

## Saturday June 1<sup>st</sup> is Tenant Day!

On June 1st, Toronto tenants will pay more than \$500 million dollars in rent to Toronto landlords. As of October 2001, the average rents in Toronto were more than 18% higher than in 1998, the year the Tenant Protection Act was passed. Are buildings maintained better? More secure? Are tenants better off than they were four years ago?

It is time for tenants to stand up and say that four years of this so-called protection is enough! We need real protection, and we need it now.

Please mark June 1<sup>st</sup> in your calendar. Look for information about Tenant Day events in the next issue of the Tenant and on the FMTA website at:

[www.torontotenants.org](http://www.torontotenants.org)

Putting on an event like this needs lots of volunteer power. If you would like to help out, please contact Marcia at [marciatdf@torontotenants.org](mailto:marciatdf@torontotenants.org) or call (416) 413-9442.

## Raising Rents and Evicting Tenants is An Essential Service?

by Marcia Barry

We are now into the sixth week of the Ontario Public Services Employees Union (OPSEU) strike. The Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal has continued to hold Hearings throughout the duration of this strike. Yet the Tribunal is not open for full service. If you are disputing a rent increase above the guideline, your only opportunity to view the landlords' application is in the morning. If you need send information to the Tribunal, you have to go in person—they are not receiving faxes. There are no live operators at the province wide information number. All of this lessens a tenant's ability to prepare for a hearing (as if this wasn't difficult enough already!).

There has been at least one occasion when the Tribunal barred the public from attending hearings (a Federation staff member was not allowed access to a hearing she was asked to attend!). Ontario law says that all hearings at the housing Tribunal must be open to the public.

If the Tribunal is unable to provide full and adequate service to the public, then they should be canceling all of the hearings until the labour dispute is resolved. If the Ontario government were as generous to their workers as the Tribunal is to landlords, there probably wouldn't have been a strike in the first place!

*The FMTA website is now  
better than ever!  
[www.torontotenants.org](http://www.torontotenants.org)*

## Tenant Summit IV

Saturday May 4<sup>th</sup> will be the fourth time that the Federation has invited the leaders of Tenant Associations to get together. At past Summits we have discussed challenging rent increases, sustaining Tenant Associations, and effective political lobbying.

This time we will be working on a TENANT ACTION PLAN for the next Provincial election. Its time to put housing back on the political agenda, and get rid of the Tenant Protection Act!

**Leaders from Tenant Associations who have worked with the FMTA will be receiving invitations to the event. If you have not received an invitation, and would like to attend, please contact us at:**

[dantdf@torontotenants.org](mailto:dantdf@torontotenants.org).

## Tribunal Chair Says No to Tenants

By Dan McIntyre

NO, he will not resign. NO, he will not make a public statement critical of the outcomes of the god awful Tenant Protection Act. NO, he will not advise Tribunal Officers to stop allowing ridiculous and unfair permanent rent increases based on a temporary increase in fuel costs.

Following our call for his resignation, we were invited to a meeting with the Chair on March 28. The Chair, Chisanga Puta-Chekwe is a well-trained immaculate gentleman. However, he remains silent as his "independent" officers all rubber stamp landlord applications without regard to section 188 of the Act.

Ironically, our argument seems to be taken more seriously by landlords than by the Tribunal. I was at a hearing in early April, where the Tribunal Officer raised and denied the tenant argument in his opening remarks! He had not heard a single word from the tenants but had already made up his mind.

So the Ontario Not Good For Rental Housing tribunal will continue to be the lap dog for the landlords. The Chair will remain silent. Toronto landlords will be unjustly enriched by more than \$40 million a year – unless the Divisional Court overrules the lap dogs.

## Notice of Membership rate change:

At the November 2001 Annual General Meeting, Federation members voted to change the Tenant Association Membership fee to \$10.00 per unit. A Tenant Association requires a minimum of three units to register.

Although we regret having to change our rates, increasing costs such as printing and postage have made this necessary.



