years

"In our building we are all like family now. We all work to support our families. We've been very patient, never given any problem to our landlord. We don't need luxury, but we have so many problems in our building. He wanted to raise the rent again in January and we told him he shouldn't ask for more. All of us have to take a step forward and say enough is enough."

– Gabriel Mondon, 59 Norfolk St.

"My message to other tenants is that they don't have to be scared of any landlord. After we sat down together we thought it was a good idea to form a tenant association, because we have common problems and we are facing these problems together. We know that united we stand, divided we fall. When one person has a problem in our building now it becomes everybody's problem. And we have the support of the Eviction Free Zone and the Campaign and we are very grateful to these people."

– Monique Joseph, Gabriel's wife - has lived at 59 Norfolk St. for 8 years.

"Things have changed since December when I thought we'd have to be out in 30 days. I feel more secure. They are still going to get a fight from me. I've lived here for 32 years and I've put in a lot of work to make this place my home, to make it livable, while the landlord neglected the building for years. It's going to take the National Guard to get me out of here. I do hope that a non-profit buys this building to keep rents affordable."

– Lou Hill, 6 Porter Rd., for 32 years

"I've never done something like this before. I don't want to move. I fixed up the apartment with my own time and money. When I moved in 3 years ago the landlord, Mr. Gross, told me, 'You have to fix it up yourself. I'm the owner but I don't live here; you live here.' I painted the apartment, put in a new kitchen floor, and a new bathroom sink."

– Carlos Urquiza, lives at 59 Norfolk St. with his wife and 3 young children.

"We felt like we didn't have any power, but when we got together we all felt stronger. Our neighbors in our building have become our friends. We know how each other feels."

– Wilfredo Perez, lives at 59 Norfolk St. with his wife and 2-year old son.

"Our windows are rotten and broke. I spoke with Mr. Gross many times about fixing them but he would say, 'Later, later,' and never did. We are working together, we are organized, and so now I think maybe we will win."

– Cruz Garay, lives at 59 Norfolk with his family, including a 2 month old baby.

"When I first heard rumors that we were going to be evicted I thought there was no recourse. But I've come to believe there is strength in numbers. I thought it was going to be worth a fight, not only for myself but also for the cause of affordable housing. It is important to stand up to our landlord and not just let him bully us around."

– Gary Adler, 6 Porter Rd., song writer and musician

"I know personally what it's like, the fear and uncertainty of losing your home. It's one of the scariest things. It's so unfair, so unjust, what [these people] are going through. And it's wonderful to see people from different backgrounds and different cultures work together so marvelously. I'm so happy to be able to help them."

– Mildred Martinez, EFZ member, helping with interpreting at meetings.

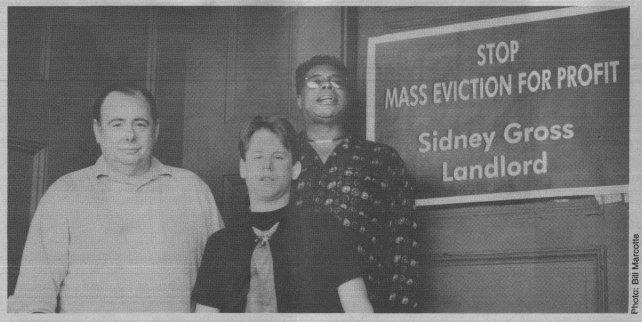


Photo: Bill Marcotte

6 Porter Rd. Tenants Association members Bob Simon, Gary Adler, & Lou Hill

to the Street

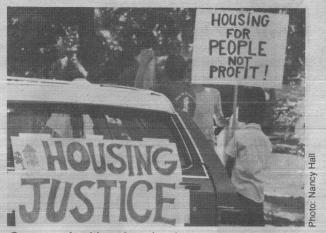


Photo: Nancy Hall

Caravan for Housing Justice

The "Scrooge" Rally - December 6, 1997

We want more and more profit - and the heck with you! Just like Scrooge, that's what large Cambridge landlords are saying to us. We decided (along with the Ghost of Affordable Housing Past) to take Real Estate Scrooge around Central Sq. and show him all the destruction he is causing. Unfortunately, unlike in the Christmas Carol, Scrooge did not promise to mend his ways. We'll just have to keep organizing! At the same rally, we provided a list of six things You can do to support affordable housing. We still have the list if you want it.

