

An Idiot's Guide to Windsor Gardens

By Sophy Churches

On taking over the keys from the previous owner of my new apartment, I was served with a white glass bowl with a ton of keys. So she said, "This is the lobby key and this is the apartment key and this is the storage key and this is ..."

So I received the bowl of keys and next minute I had no idea which was which. Fortunately, I could get in my apartment because the movers left it open. The next day I took an investigation tour with my white bowl of keys and tried all the keys, even to the mail box, which was naturally empty yet. Some of the keys fitted but most of them were useless. "This lady," I thought, "must have held the keys to all her past homes in this bowl. I carefully threaded the good keys onto a keyring and the keyring onto a nylon tape to hang in my neck all the time. Note to myself: "Never go outside without your keys!"

Of course, the first few days I regularly forgot the keys, they were frequently misplaced on the hundreds of boxes I brought with me. I either had to wait for people entering and follow them casually, or disturb my neighbor by knocking on the window. Then, the few times I took my keys, I forgot again which key was which and placed the wrong key in the lock. Then when I found the right key, I did not know which way to turn it. When at last I opened the outside door, and pulled it wide open to enter, my hands were full of shopping, the door closed automatically right then, without my entering. Repeating this exercise a few times, I thought of putting my foot between the door and myself. It is all learning the ways of Windsor Gardens entry! On successful entering, I had no idea which way to turn, the corridors go right and left, there was a complete science to finding the apartment.

Then the introductions – a heap of people gathered on my corridor, welcoming me and saying their names. My head was buzzing with names when I went to bed; I kept saying to myself Jean, Carole, Bobbi or Bonnie and other names. Fortunately, my friendly white dog goes up to everybody to say hello and he doesn't bother with names. I soon learned that barking on the corridor is not a very good point at Windsor Gardens. I am sorry but I can't help it that my dog is expressive from joy when we go out, same when we come back. I really have faith in myself that I will learn everyone's names.

I like coming to the Writing Group because we all have a nametag in front of us!