

The Tenant!



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

Winter/Spring 2011

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Fundraising: Support the FMTA!

By Geordie Dent

As we approach the election, and in the wake of recent funding cuts, we are seeking financial contributions from our members and others who we serve in order to bolster our ability to offer tenant services.

To this end, we have launched a direct mail fundraising campaign and hope that you can support us. If you are a member receiving this newsletter, please take a look at our fundraising appeal in this month's newsletter.

Consider giving generously to support the FMTA's work helping tenants in the city!

FMTA Board Fighting for Tenant Issues in Upcoming Provincial Election

By The FMTA Board

In October of this year, citizens of Ontario will cast their ballots to elect Members of Provincial Parliament to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. Elections are a key time to push issues that are important for tenants. The Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations Board of Directors is focusing on three particular campaigns in the coming election:

Bedbugs Strategy

Specific MPPs have been campaigning through private members bills to require landlords to disclose to prospective tenants whether or not their units have bedbugs, and to enforce more rigorous treatment. The FMTA is part of a coalition whose work has resulted in \$5 million in funding to combat bed

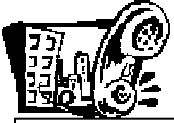
bugs.

The FMTA is working hard to ensure that proper funding, education, legislation and planning is going into fighting bed bugs in the future and is meeting with several key stakeholders in the community and government to try to make this a reality.

Affordable Housing

Current legislation in Ontario limits the amount that a landlord can increase the rent per year once a tenant is living in the unit. However, when a tenant leaves, the landlord can raise the rent as much as they want. This means that the cost of living in the city can increase uncontrolled, offering few supports for people who need affordable housing. Combined with the lack of new social housing units, this can mean serious

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Ask the Hotline

By Howard Tessler

Q.: My landlord recently sent a letter saying tenants now must pay extra charges for the air conditioner. I've had an air conditioner for years and have been using it without extra charges. Are these new charges legal?

A. If you have had an air conditioner previously in your unit, a landlord can not start charging you to operate it. However if you are moving into a unit or if you have a clause in your lease that requires you to pay a monthly fee for an air conditioner (one time fees are not legal) then you can be charged for air conditioner use.

Many tenants have called the hotline complaining of letters that their landlord has sent them stating that "new City bylaws" require an "engineering report" and "installment by a licensed professional". The FMTA has not heard of any such bylaw at this time and has not been able to confirm that this is actually correct. If you receive such a letter, you can call 3-1-1 and ask if such a bylaw occurs and also if any orders have been issued against your building regarding air conditioners. If no order or bylaw exists you can likely ignore your landlord's letter.

Also note: just because the snow is starting to melt does not mean that your landlord does not have obligations to keep the heat up! *The law says that landlords must keep the heat in their units at 21 °C until May 31.*

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

2011 International Tenants Day!

By Lisa Leinveer

The slogan of the FMTA is "Together We Are Strong". This October we aim to put our message into practice.

October 3 is International Tenant's Day and this year the FMTA is trying to bring the voices of tenants together to show that tenant issues matter and that more needs to be done to bolster our interests and build our communities.

ITD was created by the International Union of Tenants, and is now celebrated by tenants all over the world as a time to come together and advocate for "Secure Tenure," the "Right to Affordable Housing", and other local issues important to tenants.

While Toronto has one of the highest tenant populations in Canada, our City has not celebrated International

Tenants Day in recent years like our counterparts in other parts of the country.

This year we intend to bring tenant issues in Toronto into the public debate and will need your support to do so.

The FMTA will be working with other organizations and our members to bring tenants out so we need your support!

October 3rd - Save The Date!

TENANT SCHOOL



where tenants find out what they need to know about the law

**FREE legal workshops for tenants
by staff from community legal clinics
and the Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations**

MAY 4 TO JUNE 2, 2011 6:30 - 9:00 pm

Wednesday May 4	Residential Tenancies Act: The Basics
Wednesday May 11	Eviction Process
Wednesday May 18	How Rent-geared-to-income is Calculated / Internal Reviews
	Rent Increases in Private Market Housing
Wednesday May 25	Repairs and Maintenance
Thursday June 2	Community Organizing

ONTARIO INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION (OISE) 252 BLOOR ST. WEST (ST. GEORGE SUBWAY)

Registration from April 13 to April 27, 2011 at (416) 653-5400 ext. 1280
Preference will be given to Tenants who can attend all 5 sessions
Space is limited, register early



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

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increases in the cost of living, often pushing people out of their communities. The FMTA is working hard to ensure that vacancy rent control and affordable housing become major issues in the upcoming election.

Landlord Licensing

In addition, in order to address the serious maintenance issues uncovered by the City's Municipal Licensing and Standards department, the FMTA is pushing for landlord licensing. Currently a private members bill before the legislature would implement licensing. If landlords were licensed, they could be more effectively held accountable on such issues as quick and effective bedbug treatment,

maintenance work and more rigorous compliance with the RTA. If landlords did not comply with regulations, they could have their license removed.

What you can do

You can contact your MPP to let them know that you care about these issues! Support candidates who support tenants! Check out: <http://www.torontotenants.org/activism/contact-politician> for more information.

In the next issue...

More on International Tenants Day and the Election...

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)