

# Community living is not a new idea

By GARY BRAND  
NRS Realty

Believe it or not, the world first went "condo" 2,500 years ago in the Middle East! So, the concept of community living is not a new idea. But the popularity it now enjoys is a relatively recent occurrence.

Europe was the vanguard for the condominium revival about 200 years ago. Then fifty years ago, Brazil passed condominium legislation. And in 1961, the colonies got into the act with the United States adopting the concept and Canada following suit in 1966. Since then many other countries have picked up the idea including Cuba, Puerto Rico and Australia.

Why is condominium ownership riding such a crest of popularity? Possibly because buyers see it as a combination of the best of both worlds. Many of the advantages of home ownership are still there, but without the tiresome concerns of home maintenance.

Plus a lot has changed in 2500 years. Lifestyles don't always revolve around the home. For active, young couples, it gives them a freedom to travel or concentrate on a career. For empty-nesters, the time-consuming constraints of yard maintenance are eliminated. Still others find a condominium to be an affordable alternative as a first home.

What exactly is a condominium?

The word condominium refers to a legal form, not the actual dwelling place, or as it is commonly called, unit. It comes in many forms, including detached, townhouses, apartments or duplexes. The units can be new modern high-rises, conversions from older apartment buildings, garden apartments, cluster housing or even single-family homes in a subdivision format. And the

concept isn't limited to homes. It can also be applied to industrial or commercial properties.

The basic gist of the condominium concept is that you have the exclusive use of the interior of your unit, but you share the "common" areas with the other owners. These may include walkways, driveways, lawns, parking areas, recreational areas or facilities, laundry rooms, stairways etc. The actual common elements may differ from development to development, but will be clearly stated in the documents.

When you purchase a condominium, you become a shareholder in the corporation that oversees the operation of your particular development. Being a shareholder grants you certain privileges, including the right to vote on issues affecting the operation of the condominium and the privilege of being elected to the council.

Like a business, the corporation is accountable to its "investors". It must be a viable company, keep a set of books, elect directors and respond to the shareholders' concerns. It's obviously in your best interest to find out everything you can about your condominium corporation. This way, you will have an informed voice in the operation of what will after all, be your home.

Some of the things you should look into are: the amount of the monthly maintenance fee; what the insurance is on the building and property; whether or not there will be any user charges for any of the common areas, i.e. a fitness room; how much money is in the contingency fund (is it enough for repairs depending on the age of the complex) and you should also see the financial statements.

## Obeying the Rules

Another area of responsibility of the condominium corporation is the establishment of by-laws. All condos have them. Usually, common sense dictates what they are, but you should also review these as they could affect your enjoyment of your new home. If you love cats, some by-laws restrict pets. Check this out before you and your feline friends take up residence.

Whatever the by-laws that are in existence, they can be changed. Each owner is entitled to vote on the issue and if enough animal lovers are in a complex, obviously that by-law would be changed. Remember too, that most by-laws are there to protect your investment. However, there may be some dissenting voices on just what is the best kind of protection.

## Is a Condo for You?

Birds do it. Bees do it. But is a condo right for you? The recent popularity of condominiums has resulted in a good supply of units

to choose from in most major cities. So the selection is bound to have the living requirements you want.

What you should be thinking about is the lifestyle. And for many, it's very agreeable. Eliminating upkeep and maintenance of a home frees up time for family or careers. Affordability means more people benefit from home ownership. Security is improved by proximity to neighbors. Many newer condos offer a variety of amenities such as fitness clubs, community centers, swimming pools etc. The social aspect is important to many as well. It's often a chance

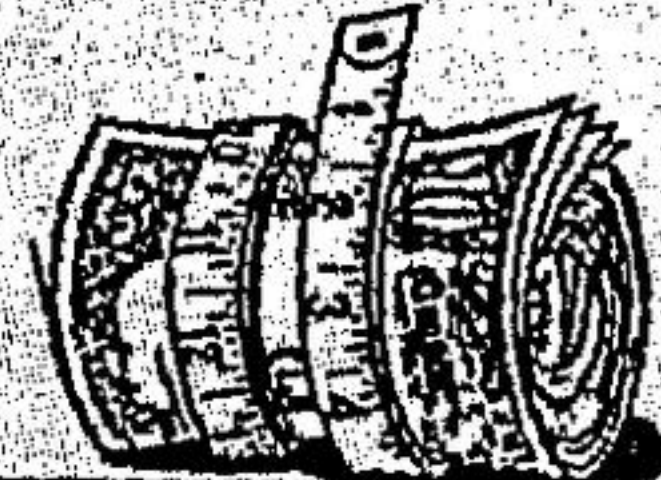
to meet others of similar background and taste.

On the other hand, some people rebel at the smallest rule, and condominiums do have by-laws. Conflicts could become a problem if personalities are too diverse. If management is on a volunteer basis, lack of experience could impact on residents.

However, if you've done your homework on the condominium you would like to live in and have weighed the pros and cons carefully, then you will find that condominium living can be an attractive alternative to conventional housing.

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## Duignan approves NDP stance

By BEN DUMMETT

The Herald

The province's tough stance con-

### Welcome home

The Partners of Goebelle MacAdam Alexander, Chartered Accountants, 37 Main Street South, Georgetown, are pleased to announce that Gary James Gillespie Hons. BMATH, C.A., has recently joined the firm as an Audit Manager. Gary is an honours graduate of the University of Waterloo Bachelor of Mathematics programme majoring in the accounting programme.

Gary, who has over five years experience in public accounting and obtained his designation in December 1989, joins other graduates from Georgetown District High School who have joined the firm in prior years.



GARY JAMES

cerning an increase to transfer payments is disturbing, yet necessary, says North-Halton MPP Noel Duignan.

The province recently announced transfer payments to municipalities, hospitals and school boards will only increase one per cent this year.

Mr. Duignan said he hoped for a three per cent increase in transfer payments.

Despite not receiving what he had hoped for, Mr. Duignan said he supports the province's announcement as a means of keeping the provincial deficit under control.

The provincial deficit is currently at \$11 billion as result of the government's announcement.

The local hospital and school board appear to be hardest hit by the province's announcement.

Bob Williams, Halton Board of Education Director, said service cuts will be required in response to the province's announcement, however, layoffs won't be necessary.

Where the cuts will take place, Mr. Williams couldn't say at this time.

The budgetary problems facing the board are evident in the fact that last year's provincial increase to transfer payments for education purposes was seven to eight per cent, Mr. Williams pointed out.

According to town Treasurer Ray King, the province's announcement won't have much effect on the town's 1992 budget.

The reason being, the amount of money the town receives in transfer payments is relatively small compared to its other revenue sources, he explained.

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