

The Kensington View

Volume 8, No. 1

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A newsletter by and about Kensington Market Lofts residents

Electrical Problems Resolved

We had an industrial accident in the Boiler Room on Thursday, May 1, about 1:35pm. Fortunately, no one was hurt. The electrical panel for the Boiler Room was burnt and other breakers and fuses blown. Since then the Boiler Room and all related equipment (boilers and heating system) has been out of service.

We've now replaced or repaired all the electrical equipment and have permission to operate it pending final inspections next week.

The final electrical inspection will involve a planned power outage. It is expected to occur at some point next week. There will also be an extensive fire alarm test and inspection this month.

The boilers were inspected; brought online and now hot water and heat are working.

If your or heat pump isn't operating or other appliances (stove?) are not operating properly, locate your electrical panel (on a wall, often in a closet or near bathroom, has grey metal door) and turn off the appropriate breakers (count to 5) then turn back on the appropriate circuit breaker. Normally this will solve the problem. If not, let us know by email to kmlboard@kml.to. Include, name, suite#, equipment, description of what is going on and what you've tried.

Alan Florence
Facilities, KML Board
2 May 2008 10:00pm

Kensington Lofts Book Exchange

By the time you receive this newsletter, you will find a **Kensington Lofts Book Exchange** located at the south side of the Nassau lobby, on the mezzanine leading to the garage. Many people have already been exchanging books in the garbage room area, so we thought it sensible to formalize the process and let it occur in a more attractive, better lit and more visible area. The concept is simple: if you have a book you no longer want, leave it on one of the shelves for someone else to pick up and read. When you are done, pass it on to a friend or return it to the Exchange for use by someone else. Any suggestions as to how to manage this process are welcome. Simply contact the newsletter editors.

Comments on the Facility

A significant portion of our budget is spent directly on energy (electricity, and gas); water; and garbage. These consumables are approximately 40% of our annual budget. As a community our consumption of these resources has increased every year along with their unit cost.

The Board continues to monitor the levels of consumption to be alert to abrupt changes in usage that may come from problems such as water leaks or other breakdowns. We've investigated possible changes to improve the efficiency of the systems that supply heating/cooling, the domestic hot water, and the corridor fresh air. All of these systems will receive scheduled improvements from the reserve fund over the next few years. The improvements planned will mainly involve changes the controllers for the equipment, installing modern controllers that fine-tune the equipment load in real-time.

The monitoring of water usage lead us to one significant leak in cooling system (repaired last year) and a number of minor leaks (~30 sinks, toilets, etc) in individual suites. For the past year we have been logging the water meters on a weekly basis and will continue to do so. (See article on p. 2.)

In our individual suites, we have started to see failures in the heat pumps. As the the heat pump is the property of the suite owner, we don't have records of repairs performed. There may be a pattern where units that receive sun all day or most of the day and as a consequence make significant use the a/c unit of the heat pump are having to repair their units. If you have made repairs to your heat pump (or replaced it) please let us know via email to (aflorence@kml.to) so we can track for patterns.

We have learnt that a slow loss of freon is inevitable and as a consequence the unit runs longer trying to cool the space. Unfortunately this occurs slowly so the longer running time is not always clearly noticeable. We have checked with the manufacturer (Whalen) and there is not a simple way to test the freon level of the unit without puncturing the coil. Also, freon is being phased out as a refrigerant (after 2010 freon-based heat pumps can no longer be manufactured) so the next year or two is the time to top up your freon level if required. At some point freon won't be available so a replacement heat pump will be required. We are beginning to work on this situation, in these ways: improving the semi-annual heat-pump inspection to attempt to detect units with a/c issues; collecting information of repairs or replacements done by owners to look for patterns; and opening a conversation with Whalen on replacement units.

Comments on the Facility (continued)

As for garbage, we could do more regarding recycling and thereby reducing our direct cost and impact on the environment. Separating garbage is already available for residents, more attention to detail by everyone would make a real difference. Also, the Board would like to hear residents views on implementing programs to separate food waste, bottle recycling (LCBO), battery collection (major toxin in landfills) and similar efforts. (See article in right-hand column.)

Security is another key ongoing topic. The Board is not always informed of security issues by residents; as far as we know however, the locking of the garage and improving of the signs and the doors has dramatically reduced theft in the building.

Please keep the Board posted of security issues you encounter. We recently completed a security study of the building by an independent consultant who found no major issues. His key recommendation was to upgrade the building entries to use electronic keys ('fobs'). The Board is evaluating the costs involved with this. Any views or opinions residents have on security are welcomed by the Board.

You may contact any Board member personally or by email. Board members' email addresses are available on the Kensington Market Lofts' Website at www.kml.to.

Alan Florence, Board member

PLANTS IN THE PUBLIC SPACES

The Kensington Market Lofts Board has received several complaints about the appearance of plants in the Nassau lobby. If the plants don't enhance the appearance of the lobby, it is felt that they should not be displayed.

If you have an **attractive and healthy** large potted plant you wish to leave to the complex, we can agree to welcome it as a permanent resident. Any donation will be vetted by our Board Chairperson, Rose Thivy (mtcc1291@hotmail.com or 416-597-8008), and it will be placed where it will survive best, either in the Baldwin or Nassau building.

We are not in the business of **watering and feeding** plants while residents go away on vacation. Nazio Vassallo, our supervisor, has been asked NOT to agree to water plants in individual units. Try to find a condo neighbor to come to your unit several times a week to do the job. We cannot continue to keep small plants in the Nassau lobby alive. If you want them back for the summer, collect them now, as they will shortly be thrown out.