Stu-Lin Picket - January 21, 1998

Stu-Lin was the second biggest rent control landlord (after Harvard), owning about 450 units. We have been demanding that all big landlords negotiate a deal similar to that Harvard agreed to - 5% increase per year for low income, sale of some units as permanently affordable. Stu-Lin did not agree. They insisted especially on pursuing an eviction against one tenant leader - Julia Gindele. We picketed Stu-Lin Realty at their 925 Mass. Ave. office along with Carpenters Local 40 demanding - no eviction of Julia, sell some units, and build union!

Airport auction rally - April 7, 1998

Sidney Gross owned 6 Porter Rd. and 59 Norfolk St. for years. He sold to Leonard Aronson in March, 1998. Aronson signed a purchase and sale with Schaeffer. Schaeffer proposed to auction off his p&cs to the highest bidder at an auction in front of the buildings April 7. When he learned that the EFZ planned a protest at the auction, they moved the auction to the Airport Ramada Inn. So the tenants and the EFZ moved the protest to the airport as well, with banners, signs and children.

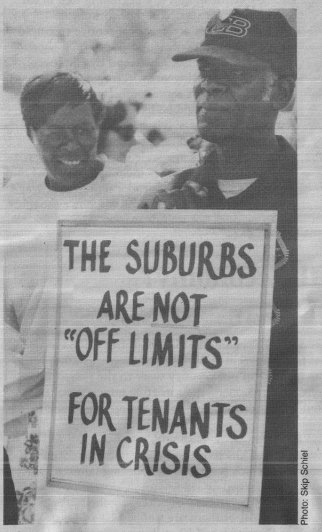


Photo: Skip Schiel



Photo: Skip Schiel

Local 40 members at Stu-Lin picket



Photo: Nancy Hall

Caravan – Stuart Rothman's mansion at Craigie Circle

continued from previous page

"The Campaign made me feel stronger and helped me to stand up to landlord harassment. It has also made me feel part of the community. It's a social cause that I believe in."

– Kevin Bradley

"The Campaign gives you personal strength and has helped me to stand up for what I believe in."

–Jo Cole

"The Campaign gives me a lot of moral support and advice. People in the Campaign have helped me to negotiate with HRI and provided me with legal assistance."

– Bridget Leahy

"I did not feel alone when dealing with my landlord as I had support from everyone in the Campaign. I felt the landlord took me more seriously. I continue to come to meetings as I learn more and want to try to help other people in my situation."

– Julia Gindele

"It is inspiring to meet other people at these [Campaign] meetings who are concerned with issues confronting the working poor, elderly and disabled."

– Elizabeth Koundakjian

"If it was not for the Campaign I would be homeless. The Campaign has helped me to know my rights as a tenant and I share that information with people around me. I am proud to be part of the Campaign."

– Jean Luc Kazadi

Profit is the issue

by Dan Bouchard

Ever since the Campaign to Save 2000 Homes began, it has emphasized the factor of profits as the primary agent in Cambridge's housing crisis. The Profit Factor is the pursuit of maximum profits - the most possible money - to be made by landlords.

When rent control was removed, every landlord in town (and many from out of town looking to get a foot in) recognized an enormous profit potential in Cambridge real estate. Many landlords have realized this potential, and continue to realize it. Many are reaping "windfall profits" (which is what happens when you buy a building for relatively cheap, and then suddenly it becomes very valuable though not necessarily because you did anything to it), and you turn around and rent apartments in it for ridiculous amounts of money (sometimes called "market rent"). Windfall profit can lead to "pure profit" which has effects on a person similar to pure cocaine, but profits are more socially acceptable, not to mention legal.

Think about the building at 5-8 Craigie Circle which Stu-Lin Realty purchased in 1985 for $1,850,000 ($22,000 per unit). Gross annual rents in 1994 ($473,000) have increased 58% to $748,000 in 1997. The value of the building doubled at a time when most real estate values dropped. The owner was recently able to borrow $3 million cash against the value of the building.

Or the apartment building at 57 Magazine St. Russell Peterson and Donato Pizzuiti bought it in 1984 for $375,000. Eviction notices were served to all Peterson's protected tenants who refused to pay an increase of 70-80%. In three years the gross rent has increased 100%. The initial investment (the money the owners "put down" on it)

Profit is the issue continued on page 9

Cambridge needs a raise

Fight for a Living Wage

By Natalie Smith

Currently the EFZ is engaged in a Living Wage Campaign. This was something which had been discussed at our '97 annual retreat. The working committee meetings which began in January of this year are represented by EFZ, Carpenters Local 40 and also the National Lawyers Guild as well as other individuals. We have now had our first city-wide coalition meeting and have endorsements form over 30 groups city wide.

