

March 29, 2012

Here is a piece of writing that I should put up on my blog. It is an old article from the anti-FMTA site, much of it written by somebody and posted by me. It was a comment on an article from the Ottawa Citizen. I will do it in PDF instead of HTML, because the links are not important here.

As explained further below, I got a copyright bully message demanding I take it down. I decided to just rewrite the whole thing, because some of the information was out of date anyway.

So here it is, with some modification from the Tenant Associations site. Never give into these people who want to exploit copyright laws. They are easy to defeat.

So somebody informed the Ottawa Citizen that their article was reprinted in full with comments as the substance of this page. It seems they are one of these publications still trying to make money off copyright in the internet age. More about that below. It might have been fun to take these clowns on in court, but I have too much else going on. So I will just paraphrase the article. If someone wants the text of it, contact me.

The article appeared in the Ottawa Citizen June 27, 1996, written by Daniel Denley. It informs tenants who are unhappy with the announcement of the gradual elimination of rent controls that there is a group which speaks on their behalf. The article does not explain who appointed these people to speak on behalf of all the tenants in the Ottawa area.

This group was the Federation of Ottawa-Carleton Tenants Associations and it was lobbying the regional government, meaning the unelected Capital region authority whose power even extends into Quebec, to collect a tax on its behalf. This would be on all tenants in privately owned buildings with more than six units.

We are informed that "The group" received two-thirds of its \$112,000 budget from the provincial government. This had by that time been cut off and so they have laid off two of their three staff. Executive director Dan McIntyre,

who came to Toronto to run FMTA, was quoted as estimating that the tax could bring the association about \$500,000 a year.

Denley asked; "Now you might ask why a tenant advocacy group needs to quadruple its budget."

"We've never had enough resources to do what we feel is necessary," McIntyre said. He talks about the wonderful stuff "his" organization wants to do, including "speak up for tenants of public housing, who won't be asked to pay the tax." This is a nice way of making social housing tenants into second class tenants, er, citizens.

"Have I been calling this a tax? Excuse me, actually its a levy. The tenants group explains the difference in a letter to regional councillors." writes Denley.

"Isn't this really a tax?" the letter asks, just in case you might have had your suspicions. "No. It is a fee or levy to be used in the community by tenants. It is not revenue for the purpose of government. It will be part of the rent payment made by tenants. It is similar to the function of the RMOC to collect monies for the use of water."

Denley notices that tenants won't be able to opt out of MacIntyre's plan. He claims it is like union dues, coerced membership in an organization. I have some problems with that analogy; union dues bring benefits to all who pay into them, and the members usually are able to vote for their leaders in real elections.

It seems these "tenant groups" had asked the former NDP government to collect their fees for them, but were turned down. Now McIntyre was going after the region that they show some leadership on this," says Denley.

The tenants association still gets \$28,500 in grants from Ottawa.

Regional Councillor Diane Holmes was receptive to the tenant group's plan but thought the amount was high. She thought that groups' costs should covered by members rather than government. She wanted public meetings and reaction from tenants before anything went ahead.

The chair of the regional authority was "distinctly unimpressed". He was quoted thusly; "I don't believe it's part of our mandate to be a collection agency for special-interest groups".

Under the plan, landlords would collect the \$1 per month per unit, either from existing rents or by raising the rent \$1. Then money would then go to the region with the landlord's tax payments.

A spokesperson for the Ottawa Region Landlords Association predicted that Landlords will oppose the plan. It is a tax on landlords because the money will come from existing rent or foregone rents.

Denley thinks that the tenants federation itself is not without merit. It is a counter weight to landlords' own organizations and useful to tenants who lack the means to resolve disputes themselves. Except that judging by the standards of our FMTA here in Toronto, it does none of these things.

Denley's difficulty is in obliging people to fund an organization to speak on their behalf, whether they want help or not. He uses the example of the Canadian Automobile Association, which he approves of but would not want to be forced to join. He does not seem to be familiar with the "free rider" argument used in defense of labor unions. And no one is asking him to join, just pay a tax to fund.

However, I see his point in part. A group that relies on government to collect its income for it cannot be independent of government, which it must be if it is to be a really effective voice for tenants. And yes, "one wonders why tenants can't organize a door-knocking campaign to collect a modest membership fee, if they feel the organization is really useful."

And he notices that \$500 000 seems a little expensive to keep such an organization going. And that is the article.

Now, since this came out, the city defunded the Ottawa Carlton Tenant's association. MacIntyre had tried to push too hard for his tenant tax. So he

arbitrarily closed the association down, pocketed its remaining funds, tore out all the office equipment, and moved to Toronto to work for FMTA.

He was here for ten years, during which he made enough to pay himself a fat pension, and has now retired. While in Toronto he lived in a choice Toronto Housing building, using pull from somewhere to jump the waiting list.

It is said that he was greatly traumatized by the extinction of the Ottawa group, and fearful that the same would happen to the FMTA. However, FMTA was able to get money steered to it by corrupt "left" politicians, and a good number of "right" ones too. In fact, almost the same \$500 000 a year he had wanted in Ottawa.