A **Volunteer** is **urgently** needed to tend the large plants in the Nassau lobby. In fact, we could use a few volunteers, so that someone could take over if the regular volunteer wishes to take a vacation. We would like to make a list of possible volunteers with their phone numbers. Call Rose Thivy at 416-597-8008 or Mitzi O'Keefe at 416-351-7171 if you can help.

GARBAGE ROOM THOUGHTS

The Garbage Room on the main level of the garage, adjacent to the Moving Room, has also served as a location for dropping off unneeded computer equipment, kitchen items, knickknacks and a variety of other items. An item that may be no longer needed by one person may often be a useful addition to someone else's loft. (*Please read **Kensington Lofts Book Exchange** article on page 1.*) Even if the item is not fully functional, someone else may be able to resuscitate it. If you leave a note on the item indicating what is wrong with it, this would help others to decide if they want to try to fix it. Finally, to make this trading process work smoothly please deposit real junk in the garbage bin, rather than leaving it on the shelves in the garbage room.

Hazardous Waste Disposal

Used batteries, burned out fluorescent/compact fluorescent light bulbs, paints and old computers should not be disposed of in the regular garbage, but should be transported to one of the province's **hazardous waste disposal sites**. Some residents may already be delivering their items to one of the disposal sites, but there is evidence that many such items end up in our garbage bin.

Plans are underway to set up a **communal disposal site in the garbage room** to receive these hazardous items. (Only *unbroken* fluorescent bulbs will be accepted.) Several residents have already volunteered to make periodic trips to transport these items to the provincial hazardous waste depot (the closest site is at 400 Commissioners St.). Walking to the garbage room with these hazardous items is not as easy as dropping them down the garbage chute, but it's the safe and proper thing to be done. Your cooperation will be appreciated.

Kensington Lofts Website

Residents recently moved into Lofts may not be aware that we have a website, found at www.kml.to. Here you will find information about the history of the lofts, an excellent map so that you can direct visitors to our location, maintenance tips, copies of previous *Kensington Views* newsletters, KML forms to use for reserving an elevator for a move, community events, listings of local businesses within the Lofts, and contact information for the Property Manager and the Board of Directors.

The KML web site is maintained by Board member Garry Choo. You can reach him at gchoo@kml.to if you have suggestions or comments about the website.

RISING WATER COSTS AND CONSUMPTION

Water consumption and water rates have both risen significantly since 2002. Below is a summary of the situation

Year	Actual Cost	% Annual Change	Avg. cost per Suite
2002/03	\$24,552		\$169
2003/04	\$33,888	+38%	\$234
2004/05	\$31,684	-6%	\$219
2005/06	\$41,569	+31%	\$287
2007/08	\$63,298	+52%	\$437
2008/09	\$60,000 (Budget)	-1%	\$414

It is quite certain that water's cost per liter will continue to rise, as the city replaces more and more worn out water pipes and passes the cost of these repairs on to us consumers. The vast majority of the water entering Kensington Market Lofts is used in the sinks and toilets in individual suites. Some is used to replenish water that evaporates from the closed-loop cooling tower in our air conditioning system.

Leaky flapper valves in toilets had contributed to excess of water usage, but this was corrected about two years ago. (See <http://www.kml.to/maintenance.htm> for more on this.) On the industrial side, a water leak in the cooling tower, discovered last year, appears to have contributed substantially to the extra water usage in 2007/08 versus 2005/06. This leak has been fixed.

Here are some **helpful hints** that would not be too invasive on our daily lives and would go a long way to help in conserving water.

Showers and Baths:

- Replace your showerhead. Older models use 18 to 30 litres per minute (lpm) while water-efficient models use 9.5 lpm or less.
- Reduce your shower time. If you shorten your shower time from 10 minutes to 5 minutes or less while using a 9.5 litre per minute (lpm) showerhead, you can save up to 40 litres of water each time you shower. You can also save water by turning off the water while lathering in the shower.
- Take a 5 minute shower instead of a bath. If a shower is not available, reduce the amount of water used in the bath by 5 centimetres (2 inches).

Toilets:

- Reduce the number of times you flush your toilet with multiple uses before flushing. (Unnecessary flushing of the toilet even once a day can waste up to 1,000 litres of water per year.)
- Do not use the toilet as a garbage can. Tissues and other items are often flushed away instead of going into appropriate disposal containers.

Faucets:

- Do not let the water run while brushing your teeth, washing your face or shaving. Instead, turn off the faucet when not directly using water flow.
- Retrofit all faucets with water saving aerators or consider replacing with water efficient models. Aerators are inexpensive items that can be found at most hardware stores. Look for ultra low flow 1.9 lpm or 0.5 gallon per minute devices.
- Use liquid soap for hand-washing; it lathers quickly with little water. Turn off the tap while washing, and turn on again to rinse.

Dishwashing:

- Scrape dishes instead of rinsing them under running water before loading your dishwasher. For heavy cleaning of grills or oven parts pre-soak them overnight.
- Wait until you have a full load before starting your dishwasher. (And run it at off-peak hours to help hydro usage.)
- When washing dishes by hand, do not wash or rinse with running water. Use tubs or plug the sink.
- Capture excess water in a container while running the tap. This water can be used for your plants or pets.

Laundry:

- Washing machines use anywhere between 100 – 200 litres of water per load.
- Operate washing machines at full capacity, or set to "Ex-Small" or "Small" for smaller loads.

There are many Websites that inform of ways to conserve water and energy. Take a tour!

Peter Hobbs and Rose Thivy