



NATIONAL EDITION

Newsbriefs

Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada

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CHF Canada meets Minister Gagliano Agency campaign moves forward

CHF Canada's campaign for a new national co-op program administration agency took another step forward on August 30 when CHF Canada representatives and members of our Manitoba lobby committee met with **Alfonso Gagliano**, the federal minister responsible for CMHC. "It was a very positive week," said **Christopher Wilson**, CHF Canada's manager of National Political Affairs. "We urged the minister to start talks on the agency as quickly as possible. He promised to put this issue high on the agenda of the upcoming meeting of federal, provincial and territorial housing ministers. This is a very important step in our campaign to ensure long-term security for housing co-operatives." The group also asked for help for leaky co-ops and the Minister was very interested in the photos of those co-ops that we showed him.

The Manitoba contingent—CHF Canada president **Wes Hosler**, **Rudy Comeault**, **Sandy Francis** and **Joan Skeene**, and Manitoba lobby co-ordinator **Roxane Hutcheson**—presented the minister with a small Inuit carving to thank him for agreeing to the return of Manitoba co-ops to federal administration. The group also had an opportunity to meet with a number of MPs that have been supportive of our national campaign.

For more information on the co-op sector's proposed administrative agency, see the bulletin included with this issue of *Newsbriefs* ★

You set the direction for CHF Canada Call for resolutions—2001 annual meeting

Each year, members set the direction of CHF Canada by passing resolutions at the annual meeting. Now is the time for your co-op to start thinking about issues that are important to you. Do you want the national federation to provide a new service, address a political issue, or work on a particular project that is important to housing co-ops? Start by developing a resolution for the CHF Canada AGM and getting the support of other delegates in your region.

see **You set the direction** on page 2

The resolutions deadline is December 31, 2000. So start thinking about it now. You can use the form that comes with this issue of *Newsbriefs* to send in your resolution. Or call 1-800-465-2752 for more information.

Since the merger of CHF Canada with the Ontario provincial federation in 1996, housing co-ops in Ontario attend two meetings, the national CHF Canada annual general meeting and the annual meeting of Ontario members. Ontario co-ops can submit resolutions for both meetings.

Next year's meeting is June 5-10, 2001 in Victoria, B.C. ★

Serving our members

Meet your president

CHF Canada has lots of hard-working volunteers that direct your federation between annual meetings. We'll be running profiles of the CHF Canada board of directors over the next few

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issues, so you can learn a bit more about the people representing you on the board. In this issue we introduce you to our president, **Wes Hosler**.

Wes Hosler has been a member of Carpathia Housing Co-operative in Winnipeg for 26 years. He first heard about co-operative housing when he graduated from nursing school and needed to find a place for his young family to live.

"We'd been living in residence while I was at school and we had to move after I graduated," Hosler says. "I was familiar with agricultural co-ops but I hadn't heard about co-op housing. We saw a notice in the paper and went to see Carpathia. The co-op was brand new and I liked what I saw. It seemed to be a nice, safe area and the kind of small community I was used to."

The co-op was so new they were just starting up committees. "There was lots of work to do," he says, "and I was encouraged to run for the board." Hosler thought it was important to be involved with other co-ops. Carpathia became a CHF Canada member in 1979, and a number of other Manitoba co-ops became members at the same time. The co-ops wanted to have access to education in the region. Hosler took CHF Canada's instructor training and became a member of the education committee.

In the early 1980s, the CHF Canada board was restructured. Up until that point directors had all been elected at large. When the membership approved a regional board structure, Hosler was elected as the director for Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Over the years he has filled both regional and at-large positions on the board, served on the finance committee and as treasurer. This is his fourth year as president.

The Hoslers, including a son and two daughters, are a committed co-op family. Wes's wife Dallas has also been on the Carpathia board, as has their oldest daughter. Both daughters stayed in the co-op when they grew up and are now raising a new generation of housing co-op members.

Hosler says its important for younger co-op members to come forward and get involved with

CHF Canada. "Some of us have been around for a long time. I think it's something that gets in your blood. You start building something and you want to see it through to its conclusion. But there's always something new."

