

The Tenant



Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations
- Fighting for Tenants' Rights since 1974 -

Spring/Summer 2010

In this Issue:

★ Co-ops!

★ Insurance!

★ Rent Reductions!

Tenants Graduate Tenant School

By FMTA Staff

The first class of graduates finished the Tenant School, on May 6th, a project by Community Legal Aid Clinics, The Inter-Clinic Public Housing Working Group and the FMTA which was funded by the Law Foundation of Ontario.

Tenants from across Toronto were able to learn about how to address repairs, how to handle the eviction process, the various elements of the *Residential Tenancies Act*, internal reviews, rent increases, rent calculations, and community organizing.

See **School**, page 3

FMTA's 36th Annual General Meeting & 2nd Annual Fundrasier!!!

By FMTA Staff and Board

The FMTA will be holding its 36th **Annual General Meeting** this year on **Saturday May 29th, 2010** between 10am and 3pm.

The AGM will be at the **Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) - 252 Bloor Street W. 2nd Floor ROOM 2-214.**

It has been a busy and successful year for the FMTA. We fought hard for a moratorium on illegal Smart Sub-Metering and won, saving thousands of tenants from hassle and illegal charges. We are now providing input to the government on Bill 235, the government's new energy bill which affects tenants.

Landlords wanted to close down garbage

chutes in many buildings and we fought against it and have prevented them from doing so arbitrarily.

We have made recommendations to the *Residential Tenancies Act*, the *Social Housing Reform Act* and the *Cooperatives Act* to better support the rights of tenants.

We won a partial victory by preventing landlords from passing on HST costs by way of an above guideline increase. We are still fighting to get the HST taken off of heat and hydro costs for all tenants.

The FMTA has also been calling on the LTB to make it fairer for tenants to achieve justice when landlords are not doing proper maintenance in buildings.

See **AGM**, Page 3



Ask the Hotline

By Howard Tessler

Q.: My landlord recently sent a letter saying tenants now must have tenant insurance. I don't have this type of insurance. Do I have to buy it and can I be evicted if I don't?

A. The Residential Tenancies Act (RTA), the law that governs the legal relations between landlords and tenants, does not talk about tenant insurance, meaning it is neither required for a tenant to get it, nor prohibited for a landlord to ask for it. Because it cannot be required, sitting tenants cannot be forced to take out "tenant" insurance. Even if your initial lease had a clause requiring you to have tenant insurance, this clause is not enforceable under the RTA.

However if you are applying for an apartment you are not yet covered under the law. Prospective landlords can demand proof of insurance in order to get the apartment. However once you became a sitting tenant you may be able to cancel the insurance if you wish.

Demanding insurance may violate the human rights code. Some agencies have argued landlords can not force tenants to get insurance or demand insurance from rental applicants if they are receiving public assistance because it makes it unnecessarily difficult for them to get or retain housing.

If you have any further questions about insurance or any other landlord-tenant issue call the Tenant Hotline at 416-921-9494.

If you have any questions about your rights as a tenant, please call the Tenant Hotline at 416-921-9494 Mon.-Fri. 8:30am – 6:00pm or email us at hotline@torontotenants.org

Housing Profile: Campus Coop

By Geordie Dent

Tucked away in the Annex lie close to 30 houses which make up one of the most interesting and oldest cooperatives in the City of Toronto.

Started in 1936, the Campus Cooperative Residence was started by students in Toronto looking for housing. After fruitless searches, they decided to start a cooperative.

Trisha Hurst, the Membership Coordinator of the Cooperative says that throughout the years they began to acquire different houses throughout the Annex area and have been operating them since then.

After an initial round of tenants cooperatively buying houses to rent in the 1940's, the 1970's provided a windfall of money from the government for cooperative buying.

See **Co-op**, Last Page



Campus Cooperative Alumni

School, Continued from Front Page

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive and we were happy to see so many tenants trained.

While many tenants were unable to register, future 'semesters' of the Tenant School' are currently being planned. Stay Tuned!

AGM, Continued from Front Page

We've also exposed landlord's not passing on rent reductions mandated by the City.

In other words, The FMTA has been fighting hard for tenants across Toronto and we hope to see you at our AGM! Guest speaker to be announced.

In addition, our 2nd annual **Fundraiser Gala** will be on **Friday, June 4th at 7pm**. An evening of dancing, food and raffles will be at the **Steelworkers Hall located at 25 Cecil St. in Toronto**. Tickets are \$35.

To purchase or reserve tickets, call 416-413-9442.

The FMTA Fundraiser allows the FMTA Board to continue to do great work in the community for tenants across the City. Hope to see you come out and help us continue to fight for tenant rights in Toronto!

Are You Facing a Variance Application?

By FMTA Staff

In December 2009, almost 130,000 tenants received notices from the City of Toronto that their rent had been reduced.

