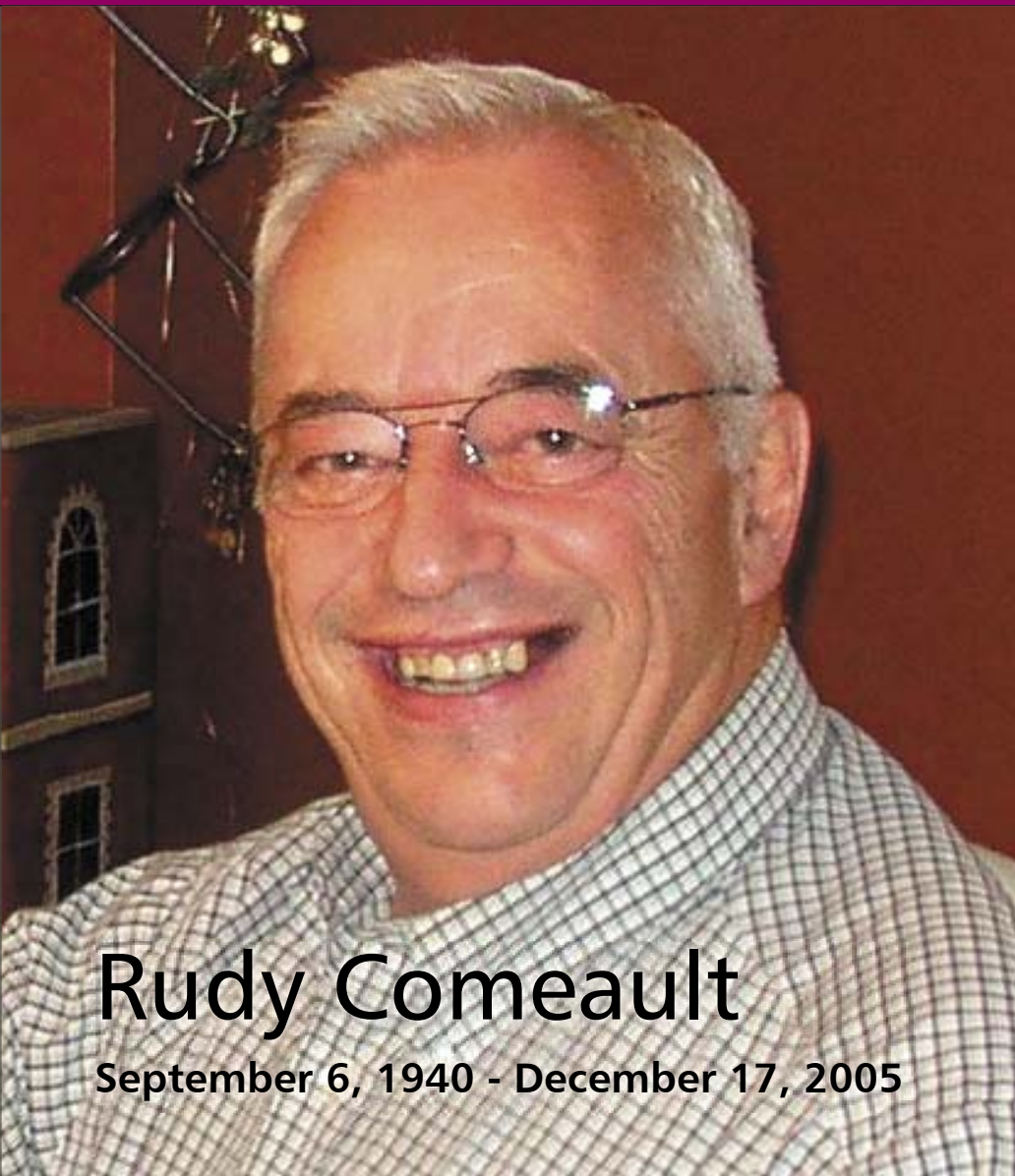


Newsbriefs

MANITOBA EDITION Spring 2006 – Volume 7, No. 1



Rudy Comeault

September 6, 1940 - December 17, 2005

So long dear friend...