He says it's important for members to be active in CHF Canada. "What's made CHF Canada strong is that it's member-driven. We have to continue to be innovative and far-sighted. We can't take a narrow view of anything." ★

Come to the Saskatchewan education conference

CHF Canada invites all Saskatchewan housing co-op members to an education conference in Saskatoon on Saturday, October 14. The conference is an all-day event, from 9–5 at the Saskatoon Inn. A wine and cheese reception the night before will give everyone a chance to network with other co-op members. Thanks to HB Group Insurance Management, Primus Canada and Sprint Canada for sponsoring this reception. For more information on the education conference, contact **Pat McClain** toll-free at 1-877-533-2667 or E-mail pmcclain@chfc.ca. ★

Help in working with your staff

CHF Canada is pleased to announce the publication of *Evaluating Staff*. This guide will help co-ops and staff do effective evaluations and be good employers. And it will help staff improve the way they work, building partnerships with their co-op employers. Employing staff is a big responsibility for housing co-ops. We need to handle this responsibility carefully because how we act affects the lives of others.

The guide talks about important aspects of the co-op - staff relationship, such as employment contracts, job descriptions and work plans. It looks at the value of team-building and feedback between evaluations. And it discusses the special challenges that face volunteer employers. The

guide gives a step-by-step evaluation process and sample forms to use or adapt to the needs of your co-op. The guide is available in English and French from the Co-op Housing Bookstore. ★

More help for co-op staff and boards

You, *Your Staff and the Law* is a guide for boards and staff on provincial employment rules. English guides are available for British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario. A French guide is available for Ontario. The 2000 guides are now available.

Managing Arrears is a useful resource for staff dealing with housing charge arrears. Instructor's notes for a workshop on arrears are available for CHF Canada instructors and federations.

Housing Co-ops as Employers offers practical ideas to help boards, members and staff work together.

Work is progressing on the development of a Model Workplace Harassment By-law. The model by-law and a short guide will be available by the new year.

For more information on any of the above publications or other resource materials, contact **Karla Skoutajan** toll free at 1-800-465-2752, ext. 241 or by E-mail at kskoutajan@chfc.ca. ★

Strengthening co-ops in Nova Scotia

CHF Canada and the co-op sector in Nova Scotia continue to develop strong relations with the provincial government. CHF staff and regional director **Susan Wells**, together with the Co-operative Housing Federation of Nova Scotia and co-op managers, are all working together to assist co-ops in the province that are experiencing operating difficulties. One creative solution being explored to build stronger co-ops in the future is a

see **Strengthening co-ops** continued on page 4

merger of Section 95 co-ops in Yarmouth. Members of four co-ops there are working with CHF Canada and the province towards the creation of one co-op that will focus on building a strong foundation for the future. Co-op members have been meeting weekly throughout the summer. We wish the co-ops all the best in this bold initiative. ★

See our new Web site

CHF Canada has launched our new, redesigned Web site. The site also includes the first part of a password-protected area for CHF Canada members, including discussion groups. Our new site can be found at www.chfc.ca. The work was done with the help of Baseline Type and Graphics, a Vancouver worker co-op. Baseline's main staff person on the project is **David Lach**, a member of Quebec Manor housing co-op in Vancouver. David had a very busy summer, as he was also working part-time as acting Executive Director of the Co-operative Housing Federation of BC.

Two students assisted with site as well over the summer. **Sarah Robinson**, a communications student at Simon Fraser University worked in our Vancouver office. Sarah is a member of Broadview Housing Co-op in Vancouver. **Simon Nguyen**, a software engineering student at the University of Ottawa, was hired in our Ottawa office. Thanks to Human Resources Development Canada for the funding that made it possible for us to hire these two talented and enthusiastic young people. ★

Does your co-op have a Web site?

Send us your co-op's URL and we'll add a link to your site from ours. Contact **Merrilee Robson** by phone at our Vancouver office or E-mail mrobson@chfc.ca. And you may want to add a link from your site to ours at www.chfc.ca. ★

Information for co-ops

Filing Your GST/HST Returns By Phone

The following information was sent to us by Canada Customs and Revenue Agency:

A fast, free, and easy way to file your Goods and Services / Harmonized Sales Tax (GST/HST) returns is coming your way. Beginning May 1, 2000, GST/HST TELEFILE will be offered in the provinces of Newfoundland and Labrador, and New Brunswick. The Canada Customs and Revenue Agency will pilot this new service allowing selected business clients to file their GST/HST returns that have a nil balance or refund of \$10,000.00 or less, by telephone.

