

The Tenant



Fall 2003

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

Your Vote Counts!

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By Dan McIntyre

Ever hear anyone say "Why bother to vote. My vote doesn't matter"? There is a Provincial election coming up October 2nd and your vote does matter... and so do all tenant votes (see examples on the Back Page).

Many elections are decided by a few hundred votes. Many apartment buildings have hundreds of voters. Maybe your building will decide an election.

But many of our faithful members and readers always vote. We also shake our heads at our neighbours who don't vote. You can increase your voting power! Spend time talking to those neighbours and convince them to vote for your preferred candidate. Convince at least 5 people who never

voted before to get off their "you know whats" and put an x beside some one's name.

Don't wait until election day. People make up their minds several days before an election. Tenant Associations can encourage candidates to hold lobby meetings so we can see who we are voting for (or against). Go to all candidate meetings or call in to television shows where candidates debate. Ask them, what they are going to do for tenants.

Voting is a perfectly selfish act. Landlords vote and they support candidates that they like. We outnumber landlords!

There is another thing that successful

politicians take into account. Although your vote is secret, it is no secret who voted and who did not. Voters are assigned a poll. Many apartment buildings are a poll all on their own. A smart politician takes notes of the polls where a lot of people voted. That affects their thinking on issues.

We have heard many politicians say over the last few years "tenants don't vote" and that's why we are stuck with the Tenant Protection Act. Let us change that. Talk to your neighbours and talk to newcomers. Increase our voting power!

For help in ensuring that you are on the voters list, visit our web site at www.torontotenants.org.



The Election Issue

Tenants Influence in Ontario Elections

1975: Stephen Lewis and the NDP were so successful in making rent "control" an issue, that Bill Davis and the PC party changed positions during the election. Davis was able to hold a few more Toronto seats and retained Government. This led to the first introduction of rent "review" in Ontario in 1976.

1977: The Davis Government was defeated in the Legislature on a bill about rent review causing the 1977 election.

1985: The PC Government loses power on a Liberal-NDP accord that featured an extension of rent review. David Peterson promises a rent registry and a tenant bill of rights.

1990: The election of an NDP Government with an agenda that would eliminate above guideline rent increases. Although that promise was abandoned, the vastly improved Rent Control Act was enacted in 1992. Voter turnout was relatively strong by tenants in 1990.

1995: Tenants do not vote or vote based on other issues. Consequently, we get stuck with the Tenant Protection Act and the destruction of affordable housing in Ontario.

2003: Tenants vote in record numbers – we trust.

Some things to ask the Candidate at your door...

In Toronto, restaurants are checked regularly and graded by inspectors. **Do you think this would be a good idea for rental housing?**

It was estimated that the number of seniors living in rental housing will rise over the next decade. Many seniors live on low and fixed incomes. **What would your party do to ensure that seniors can stay in their apartments?**

No new social housing has been built in the recent past, and the private sector has not responded to the growing demand for affordable housing. Given that rents are becoming less and less affordable, **when will your party return to the building of non-profit housing?**

Tenant Turnout is Paramount

By Michelle Mulgrave

Voting is made easier when there is choice. We have a number of political parties vying for our attention. We need to select a party that will truly help tenants. The *Tenant Protection Act* must "protect" tenants or be scrapped.

The Fall always brings change. As the leaves fall to the way side, it is time to think about changing our provincial government. On October 2, 2003, tenant turnout is paramount. A low tenant turnout will lead to tenant issues falling off the radar. Tenant issues have been ignored since 1995.



A new government will need direction. A high tenant turnout can help prioritize tenant issues. Even after the election tenants must keep at the provincial government. If we snooze we lose. On October 2, bring your neighbour with you and vote!

Make Copies of Page 3 and Help Spread the Word!



Share the Message with your Friends and Neighbours!

Get Out and Vote for Fairness for Tenants!

For 5 years now, Tenants in Ontario have been hurt by:

- Rents that go up and up
- 5 000 evictions every month in Ontario
- Inadequate maintenance in many buildings
- No new affordable housing

Here's what some tenants have to say:

"I need affordable housing. Raising children in a high rise is tough enough, but the government makes it much harder."

-- Nora

"I'm seventy years old. I can't make ends meet with all these rent increases. The one thing I can do is vote!"

-- Anna

"I'm a Tenant and I Vote!"

"I work hard. Every year the landlord gets a big raise, but I don't. And our building is in bad shape."

-- Peter

"This is our chance to make a change!"

Things you can do to make a difference:

- ✓ Call Elections Ontario at 1-800-677-8683 to make sure you are on the Voters List
- ✓ Contact the Federation of Metro Tenants Associations at (416) 921-9494
- ✓ Visit the Federation of Metro Tenants' Association's website at **www.torontotenants.org**
- ✓ Encourage your friends and neighbours to vote
- ✓ Contact the candidates in your riding and ask them what they are going to do for tenants
- ✓ On Election Day, vote for candidates who will work for Tenants

This flyer brought to you by Tenants working with the *Federation of Metro Tenants Associations*

**Tenants Can Make
A Difference!**

Every vote counts, and here are a couple of examples to remember as we get ready to vote on October 2!

In the riding of Nipissing, the vote totals were PC's 13,989, Liberals 13,790. In a twenty floor apartment building one vote per floor could have easily changed the outcome of that election.

In the city of Toronto elections in the 2000, Suzan Hall won a council seat with 2,894 votes and Vincent Cristani lost with 2,797 votes. The margin of difference was so close, one apartment complex could have changed that result, or widened the gap.

Last, but certainly not least, in a by-election held in Beaches-York Michael Tziretas became a councillor with 3,932 votes defeating Janet Davis who had 3,878. Over 50% of the residents of Beaches-York live in apartments. Just imagine if Crescent Town with over 6,000 residents had of voted at 25% instead of 5%.

Tenants have an opportunity to pick someone to represent them that cares about tenant issues.

We Need Cash!

Once again, thank-you to all who responded to our last request for donations. The election has finally been called and we continue to need money for mailings and flyers. We are determined to make sure your voice is heard. We may not have the money that the rich landlord lobby has but there are more of us and we can vote, vote, vote! We are grateful for all donations that help us get your message out!

Mark your Calendar!

The FMTA's Annual General Meeting will be held on November 29,2003 at OISE Stay tuned for more information

**Federation of Metro
Tenants' Associations**

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TENANT HOTLINE:
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(416) 921-4177

We're on the Web!
www.torontotenants.org

E-MAIL:
fmta@torontotenants.org

Housing in Ontario Means Everybody (HOME)

September 18, the HOME coalition will be holding a mock eviction of Ernie Eves. "Mr. Eves" will see how cruel his Tribunal has been to tenants.

The event will start shortly after 11:00 am at the Tribunal head office at 777 Bay Street (southeast entrance). All tenants are encouraged to attend.

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

Please send me my membership card and information about the services that I receive a member.

I will pay my membership dues by:

Cheque or money order
(made out to FMTA)

Cash

Please Print:

Name: _____
Address: _____ Apt. #: _____
City: _____ Postal Code: _____
Telephone #: (h) _____ (w) _____
Fax: _____ e-mail: _____

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

**I am joining as the following
type of member:**

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 per year per unit (minimum 3 units)

Send to: Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations, 27 Carlton St., Suite 500, Toronto ON, M5B 1L2