



SERENA SOLOMON

Rick Perry, resident manager at 159 Madison Avenue



SECRET LIVES OF BUILDINGS

Building a Barter Economy

BY KATHRYN FARRELL

RICK PERRY KNOWS the value of bartering. The resident manager at 159 Madison Avenue, a 109-unit cooperative built in 1911, Perry was asked by the board to put a security camera on the roof. Perry — no relation to the former Texas governor and current Trump Administration cabinet member — admits he didn't know much about security cameras. But he knew a guy who did.

That's when the bartering began. Rather than paying \$5,000 for the

installation, Perry traded labor with his knowledgeable friend and ended up paying just \$400 for the camera and wire. The installation work was a trade-off. "I helped him with a plumbing problem," Perry says. "His circulator needed new bearings."

Perry, who has a staff of six, has extended his philosophy to the Five Boroughs Club — "a bunch of guys, resident managers" — who meet once a month to discuss upcoming issues with representatives of Con Edison and the Department of Buildings. "When

I started talking to resident managers there, I started telling them, 'Find out what your guys used to do before becoming doormen, or porters, or handymen.'" Perry was speaking from experience. Nine years ago, he sold his company, Perry Plumbing and Heating, and became a resident manager.

Since most of the members of the Five Boroughs Club had previously worked in various trades (painters, plumbers, sheetrockers), Perry suggested that they "utilize the team we have." By helping each other, he says, "we save over half of what it would cost. You work together, you know — instead of having six guys like we have, I have 30 guys, 40 guys. It makes [everyone] a little extra money, and it saves for the buildings." ■