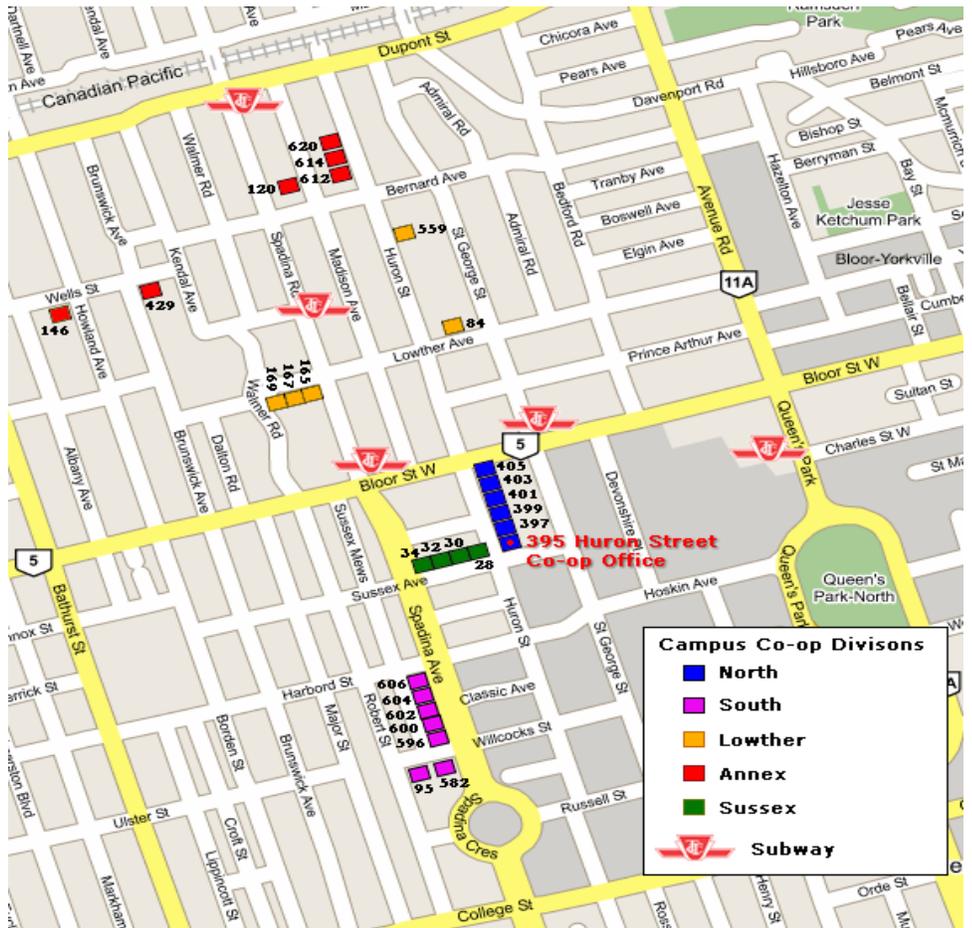
While many tenants were happy to receive the reduction, landlords in over 100 buildings have applied to reduce or eliminate the rent reduction

through a 'variance application'. Many tenants in these buildings are FMTA members.

The FMTA has helped develop a response for tenants who receive a 'notice of hearing' from the Landlord and Tenant Board and sent it to our members.

If you have received a notice from the Landlord and Tenant Board or a copy of the FMTA response, please call the Tenant Hotline for more information about how the process works at 416-921-9494.

Together We Are Strong!



Buildings Owned by The Campus Cooperative

Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations

27 Carlton St.
Suite 500
Toronto, Ontario
M5B 1L2

TENANT HOTLINE
(416) 921-9494

OUTREACH &
ORGANIZING
(416) 413-9442

OFFICE
(416) 646-1772

FAX
(416) 921-4177

Co-op, Continued from page 2

Now, the Co-op owns and operates 28 row houses or detached Victorian mansions which have all been converted into shared housing for their tenant members.

Like many cooperatives, the Campus Co-op is run by a board of directors and the tenants themselves. Some board members have been long standing while others are students who have only been involved in the Co-op only recently. The Co-op also has 6 staff and interns.

While the longevity of the Co-op speaks to its success, it still struggles to engage with its members, many of whom have language issues, heavy workloads and a transient nature, being students. The age and size of its

buildings and lack of members during the summer make maintenance and funding difficult to navigate.

However Trisha Hurst, the Membership Coordinator, says success can be found everywhere in the Co-op. "It is the bonding that really inspires them to grow as people," she said. The spread-out nature of the co-op means it is not traditional in being in one big building.

Next year the, Co-op celebrates its 75th anniversary. As Hurst points out, the fact that the Co-op has been around as long as it has and is still functioning well speaks more to its success than anything else.

Learn more about the Campus Cooperative at www.campus.coop

Visit our website! www.torontotenants.org

Become a member of the FMTA!

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: _____

Yes! I would like to donate \$ _____ to the FMTA!

Type of membership:

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, \$10/year/unit (minimum 3 units)