So, he was able to get his comfortable retirement without having to risk campaigning for a tenant levy. However, the idea continues to float around among this clique of former UTOO people who still see themselves as owning tenants all across Ontario.

Barbara Hurd, the homeowner who has been the Chair of the Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations for some years, also had another organization from 1991 onwards (4 years after the demise of the original Tenant Hotline, of which she was the president. That group was called the United Tenants of Ontario (UTOO). I have UTOO documents showing that her home address was listed as the "head office" address for that organization and that only one other person was listed on the incorporation papers for that "group".

In April 1995, UTOO released a survey done by Environics Research Group Limited, and paid for by a grant from the Ontario government. The report was called "Attitudes of renters toward tenants' organizations and public housing". The reports introduction read:

" Environics Research Group Limited is pleased to present this report to the United Tenants of Ontario (UTOO) regarding the attitudes of tenants across Ontario toward various issues, including willingness to contribute toward a province-wide tenants' organization."

On page 13 of this report was the survey question:

"One way to raise money for tenants' groups would be to have the Ontario government collect from landlords a dollar a month for each of their rental

units. This money, which tenants would pay with their rent, would be paid to a central fund for tenant groups. How would you feel about this or similar legislation?"

It seems that these people still believe that governments should be collecting money from the public for their groups whether or not the people want to contribute or be part of their group, or whether the group actually does anything. It also appears that these people spend an inordinate amount of time, using government funding, on working on ways to get even more government funding for themselves, instead of using this public money for things that would actually benefit tenants.

In recent years the Federation of Metro Tenants Associations had been lobbying heavily along with ACORN for there to be city apartment licenses on all apartments, falsely claiming that the costs could never be passed on to tenants. They were also lobbying heavily on their message board that 10% of the estimated \$5 to \$10 MILLION in apartment license fees must go to "tenant advocacy," that is to them.

Lately Mayor Ford has cut off their funding from the city. So they have had to give up for now on their idea of taxing tenants to enrich themselves and are focused in survival, on lasting out Ford. They are still getting a little money from somewhere. But dollar a door Dan is now safely retired.

Now, here is the letter I got from the Ottawa Citizen and its agents;

*Dear Mr. R,*

*It has recently come to our attention that your organization's website at <http://www.torontotenantsassociations.ca/tenant-tax.html> has posted an article from the Ottawa Citizen.*

*We are not aware of permission having been requested, which is required prior to posting our content. When our permission is granted, a fee of \$250 per article is payable, which allows posting for 4 months.*

*As the copyright owner of this article, Postmedia Network Inc., retains all rights to contents and design of our newspapers and websites. Be advised that your use of any Postmedia newspaper content is subject to our permission and fee schedule. Use of our content without permission is a breach of our copyright.*

*Please contact me directly to discuss licensing options available to you, or advise us of your intention to immediately remove the articles from your website.*

*Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.*

*Kind regards,*

*Cheryl Minnis, Licensing Associate  
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And so here is what I wrote back;

Hi, Cheryl;

I offered the guy who contacted me first to put a "reprinted with permission of.." into the article. Or, he could provide a live link to the article on the Ottawa Citizen web site. Nope. He was a real stuffed shirt about it, asking me if I was serious.

You guys are definitely not serious. Do you think you would actually find some loser to pay you \$250 to put up a 16 year old news article for four months?

Yes, it got produced in your news room. You got paid for it when it first came out and the public bought your paper. It is now public domain by right. As you can tell by my comments on it, and the rest of the content around it, the article is of public interest.

At some point law is going to catch up with reality and we will have an end to copyright laws as they are now. But for awhile we will have to put up with nonsense from copyright bullies trying to create, not a fair payment for their work, but a rent.

I might invite you to sue me. It would be interesting to take one of your type on. There is not the slightest chance you could get anything out of me or interfere with me in any serious way. You would find it very difficult to press my web service provider to remove any of my pages. Smarter and more ruthless people than you have tried and failed.

I do not mind going to court. I spend a lot of time there anyway and I am getting very good at handling my own cases. You can see by the content of my web sites that a lot of people in Toronto do not like me. Many of them have done things to try to shut me up. Quite often I end up taking some money off of them out of legal proceedings. None have ever made me pay them anything.

However, as I wrote above, the web page needs revising anyway. I will review the article and if anyone researching FMTA or MacIntyre really wants the original text, I will send it to them. If I can still find it.

How did I get this article? I have had it up for I think three or four years. An old fellow I worked with, who is good at researching this stuff, wrote the whole original page for me, with the "typists notes". I do not know how he got it and he is retired from the fight now, due to ill health.

I have a pretty good idea of why Ottawa Citizen has noticed this article now. The FMTA goons are getting very desperate now. Mayor Ford has shut off their funds from the city. There has lately been a new wave of harassment and intimidation attempts from them, toward me and my associates.

So now, if Ottawa Citizen and Infomart would like more negative publicity and expended effort for no possibility of gain, feel free. Otherwise, have a nice life, Cheryl. I hope you find a better job soon.

Web owner, [torontotenantsassociations.ca](http://torontotenantsassociations.ca)