



George Blumson of The Free Press

Residents from a northeast London apartment complex say they will continue picketing until their homes are cleared of an infestation of cockroaches. From left, Dave Roelofsen, Daniel Miller, 3, Diane Miller, Billy Miller, 5, and Charlene Roelofsen parade their complaints on placards outside the buildings Wednesday.

## Tenants picket over cockroaches

By Randy Ray  
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### Owner told to clean out 'ugly' bugs

A cockroach infestation has residents of a northeast London apartment complex bugged.

And in a bid to rid their four-building development of the repulsive beetles, residents are bugging their property manager and the Middlesex-London district health unit through Ward 3 Alderman Pat O'Brien.

A handful of residents also marched outside the buildings at 1420, 1422, 1424 and 1426 Huron St. on Wednesday, vowing to continue picketing the complex until the insects are removed.

During the protest, O'Brien promised that the health unit would investigate their complaints. Later, he said a health unit inspector discovered a "heavy infestation" and would order the Toronto owner of the complex to have pest control experts "thoroughly" spray the buildings within seven days.

"I'll stay out here all night if I have to," said Dave Roelofsen of Apartment 205, 1424

Huron St., who said he has withheld his rent for two months to protest the infestation and received an eviction notice Wednesday. "We want this cleaned up."

Roelofsen, who has lived in the building since July, conceded the buildings' local property manager has had the buildings sprayed regularly. But the bugs keep returning.

"The roaches are everywhere," and a quick tour of his apartment illustrated the problem. Dead roaches could be seen in cupboards, in the refrigerator and behind a fire extinguisher in a hallway. When Roelofsen opened a cupboard door, half a dozen of the tan-colored pests scurried for cover.

A check with residents of other buildings in the complex showed the problem is not confined to one building.

Linda Sangster of Apartment 109, 1426 Huron St. said she and her family are leav-

ing the building Oct. 26 because cockroaches are in every room in her apartment. They crawl inside her refrigerator, up and down walls and into beds, she said, describing them as "hard-shelled ... a deep tan color. They're ugly, they give you the creeps."

Like Roelofsen, she suggested the buildings' owners should move all tenants out of the complex for two or three days and fumigate each building. "Spraying's obviously not doing any good."

Property manager June Diggins admitted cockroaches are widespread throughout the complex. She said the buildings are regularly sprayed by pest control experts. The last spraying took place about three weeks ago, she said.

"It's not as if I'm ignoring the situation," she said, suggesting some of those behind the protest are "trying to get back at me" after receiving eviction notices. "If anyone

comes to me with complaints, the pest control people are called."

Health unit environmental health director Robert Carson confirmed that an inspector visited the three-storey, walk-up buildings Wednesday afternoon and "if there's a health hazard there, we'll order it stopped." Carson could not say what action might be ordered because he hadn't heard from the inspector.

He said the health unit has received complaints of cockroaches in the buildings before and "as far as we know, the owner took appropriate action."

Carson described the insects as "difficult little beasties to get rid of," noting they're tough to eradicate unless all tenants in a building co-operate by allowing all units to be sprayed.

Later, O'Brien said the city will contact the owner of the buildings — Pamlimar Investments of Toronto — and ask them to spray within a week. He said he also suggested all tenants give their full co-operation so that every inch of the complex can be thoroughly sprayed.