The Living Wage amount which we are seeking is $10 per hour without a benefits package. (We felt this was too difficult to monitor.) The Living Wage would affect all workers who are working for companies who have contracts with the city or subsidies from the city. This will be a strong statement, and is a beginning step in the overall fight for justice in the workplace.

Living wages act as a disincentive to employers who hope to contract work out on a short term basis. There is a new trend by employers to engineer a contingent workforce who are paid less and with short term contracts. These short term contracts could be likened to day-labor. Setting a living wage is a good way to combat such tactics which disempower workers and bring the overall wage scale down. It is very important for all workers including part-time and temporary workers to consider unions as a way to better their working conditions, since the market alone does not set fair wages.

Are *you* booming with the economy?

By Mark Sutherland of Local 40 (in collaboration with the Living Wage Cmte)

The economy is thriving; sadly, however, wages are not. The middle class is in free fall - average hourly wages have been falling since 1973, and real family income is 12% less than it was 20 years ago. Over the past two decades, 97% of the income increase in our country went to the richest 20%. And the gap between the rich and the rest of us keeps getting wider - the top 10% now control 68% of the wealth. We need economic justice and economic fairness. We need to give something back to the workers who create all this wealth.

Since 1980, productivity has increased 24%, and American workers should have been able to enjoy a substantial increase in purchasing power. Instead the productivity was converted into corporate profits, which went up 200%, and executive compensation, which is up 400%. Working families have little money to spend and are loaded with debt. They are threatened by restructuring, downsizing, pension raids and runaway plants and their anger is exceeded only by anxiety over keeping their jobs.

75 cities have passed, or are considering a living wage. All of them are under $10 an hour. We do not believe that this is sufficient to live in the City of Cambridge. $10 an hour is not the solution to all of these problems. I do, however, believe it is a start. I would challenge anyone to live and provide for their families on $10 an hour.

The City of Cambridge must take the lead, and break down the single digit barrier which other cities and towns have come to accept.

Hard to believe, but true

Some strange cases from the housing wars

"If the conditions are so bad in your apartment, why do you want to live there; why don't you just move?"

"When are the tenants of Cambridge going to realize that rent control doesn't exist anymore?"

– District Ct. judge lecturing Cambridge tenants trying to present their legal defense to eviction.

One Cambridge investor bought a building on Magnolia Ave. He gave eviction notices to all 5 Haitian tenants in a rooming house using simply the name John Doe. The tenants did not know they were supposed to respond and defaulted. When later they complained that they weren't notified, the judge upheld the notice as legal.

"After I win this case, I will chase you from this building like a dog."

One Cambridge landlord boasting to his tenant just before he lost *the case.*

One Cambridge landlord sought to evict a family who couldn't afford a large increase in a dilapidated apartment. The tenant refused to pay the increase and filed counterclaims in court for bad conditions. Before the case was heard, he got accepted by the Cambridge Housing Authority and moved out to a permanently affordable home. Not satisfied, the landlord pursued the case for $500 he said the tenant owed in back rent. The tenant defended himself with his counterclaims and was awarded $20,000 by the court!

Short Updates from Tenant Associations

by Bill Cavellini

Vail Court
This 24-unit building off Bishop Allen Drive began organizing in Spring, 1995. After a recent, bitter, 9 month struggle, the tenants got a five-year settlement, 12% increases per year, for two tenants, that serves as a model for subsequent tenant relations. They withstood landlord harassment and used code violation counterclaims.

274-280 Brookline St.
Chiccarelli tenants had been meeting months before notice of large rent increases, so code violation and retaliation counterclaims were quickly mounted. Some tenants got into public housing or obtained Sec. 8 to move out. Others are still paying the rent controlled rents and negotiating to stay in the 18-unit building at affordable rents.

138-140 Spring St.
Prompt and public exposure of Darrell Hallett, East Cambridge property speculator, resulted in long-term residents being able to stay in their homes. The City, through non-profit housing developer, Just-a-Start, bought the three building, six-unit complex from Hallett, thereby blocking all evictions.