We have lost a dear friend. Not just those of us who knew **Rudy Comeault** well, but anyone who lives in a housing co-op in Canada. He was a source of information and advice to anyone who asked and a fierce defender of co-op housing for over 30 years. He became a member of CHF Canada when our membership was so small we could meet in a hotel room! Now we hold our annual meetings of 700+ people in Convention Centres.

During his many years of volunteer service, Rudy received an Honorary Life Associate award from CHF Canada, and was a former President of the Federal Co-operative Housing Stabilization Fund, a position he held for two terms. [2] ►

2-3

Westboine Park

30 years later, Westboine Park takes stock of its past and considers the future by planning an assisted living facility for an aging membership.

3

Events

Mark your calendar for the Education Conference, Advisory Forum meetings, Networking Luncheons and Networking Evening in 2006.

4

Noteworthy

There are big changes planned for the 2006 CHF Canada AGM in London, including a one-step registration system. Check out why you won't want to miss it!



◀ [cover]

Rudy lived in **Village Canadien Co-op** for many years, and also managed **Westboine Park** and **Carpathia Housing Co-ops** for over 20 years. For the past two years, he was managing **Maurepas Village Housing Co-op** in Selkirk for a few hours per month, to help them with their financial record keeping. Rudy was also a workshop leader for CHF Canada and was the 'expert' in finances, governance, co-ops in difficulty, and membership terminations.

When Rudy retired in 2003, after his many years of service to the co-op housing sector, he was asked to take on a part-time position as Executive Director of the **Manitoba Cooperative Association**, the umbrella organization for all types of co-ops in the province. Rudy left this position in September 2005 to take on a full retirement at the age of 65.

An old proverb says "What is important is not the number of days in your life but the life in your days." Rudy filled each day of his short life to overflowing. He will be greatly missed by his friends and fellow co-operators from across the country. 🇨🇦

30 years at Westboine Park Housing Co-operative

Set among 17 acres of trees and open space along the Assiniboine River, **Westboine Park Housing Co-op** looks like a ski village. The first co-op board incorporated in 1975. They purchased the land from the local Shelmerdine Nursery, but members didn't start moving in until 1978. The co-op has 188 units in three-storey townhouses and an apartment block. The townhouses all have cedar siding with a wide variation of styles and layouts, with 35 different floor plans. Members share a large meeting hall for co-op activities or rent it out for private family events. Westboine Park's architect won a design award for his innovative building concepts.

Mel Willis, CHF Canada Director for Manitoba, is a long-time Westboine Park resident, and the co-op's Secretary-Treasurer. "It makes for a nice ambience outside, they built a nice recreation hall and saved a lot of money but unfortunately the insides could have been developed much better; we could have had more spacious rooms." Although many original Westboine members have moved away or died, some, like Willis and his family, still live in the co-op with their children who've grown up and now live in co-op townhouses of their own.

While a lot happens in 30 years, a few key issues stand out. When vacancy rates were high in Winnipeg, Westboine struggled. Located in the community of Charleswood, a wooded area of Winnipeg, it wasn't seen as a desirable location. At one time they had 20 empty [3] ▶

▶
Westboine Park's office and community hall could make way for a new assisted living facility to accommodate aging membership.

Top right: Variety is the spice of life at Westboine Park where 35 different floorplans define the co-op's 188 units in three-storey townhouses and an apartment block.





units and faced major financial crises. Now, because there has been no new social housing built in Winnipeg for over 15 years, and because of a tight housing market, Westboine Park no longer has a problem with vacancies. But they do continue to struggle with the expenses of an aging co-op.

In a reverse from the leaky co-op problems of British Columbia, Westboine discovered that cedar siding doesn't work well in the dry cold of Manitoba because it needs to be kept damp to keep its integrity. They've had to remove the siding from two units and replace it with stucco, but more need repairs. The units were also never insulated well for the weather. **Sandy Francis**, Administrative Assistant and staff with Westboine for over 20 years, explains.

"The vapour barrier was missing, and there was a lack of insulation in places; we fix one unit at a time when they come up, but there are 153 townhouses and about 20 different styles of units, so it's an ongoing thing. And the cost of these kinds of repairs has become quite expensive. But we've always had enough good leadership at Westboine, with people who had the co-op's best interests at heart."