## Gas Fight Update

by Michelle Mulgrave

The tenants at 1305 Wilson Avenue will be making arguments on June 28, 2002 at Osgoode Hall. A court date has not been set for tenants at 50 Panorama Court who are also appealing to Divisional Court. We hope that the Divisional Court will help protect tenants since the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal to date has failed to do so.

In the meantime, tenants should continue to contact their local MPP's and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to voice their concerns about the impact of the Tenant Protection Act. Chris Hodgson, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, can be reached at:

Office of the Minister  
777 Bay Street, 17<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto, Ontario, M5G 2E5

Our new Premier Ernie Eves should be aware of unfair rent increases that are a direct result of the Provincial government not considering the impact on tenants.

He can be reached at:

Ernie Eves, Premier  
Legislative Building  
Queen's Park  
Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1A1

The Chair of the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal should also receive your letters since tenants have been forced to go outside of the Tribunal to Divisional Court, to resolve an issue that the Tribunal has the jurisdiction and authority to remedy.

Mr. Chisanga Puta-Chekwe  
Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal  
777 Bay Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto, Ontario, M5G 2E5

Tenants who are facing an above guideline increase due to extraordinary costs can still contact Richard Fink and add their building to the appeal. The City of Toronto may provide funding under the Tenant Defence Fund to help with your appeal. The FMTA can help you apply for this grant. Once you receive your order, you have 30 days to decide if you want to continue your fight. If more than 30 days have passed since you received your order, unfortunately you are out of luck.

## Maybe Ernie Eves Will Make A Difference

by Dan McIntyre

On April 15, Ernie Eves became Premier of Ontario. Will he be kinder? Gentler? Will he give a hoot about tenants? So far, he has not said anything and he did not need our votes to win the leadership.

If we have any chance with Ernie, he has to hear from tenants quickly and in great numbers. Now is the time to write to the Premier. Send him a copy of your rent cheque. Tell him what you paid in rent 5 years ago – before the Tenant Protection Act. Tell him how hard it is to find an affordable apartment. Tell him how well your building is managed.

Tell him about you. Tell him you are a pensioner on fixed income. Tell him how much your wages have gone up. Tell him that you are a student paying huge rents and then huge tuition fees. Tell him what it is like to be on a disability income or to struggle on social services or between jobs.

It is up to all of us. If he hears from thousands of tenants – who knows what might happen? Many people told me that they had given up on Mike Harris.

At the same time, Dalton McGuinty must become more aware of the plight of tenants. With an election looming in the next year or so, we cannot afford anything but immediate action for reform. Write him too.

**Interesting footnote:** The MPP for St. Pauls defeated a sitting incumbent largely because of the tenant vote. This gave that former member an opportunity to have other interests and the good ear of Ernie Eves. Maybe that will help.

The FMTA can be reached at:  
27 Carlton Street, Suite 500  
Toronto, ON. M5B 1L2

Tenants' Hotline:(416) 921-9494  
Outreach & Organizing: (416) 413-9442

Fax:(416) 921-4177  
FMTA office:(416) 646-1772  
Webpage:[www.torontotenants.org](http://www.torontotenants.org)  
email: [fmta@torontotenants.org](mailto:fmta@torontotenants.org)  
[hotline@torontotenants.org](mailto:hotline@torontotenants.org)  
[tdf@torontotenants.org](mailto:tdf@torontotenants.org)

**Write the premier your thoughts: It is important that he hear *your* story! Contact info is on the back page!**

### Yes, I want to be part of the Tenants' Movement!

#### I will pay my membership dues by:

Cheque or money order (made out to FMTA)     Cash

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. #: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone #: (h) \_\_\_\_\_ (w) \_\_\_\_\_

Fax #: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

#### I am joining as :

New Member     Renewal

- Individual: \$15/year
- Senior, student or unemployed: \$5/year
- Sustaining Member: \$50/year
- Homeowner (non-voting): \$25/year
- Organization (non-voting): \$25/year
- Tenants' Association: \_\_\_\_\_ units, at \$10 per year per unit (minimum 3 units).

*Together we are strong!*