

# The Tenant



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

Winter/Spring 2007

In this Issue:

★ New Staff!

★ Fun Survey!

★ Condo Tenants!

## New Project

By Jed Kilbourn

The City of Toronto has recently committed to what they are calling the Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy. The strategy includes cooperation between the City, community agencies and residents with a goal of increased service to target neighbourhoods in Toronto. The FMTA will be participating in the Strategy by coordinating a series of workshops about the Residential Tenancies Act for tenants in the priority neighbourhoods.

To assist us in this increased education and outreach, the Outreach &

## 2007 – A Better Year for Tenants!

By Dan McIntyre

What we know:

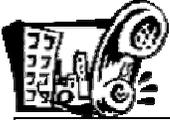
- ✓ The Residential Tenancies Act will be proclaimed on January 31<sup>st</sup>. It will be much fairer for tenants.
- ✓ The new Landlord & Tenant Board will keep their promise of being more tenant friendly.
- ✓ No tenant will be evicted without a hearing.

Organizing team has hired Victoria Natola. Victoria has a long history of community development and human rights work. She was the coordinator of the Housing Help Center at Concordia University and a volunteer with FRAPRU (Front d'Action Populaire en Réaménagement Urbain) in Montreal. We're thrilled that she's part of the team!

What we will do:

- ✓ The Tenant Defence Fund Program will be improved.
- ✓ We will help tenants deal effectively with inadequate maintenance and will continue to help all tenant groups facing unfair applications by their property owners or managers.
- ✓ The FMTA will serve more communities in Toronto, in more languages.
- ✓ Membership in the FMTA will substantially increase, with more benefits for members.
- ✓ We will continue to fight for the right for all tenants to live safely and with dignity in housing they can afford.

These are all matters that we have all worked very hard to achieve. We look forward to continuing our work in 2007 on. Happy New Year!



## Ask the Hotline

By Pauline Sok Yin  
Hwang

**Question:** In December, I received a letter from the City of Toronto, saying I am entitled to a rent reduction. What does this mean? Why didn't my friend get a letter?

**Answer:** The letter means that property taxes for the owner went down last year, resulting in a rent reduction for you. As you may know, about 20% of our rent goes toward property taxes. So when these taxes decrease more than a specified amount, tenants are automatically entitled to a rent reduction.

You don't need special permission to begin paying the reduced rent, but to avoid any confusion, it would be a good idea to attach a copy of the letter to your rent payment.

Because property taxes are different for each property, the rent reduction does NOT apply to all (or even most) residences in Toronto. This is probably why your friend did not receive a letter. Finally, please note that certain tenants are exempt, including most residents of public and non-profit housing. If you have trouble calculating the reduction, are unsure whether you are entitled to one, or have other questions, you may call the 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](mailto:hotline@torontotenants.org)***

## Condominium Tenants

By Jed Kilbourn

Condominiums in the the City of Toronto have been multiplying at an astronomical pace. It seem as thought everywhere you look there's a new condo being built. In fact, since 2001, there have been over 120 000 new condominium units registered in Toronto!

The same is not true of rental housing, however, and what we find is that increasingly, tenants are finding housing in condominium complexes. In fact, estimates set the rate of tenanted condominiums at about 20% to 25%, which means that there are approximately 24 000 – 30 000 people renting condos in Toronto.

On the surface, this looks like

a happy arrangement, but if we dig a little deeper, we see that the Residential Tenancies Act hasn't anticipated the growth of condominium tenancies.

Under the Residential Tenancies Act, a tenant has the right to take a property owner or manager to the Landlord and Tenant Board for not properly maintaining the tenant's unit or the common areas of the residential complex.

The same ought to be true for tenants living in condominiums, but the law doesn't account for the management structure of condominiums.

The structure of condominiums essentially works like this: An individual owns their unit and a voting share in the condominium corporation. The corporation is then responsible for the management of the condominium complex (what we

would understand as the common areas.

That means that a problem arises when a tenant wants make an application to the Board for a problem in the common area. The law allows a tenant to take their individual unit owner to the Board but it doesn't recognize the condominium corporation as a landlord. This means that it is almost impossible for condominium tenants to have their common area problems addressed at the Board.

