Canarsie Residents Seek City's Help With Illegal Apartment Conversions

By Craig McGuire

Forever throwing their ands up in disgust, several Canarsie residents are frusrated and tired of seeing convert apartments. How- quickly

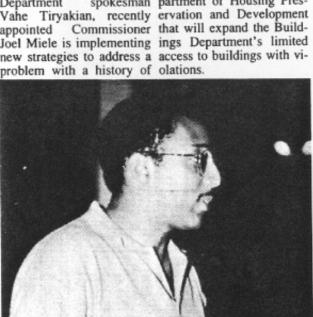
tinue to convert their two- \$10,000." family homes to three-fam-

Department

difficult enforcement.

"Commissioner Miele is in the process of working with the New York City Law Department streamlinheir neighbors illegally ing services to more facilitate the ever, help may be on the lengthy legal procedures," said Tiryakian. "The com-"I'm in Canarsie and missioner is also working 'm not leaving," says resi- on legislation, to be submitdent Lew Krieger. "But ted to the City Council, that there are many people leav- would raise the maximum ing the area like roaches first offense from \$1,000 to with the Combat after them \$2,500, and raise the secbecause of those who con- ond offense from \$5,000 to

And, according to Tiryakian, Miele has made an According to Buildings arrangement with the Despokesman partment of Housing Pres-



"We have to see the violation to do anything about them," noted Tiryakian. inspectors Department sometimes fail to write up violations because they are denied entry to a building or property.

Residents may call in an HPD inspector on a variety of complaints ranging from a sagging ceiling to no hot water.

Under the new agreement, the HPD is now authorized to issue any of the 200 violations of the buildings code.

"Residents who observe violations should report them to either the Buildings Department, their community board, or their local officials," said Tiryakian.

"If it is an obvious conversion, a building inspector can come down and issue a violation," said Community Board 18 District Manager Dorothy Turano. "The major problem we face is that few people want to be the one who rats on their neighbor."

"The Buildings Department requires the complainant's name," explained Tiryakian. "If we accepted anonymous complaints we would be running all over the city."

"However, the building code specifically states that the name of the complainant be kept confidential," added Tiryakian. strictly adhere to this proce-

pose an imminent hazard."

later date," added Tiry- court proceedings. akian.

Once access is refused on the second attempt, legal procedures are initiated through the city's Law Department.

"In order to secure an access warrant, we need documentation," said Tiryakian, "including an affidavit signed by the complainant."

Landlords take other risks when renting illegal apartments as well. According to Michael Mondschein, a local real estate lawyer, "Illegal tenants are very difficult to remove, and if you are currently living in an illegally converted apartment you are not required to pay rent."

According to Mond-

served for buildings that ant removed from an illegally converted apartment "If the inspector is not ranges from \$3,500 to allowed access to the build- \$5,000. That does not ining, which happens more clude the money the landoften than not, there is a lord would be losing on second attempt made at a rent during the lengthy

Canarsie and Flatlands residents interested in filing a confidential complaint with the Buildings Department can call (718) 802-3681, or contact Community Board 18 at (718) 241-0422.



schein, the legal fee to file Concerned residents like this one offered suggestions on an injunction to have a ten- how to better address the problem. Photos by Craig McGuire

Con Artists Coming Your Way

By Craig McGuire

Summer in Brooklyn is the season for street fairs. days at the beach, and sticky weather. Unfortunately, it is also the season to beware of scam artists, to remember is that nobody especially if you are a se- is going to give you money nior.

two black males in their informed Meier, 30s," "these criminals come in all shapes, sizes, ages, and sexes."

"Perhaps the best thing in this area." he advised. purse or wallet.

* You may be asked to help an elderly or handicapped person cross the street, and while you do, an accomplice will grab your bag. When helping anyone cross the street, keep your bag between you and the