GST/HST TELEFILE is a secure and confidential service that is being offered to business clients on an invitation only basis. Registrants must have at least a one year GST/HST filing history, among other criteria, to be selected to use the service. If you are selected you will be provided with a GST/HST TELEFILE Access Code, which will be preprinted on the personalized GST/HST return that is mailed to you.

Filing your GST/HST return with GST/HST TELEFILE is as easy as making a 1-800 phone call. To use this service you must have the use of a push-button (tone-signaling) phone with touch-tone service. Then all you need to do is simply complete your GST/HST return and call the toll-free number. From there, you follow the automated voice directions to enter the information from your return using the telephone keypad. GST/HST TELEFILE confirms all of your calculations. When you have finished entering all your data, and you indicate that you want to file your GST/HST return, GST/HST TELEFILE gives you a confirmation number.

The GST/HST TELEFILE service is available six days a week. From Monday to Friday, the hours of operation are 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., and on Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. local time in the participating provinces. GST/HST

TELEFILE is not available on Sundays or Federal Government Statutory Holidays.

For more information on GST/HST TELEFILE, visit our web site at

www.cra-adrc.gc.ca/gsthst-telefile or call us at:

1-877-322-7849 (English)

1-877-322-7852 (French)

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Publications on sale

The Co-op Housing Bookstore is pleased to offer a fall special of three top-selling publications, *Dealing With Conflict*, *Better Meetings* and *Effective Elections*. Buy all three before November 3, 2000 for \$24, a savings of \$16!

Had any conflict in your co-op this summer? *Dealing With Conflict* is one of the Co-op Housing Bookstore's best selling items. It has helped many co-op communities, members and staff deal with conflict effectively. This book (regularly \$16) is on sale for \$10.

Better Meetings and *Effective Elections* are two other publications that can help your co-op avoid unnecessary conflict. If you buy *Better Meetings* (\$14), the Bookstore will include *Effective Elections*, a value of \$10, at no extra charge.

This sale offer is good until November 3, 2000. To order these publications, see the flyer included with this issue. ★

Rooftops Canada helps Turkish rebuilding

Last year an earthquake struck Turkey, killing over 127,000 people. One year later, the people of Turkey are rebuilding and taking steps to prevent a similar tragedy in the future. Poor quality construction and lack of inspection and enforcement

of building codes have been cited as reasons for the high death toll. Rooftops Canada, the co-op housing movement's international development organization, has been working with local organizations and municipal officials in Turkey to improve building practices to make housing safer.

As part of this project, a Canadian delegation, with representatives from local municipalities, trade unions, the co-op housing sector and CMHC, participated in a workshop with their counterparts in Istanbul. The workshop focused on strategies to improve cooperation and communication among stakeholders involved in the building and planning process. **Michael Shapcott**, Manager of Communications and Government Relations for CHF Canada's Ontario Region brought a Canadian perspective to discussions on the role that housing and community groups could play in postearthquake programs and in disaster mitigation in the future.

Looking for further information or opportunities for involvement? Contact Rooftops Canada for copies of our most recent annual report or a set of colourful posters for your coop. T-shirts are for sale for \$15.00. Join the network of volunteers active in Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Moncton. Contact Carol Mundle, Education Coordinator at (416) 366-1445, or Email: carol@rooftops.ca. ★

Are you interested in volunteering overseas?

Would you like to share your skills with a co-op in a different country? The Canadian Co-operative Association is adding to its list of skilled co-operative and credit union volunteers who are interested in worldwide co-operative development. If you are interested in sharing your knowledge and skills to help with development projects in Africa, Central and South America, Asia or Ukraine, please contact Laurie Tennian by E-mail at laurie@coopcca.com. Get more information on the CCA web site at www.coopcca.com. ★

Ontario sets timetable for download plans

The Ontario government's plans to reform provincial social housing programs and download them to municipalities are back on the fast track. The Hon. **Tony Clement**, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, made a major policy announcement in mid-August, then gave more details in a nine-page letter sent to co-ops, non-profits and municipalities a few days later.

About 21,000 households in co-ops under provincial administration are affected by the transfer plans. Federally funded co-ops are not affected.

"The government seems finally to have a firm timetable," says **Joyce Morris**, President of CHF Canada's Ontario Council. "Provincial legislation could come as early as October. The download is expected to be finished in about 18 months."