Westboine is also working on a feasibility study to put in an assisted living facility for seniors and disabled people with a three-storey building in-fill. To do this they would tear down the existing office and community hall. They've applied for project development funding from the provincial government. At this point, people who get to the point where they need assisted living have had to leave the co-op. Willis likes the idea. "It's my concept that people should be able to be born, live and die in the same place if they want to. It may not sound very exciting in this day and age with travel being the way it is, but if you come back to your roots, you don't go too far wrong." ☺

events

Education Conference

What makes for a well-run co-op? Many times it's the skill and knowledge of the board, members and the staff. The CHF Canada – Manitoba Office is hosting our annual Education Conference on Saturday, **April 29, 2006** at the Victoria Inn in Winnipeg. Closer to the event we'll send out more detailed information with registration forms, workshop descriptions and cost.

Come share, learn and have fun with others from across the province! For further information, contact the CHF Canada Manitoba Office at 1-888-591-3301 or 989-5963 (in Winnipeg).

Manitoba Advisory Forum Meetings

The Advisory Forum of the CHF Canada Manitoba Office will meet in Winnipeg on:

- Saturday, **April 29** at 12:30 pm during the Education Conference
- Wednesday, **November 1**, in the evening

Networking Luncheons

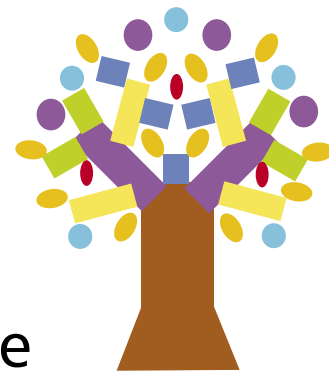
The CHF Canada Manitoba Office will host Networking luncheons from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm in Winnipeg on:

- Wednesday, **May 10**
- Wednesday, **October 18**

Networking Evening

The CHF Canada Manitoba Office will host an after-work Networking Evening in Winnipeg to celebrate the holiday season on Wednesday, **December 6**.

Contact the CHF Canada Manitoba Office at 1-888-591-3301 or 989-5963 (in Winnipeg) for further information.



CHF Canada AGM Why you'll want to be there



Publication information

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Plan to attend the 2006 CHF Canada AGM in London, June 8 – 10. For 2006, big changes are in store – all aimed at more convenience, less rushing around, and more opportunities to meet and share stories with fellow delegates.

- A one-step registration system so that co-ops get one meeting package – instead of two – to register participants, staff, buy tickets and so on. Unlike last year, this will contain both meeting and workshop information – all at once!
- No pre-registration at all for workshops in the Member Education Conference.
- To make your AGM less hectic, lunch will be provided on Saturday for all participants, right next to the business meeting in the London Convention Centre. The cost of the lunch will be included in the AGM registration fee.
- A more relaxed business meeting, with plenty of time to consider members' resolutions.
- More seats at the popular networking lunch on Friday.
- A longer "Meet the Candidates" session.
- The Saturday dinner and dance will feature a quiet area, so that members who want to can get together for a final conversation.

We've made these changes to keep registration fees reasonable. Interested? Visit the AGM Information Centre at www.chfc.coop/agm2006.

And get ready for 2007

CHF Canada's 2007 annual meeting will take place right here in Manitoba – June 7 – 9 in Winnipeg. It will be a chance to show off our co-op homes to the rest of Canada's housing co-ops. With over 700 people involved, the AGM takes lots of planning and needs lots of local volunteers. Interested? Call Jocelyn Peifer Ross at (204) 989-5963 (1-888-591-3301 toll free.) ☎

Manitoba Regional Director election

CHF Canada's Board includes 16 directors – 10 regional representatives, one representative of the Aboriginal community, and five directors elected at large. The at-large elections take place at the CHF Canada AGM, and are one of the highlights of the meeting, when members choose people to represent them at the national Board table.

CHF Canada members in Manitoba have chosen to elect their Regional Director at a meeting held in the region. That election will take place on April 29, at the Manitoba Advisory Forum meeting, held over the lunch hour during our annual Education Conference.

Nomination forms are available on CHF Canada's website in the AGM section of our website at www.chfc.coop. You can find information on what's involved and the role of directors there too. Or contact Nick Sidor, Director, Corporate Affairs at 1-800-465-2752, ext.231 or by e-mail at nsidor@chfc.ca.