

ACLU v. Galaxy condo in free speech suit



MARK BARTKIEWICZ JOURNAL PHOTO

GALAXY TOWER residents, from left, Stanley Maron, Mike DeLuca and Martha Di Giovanni discuss what is happening in their Guttenberg building.

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GUTTENBERG — The American Civil Liberties Union has filed a lawsuit against the Galaxy Towers condominium association and its president, Martha Norget, saying the organization was stifling the free speech of building residents.

The case, which is being handled by Frank Askin, an attorney and professor at Rutgers Law School in Newark, is currently proceeding with discovery and is scheduled to go to trial in November.

"It has to do with whether or not the state Constitution applies to private communities such as the Galaxy," Askin said.

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FRANK ASKIN
RESIDENTS' ATTORNEY

They also want an equal voice on the condo's in-house cable station, Time Warner Access Channel 26, and publication, the Galaxy Newsletter.

Stanley Maron, 71, a unit owner at the Galaxy for 11 years, is so upset he's decided to relocate to Massachusetts next month. "My biggest reason for leaving is the stress of such a restrictive environ-

ment," he said.

Michael DeLuca, president of the Concerned Unit Owners Group, said the board of directors would not allow their opponents to campaign inside the building before the March election.

"They wouldn't let us put up posters in the complex, so we rented trucks to put posters on across the street," he said.

"We were told (by the election committee) we couldn't wear buttons or hats with the candidates' names," said Lynn Miles, an owner at the Galaxy for about a year and a half. "They came out with these rules about a week before the election and we didn't want our candidates disqualified, so we followed."

"It was never written down; it was all verbal," she said.

Joel Price, vice president of the condominium association, refused to comment. "The case is in the discovery stage and our legal team has advised us not to discuss it."