329 Harvard St.
One family's heroic struggle inspired other tenants in this large apartment building to resist a proposed condominium conversion of the entire building. This large landlord's (Najarian) action would have been in violation of state condo law, but a very-much needed, stronger, local condo protection ordinance would have blocked this plan outright.

Friends of Craigie Circle
A resident group from Craigie Circle, a 84-unit apartment building owned by Stu-Lin Realty, met for several months and engaged in a very public battle to resist large rent increases. A "seeds of compassion" march and rally was held on site and the landlord retaliated by destroying tenants' garden plots. But the struggle succeeded in forcing retention of most subsidized tenants at affordable rents.

164-170 Putnam Ave.
Organized tenant action has stalled evictions and proposed rent increases of over 400% in this four unit building of long term residents for many months. Tenants have organized and prepared a series of counterclaims on longstanding code violations. Tenants have forced significant repairs in the apartments.

77 Elm St
Non-profit housing developer, Homeowners Rehab Inc. (HRI) is rehabbing this 6-unit building after valiant tenant resistance to rent increases and evictions, including demonstrations at 3 foreclosure auctions, resulted in the bank selling to the city for permanently affordable housing.

324-340 Franklin St.
These 13 units in two buildings (including 5 rooming house units) became a highly celebrated case when the tenants went public with research on their landlord (Billmark LLC) buying cheap at government foreclosure and trying to make a killing by evicting all. A year-long tenant resistance resulted in the sale to a new owner, who is negotiating with the tenants for sale to a non-profit.

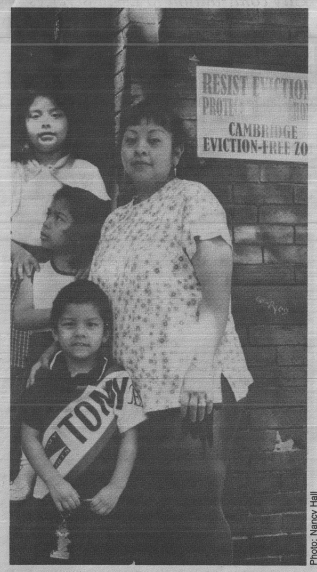


Photo: Nancy Hall

More and more tenants are hanging up the EFZ window sign.

New laws we support

The Eviction Free Zone and the Campaign to Save 2000 Homes have supported many tenant associations and individuals in direct action to save their homes. But we have also put forward or supported many new concrete laws to help families in need.

An increase in City affordable housing spending

The EFZ has demanded that all the extra money coming into the City from the end of rent control be used to create permanent (socially owned) affordable housing. We believe the City should spend $10 million per year. Before the end of rent control it was almost nothing. Now it is $5 million per year.

A home rule petition to protect HUD assisted buildings

This was started by the Expiring Use Tenants Committee. It was passed by the Council 8-1 (only Galluccio voted no). It was reported favorably by the Housing Committee. It can almost certainly pass the Senate but it has not yet passed the House.

A transfer tax on expensive property

The EFZ has pushed for a 1% transfer tax on the value of property over $300,000, to go to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. This would tax part of the vastly increased equity value of large, expensive buildings. The City Council passed this home rule petition 5-4 (Born, Davis, Duehay, Reeves, Triantafillou voting yes). It was reported favorably by the Taxation Committee of the state legislature but has not been passed.

Public housing organizer

We asked the City to fund an organizer to assist the Tenant Senate in fighting the federal cuts and deregulation. This measure passed the Council 9-0 but the City Manager never implemented it.

City contribution to Legal Services

The EFZ asked the City to use $50,000 to fund a new position at Legal Services to help tenants losing their homes after rent control. A resolution passed the Council 6-3 (Galluccio, Sullivan, Toomey voted no). The City Manager did put this in the budget. Todd Kaplan was hired and helped many of our members. We are now seeking a second year of funding.

City condo law

The state condo law should protect low income tenants for up to 4 years from evictions or large rent increases. It doesn't work very well. We need a local condo law to make sure tenants facing condo conversions are protected. This has not been voted on.

Inclusionary Zoning

This was not our proposal, but we supported it. It gives developers the right to higher density in new construction in return for 15% affordable units. There is priority in these units for Sec. 8. We believe this will help Sec. 8 tenants find housing.



Photo: Skip Schiel



Photo: Nancy Hall

Tenants rally in April, 1996, to demand passage of the home rule petition. Tenants continue to fight for this important legislation.