The FMTA is very concerned about this growing problem. We have begun a Condominium Tenant portion of our website, and are currently creating an outreach strategy to target condo tenants.

More information? Check out [www.torontotenants.org](http://www.torontotenants.org)

**Tired?  
Overworked?  
Stressed?**  
*But still want to  
give back to your  
community?*

**Join Us!**

We are looking for **volunteer** members to become directors of our dynamic organization. We uphold the rights of tenants through education, organization, lobbying, and community building.

If you have 2 – 4 hours a month (or more if you're willing) you *can* make a difference. If you are a dedicated, passionate, hardworking, progressive person and are willing to help represent over a million tenants, we want your help.

By joining the FMTA, you will help shape and direct the fight for fairness in law and the right of tenants to decent, safe and affordable housing, free from discrimination and intimidation.

If you can handle more work, no pay, and the stress of urgency; we need you! Your reward will be the satisfaction that comes from contributing and giving. Email your full contact information along with a short biography to:

chair@torontotenants.org

# A Quick Survey

The FMTA is always looking for new ways of helping tenants. One of the things that we've heard concerns about is apartment insurance. We're interested in finding out what you think!

Would you be interested in receiving a member's quotation for cost reduced, standard Tenant Package Insurance?

YES! Please send me some information about apartment contents and liability insurance!

- I rent a:
- Bachelor/Studio
  - 1 bedroom
  - 2 bedroom
  - 3 or more bedroom
  - Entire house

Are you currently a member of the FMTA?

- YES
- NO, but please send me more information

- In a:
- Private home
  - Townhouse
  - \_\_\_\_\_-plex
  - Low-rise building
  - High-rise building
  - Condominium

- With:
- One bathroom
  - Two or more bathrooms

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

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Apartment: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Personal information provided by you will be held in confidence by the FMTA and will not be shared or sold to third party companies or individuals except to provide specialized information or quotations requested by you. Service providers to the FMTA and its members are also bound to hold your personal information in confidence.

**Reminder!** The deadline for the name change contest that we introduced in the fall edition of *the Tenant* has been extended to February 10<sup>th</sup>!

**So:** If you can think of a new name for the FMTA, write it down and mail it to:

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

(Entries need to be received by February 10<sup>th</sup>, and don't forget to include your name and address with your entry)

**Membership Application Form**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Apartment: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Ward: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer that future correspondence is sent to me by:  Mail  Email

**Type of Rental Accomodation:**

- |                                    |  |   |
|------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Duplex    | <input type="checkbox"/> House         | Apartment Building: <input type="checkbox"/> 9-50 Units |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fourplex  | <input type="checkbox"/> Townhouse     | <input type="checkbox"/> 50+ Units                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sixplex   | <input type="checkbox"/> Rooming House |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eightplex | <input type="checkbox"/> Floor         | <input type="checkbox"/> Condominium                    |
|                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Basement      |   |

**Years in Residence:**

- Less than one year
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- Over 10 years

**FMTA Membership:**

- I am a new member
- I am renewing my membership

**Membership Category:**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$15   | <input type="checkbox"/> Home Owner (non-voting) \$25                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Condo Tenant \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Associate Organisation (non-voting) \$25         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior \$5        | <input type="checkbox"/> International Membership (non-voting) \$40 (USD) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student \$5       |   |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Tenant Association:                              |
|  | _____ Number of Units (\$10/unit)   |
|  | _____ Total \$  |

**Donation:**

I would like to support the work of the FMTA through my donation of \$

- I enclose my  Cheque  
 Money Order – payable to the FMTA

Mail application form and payment to: FMTA 27 Carlton St., Suite 500, Toronto, ON M5B 1L2

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Applicant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

*Information provided in this membership application form is for use by the FMTA only and will not be shared or sold to individuals, agencies, or other organisations*

Visit our website! [www.torontotenants.org](http://www.torontotenants.org)

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 Metro Tenants  
 Associations**

27 Carlton St. Suite 500 Toronto, ON M5B 1L2  
 TENANT HOTLINE (416) 921-9494  
 OUTREACH & ORGANIZING (416) 413-9442  
 OFFICE (416) 646-1772  
 FAX (416) 921-4177