

# Mutual Heights

Darling Street Cape Town.

## NEWS FROM YOUR TRUSTEES

Edition 7.

November 2006

Dear Fellow Owner,

In order to celebrate the approaching Christmas (or if you prefer “Festive”) Season your trustees warmly invite you to a party to be held in The Banking Hall of the Mutual Building on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> of December at 7pm in the evening (Please note the changed date from that mentioned in the last newsletter.) Your trustees look forward to meeting you (and your spouse and/or partner) and to celebrating the forthcoming jollifications. As last year it will be a splendid opportunity to get to know the neighbours as well as us trustees, and we you. Do come. It is entirely free. (Though of course as the economists among us will tell us, there is no such thing as free biscuits; on this occasion the Managing Agent has contrived to find a modest portion of our funds sufficient to foot the bill .) So hopefully we shall have as good a time as last year. As last year there will be delicious snacks available (for me enough to take the place of supper) and the party will go on until there is pretty well no one left to continue celebrating.

### Good News

Your trustees have been able to let the famous and prominent advertising space on the east wall of our building – in fact to Old Mutual who will be paying a useful – indeed generous - rent for this amenity. This we plan to apply in various ways, but initially in “embellishing” the atrium hopefully to make it somewhat less stark. More on this in a future newsletter. Your trustees are always open to (polite) suggestions as to what they could be doing and if you have any ideas for the future use of the rents, then please let us know. From time to time we are approached by film companies to use parts of the communal areas of the building as settings for films. Provided that the building’s users unlikely to be greatly inconvenienced these opportunities also provide a useful income for the Body Corporate. It is flattering to be asked in this way to share our great and beautiful building with the wider public.

### MutualHeights.com

You will be aware that the trustees have been investigating improving the website and at their last meeting received a report from Professor Andy Bytheway (himself a trustee) from which it appeared that many owners and tenants would find this a useful means of keeping in touch both privately between owners and also with the wider world. One request made was for the publication of the minutes of trustees and we shall do this although necessarily what appears will always be a little out of date since the draft minutes must always first be approved by the trustees as a correct record. In the mean time the minute book is always available in the Managing Agent’s Office on Mezzanine “B” A website could also become a useful place for the exchange of

ideas, a forum for ranting and raving about things which are or which go wrong and a place to advertise. As to the latter please remember that you can use the notice boards in the north lift lobbies (submitted though Charles Keefer) and this humble newsletter will carry bona fide ads from owners, both media without charge.

### Security

Alas there has been a theft from one of the apartments. As last time, it appears that the miscreants got into the apartment through the front door. The trustees have been asked by one or two owners to consent to the installation of steel trellis doors. They have refused that request mainly because of the deleterious look of such doors but the trustees will readily agree to a supplementing of the existing lock with a "Yale" type of lock. In the meantime if you ever feel that secure access to your keys has been compromised then your trustees firmly advise you to replace the lock on your front door. Please be careful not to let anyone in through the Parliament Street door unless you personally verify them.

### Noisy home improvement work

We have had a complaint about noise at unsociable hours created by home improvement work. Such noise travels in our building both laterally and vertically further than you might anticipate. Please limit such work to take place only between 8am and 5pm and not at anytime on Saturdays, Sundays or on a public holiday.

### Rates revaluation

Owners will recall that in my last annual report and at the AGM this year I made reference to the difficulties of the Body Corporate arising from the fact that the building was still valued for rating purposes at its former value for commercial and office use. The AGM agreed that the levy for the forthcoming year should include a supplement to anticipate a sudden rates demand based on an up to date and realistic assessment of the current use of the building as altered. Indications are that the City is stirring and a rates claim based on an amended valuation had recently be sent to Old Mutual (sic). This claimed to assess the building on the basis of wholly commercial use. Despite these fundamental errors, it appeared that the City was at last wakening up to the present unsatisfactory position. The errors had been pointed out to the City and it could be anticipated that we would soon receive a new valuation and demand for current and arrears of rates based on the new valuation. We shall be visited by surveyors who will wish to appraise the building. One of them may knock on your door when you are there. Please admit them provided they have sufficient evidence of identity. Don't be too effusive about the splendours of our fine building! Otherwise no action is required of us at present and your trustees are ready to respond promptly to a new valuation reflecting the present use of the building and its present ownership.

**"Never need.....can't feel"** is a Bahamian proverb to the effect that the most charitable people are just those who themselves have known hunger or homelessness. This year the trustees have endorsed an appeal for The Arch which is the soup kitchen run by Saint George's Cathedral just up Adderley Street. This provides hot food and companionship for homeless people and for the poorest of our citizens. At a time of year when most of us tend to over indulge it is right that we should remember and provide for the street people around us who have nothing. The Arch is recognized as one of the best organized and run soup kitchens in our City and does much with a meagre income. Your Trustees will be raffling a Magnum of Champagne and at least one consolation prize at the Party in aid of this good cause. And we will all be given an opportunity to slip in an envelope perhaps the cost of one Christmas Dinner round your table for the benefit of those we know to be far less fortunate than ourselves.

All of us trustees look forward to greeting you at the Party on 12<sup>th</sup> December, but if you will have already left on your Christmas hols (*already?*) then we all wish you a very merry Christmas and a safe return to us in the New Year.

Paul Rippon.

Chairman