Tenant Rights

Some things to remember

by Julie Geanakakis

One of the first lines of defense for tenants facing eviction is to learn their legal rights. Armed with this kind of information, the threat of eviction (which I have personally resisted at least four times with EFZ support) is demystified and the anxiety that is brought on by "ignorance of the law" is diminished.

1) A "notice to quit" does **not** mean that you have to move out. You do not have to move out until a **judge** orders you to do so and there is usually a lengthy legal process leading up to eviction, particularly if you have good legal advice. If you receive a notice to quit that contains a rent increase, if you pay the increase **once** you are contractually bound to continue paying that rent. If you continue to pay your old rent, you safeguard yourself from eviction for "non-payment."

2) Tenants, as consumers of housing, have rights in the form of a "warranty of habitability." Bad housing conditions that violate the state sanitary code can be used as defenses against eviction. Tenants have a legal right to housing with secure locks, no leaks, adequate heat and hot water, working gas, electrical and plumbing systems. These are just a few of the conditions required by law. The City Inspectional Services Department (349-6100) is responsible for enforcing the housing code. But tenants should follow up to make sure this happens.

3) Violation of a tenant's "quiet enjoyment" of the rented premises is also against the law. Breaches of quiet enjoyment include harassment by excessive noise, threats and assaults, utility shut-offs and landlords or their representatives illegally entering your apartment without your prior knowledge or permission (this rule is waived in emergency situations such as major leaks, fires, or the like).

4) Document, document, document. Consistent recording of times and dates of notices, phone conversations and correspondence as well as photographs and reports of code violations support your claims whether you go to court or negotiate out of court. Documentation is essential to safeguarding your rights and providing substance and evidence should your case continue to court.

For additional legal information, consult Legal Tactics: Self-Defense for Tenants in Massachusetts. This is available from the Eviction Free Zone at 11 Inman St. We sell at cost, which in the past has been $13.

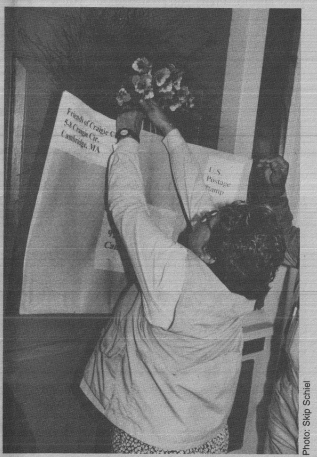


Photo: Skip Schiel

Sonia Andujar, member of Friends of Craigie Circle, pins a large letter to landlord Stuart Rothman on his door during "Seeds of Compassion" protest.

CAMBRIDGE EVICTION FREE ZONE

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11 Inman St., Cambridge MA 02139 (617) 868-2900

1998 JUL 23 P 3:31
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

July 23, 1998

Mayor Duehay
Vice Mayor Galluccio
City Councilors

Dear Councilors:

We want to alert you to the increase in problems for low and moderate income tenants coming from condo conversions.

On June 21, we had a protest in support of Jean Keldysz, a long time resident of Porter Sq. In fact, Jean has lived in her home over 50 years. She has faced very large increases. The latest seeks a rent above Sec. 8 guidelines. This has happened despite enormous profits in from the building already after condo conversion and sales.

The problems Jean faces should not exist. The state condominium conversion law should be protecting people like her. It does not. But the state condo law does allow local towns and cities to pass their own version of the state law. Many communities have done so over the years.

The Council Housing Committee briefly considered such an ordinance during meetings in early 1997. We are urging the Council to take action. Together with Legal Services, we are drafting an ordinance which will be ready during August for your review. At the current time we have a detailed summary of our proposals.

Unfortunately, Jean is not alone in facing these dilemmas from condo conversion. We have many other cases which should not exist if a local ordinance were in place.

In addition to these problems of condo conversion, we continue to support tenant associations where they are able to organize and individuals where they cannot. The cases of 6 Porter Rd. and 59 Norfolk St. remain prominent. 6 Porter Rd. has apparently just been sold again.

We thank you for support you have given us in the past and look forward to future support.

Sincerely,

Nancy Hall

Nancy Hall

Consent Communication #65 5345

A communication was received from Nancy Hall, Cambridge Eviction Free Zone, transmitting concern relative to the increase in problems for low and moderate income tenants coming from condo conversions.

In CtiyCouincil July 27, 1998

Referred to Ordinance Committee

7/30 Sent to C. Davis