"The reform and download plans will have a big impact on provincial co-ops," says Morris. "We now know the broad outlines of the government's plans. Some parts of the announcement are encouraging. The minister has promised co-ops fixed funding, significant protection for existing rent-geared-to-income levels and more autonomy. We have big problems with other parts of the plan, such as the requirement for co-ops to share half of any operating surplus with municipalities. But we won't know where we stand overall until we find out more of the key details."

As the province's plans unfold, CHF Canada's Ontario Region is continuing to fight to protect co-ops. The Ontario Council met with Minister Clement in late August to put forward co-ops' concerns. Co-ops will also have a representative on each of the working groups the minister sets up to do detailed work on reform.

Many individual co-ops are also speaking out. Over the summer, more than 130 co-ops and co-op members wrote to Minister Clement and other MPPs, asking for public hearings on the planned

legislation. They have all heard that co-ops want a say on the legislation. "We think a final push could bring the minister to agree to hearings," says Morris.

The *Bulletin on Social Housing Reform*, sent to provincial co-ops in late August has more on reform and downloading. For more information, call **Harvey Cooper** or **Michael Shapcott** at CHF Ontario Region at 1-800-268-2537 (in Toronto, 416-366-1711). E-mail: hcooper@chfc.ca or mshapcott@chfc.ca. Or check our web site at www.chfc.ca. ★

CMHC appoints new president

The Minister Responsible for CMHC, the Hon. **Alfonso Gagliano**, has announced the appointment of **Jean-Claude Villiard** as President and CEO of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. The appointment is effective October 23, for a five-year term. Villiard is currently based in Washington, D.C., where he works at the World Bank. ★

Co-ops still leaking

With winter and the rainy season fast approaching, more than 40 B.C. housing co-ops are still waiting for help from CMHC in order to fix their leaky buildings. The Co-operative Housing Federation of BC and CHF Canada are working with these co-ops to put pressure on CMHC to act quickly. CHF Canada's Executive Director **Alexandra Wilson** and National Government Relations Officer **Louise MacNaughton** met in August with two CMHC vice-presidents and an assistant to the minister responsible for CMHC. Several possible solutions for co-ops unable to afford conventional loans were discussed at the meeting. Meanwhile co-ops continue to lobby their MPs. Two Vancouver co-ops, Alder Bay and False Creek, have now received second mortgage loan approvals from CMHC. It remains to be seen how long the other co-ops will have to wait for help.

For more information, call CHF/BC at (604) 879-5111 or contact Nicholas Gazzard at ngazzard@chfc.ca or Louise MacNaughton at lmacnaughton@chfc.ca. ★

All the housing news

For the latest information on housing advocacy in Canada, visit the Housing Again Web site. The web site address is <http://www.housingagain.web.net>. ★

People and places

Thom Armstrong moves to CHF/BC

Thom Armstrong has resigned as CHF Canada's Director, Corporate Affairs to take on new challenges as the executive director of the Co-operative Housing Federation of BC.

Thom joined CHF Canada 10 years ago and many of our members know him from the active role he has played at each AGM. He has also been responsible for CHF Canada's membership development, communications, external relations and commercial services. Prior to that, Thom worked in co-op housing development in Saskatchewan and Ontario.

Thom's calm and rational approach to difficult issues and his extensive knowledge of the Canadian housing co-op movement will be missed by his many friends at CHF Canada.

The CHF/BC board is thrilled to welcome Thom to British Columbia. CHF/BC President **Gary Panagiotidis** says, "We were very pleased to attract such a highly qualified individual to the position." ★

Visit CHF Canada on the Web
www.chfc.ca

More staff changes

There have been other staff changes at CHF Canada. With Thom's departure, **Linda Stephenson** will take on more responsibility for the annual meeting operations and will be responsible for the development and delivery of our group insurance programs. We wish **Patricia Muller**, our Co-ordinator, Information Systems, good luck as she takes on the challenge of her own consulting business. And our best wishes go to **Danielle Leury**, our Program Co-ordinator, who has taken a one-year leave of absence to further her education, and to **Catherine Lee**, who has left our accounting staff.

Their departure, and the retirement of **Ursula Kieley** in May have led to new opportunities for other staff. **Louise Briglio**, who has been working as administrative assistant in our Corporate Affairs division, has been hired as Co-ordinator, Information Systems and Commercial Services. **Renée Parisien** has joined CHF Canada as our new full-time Administrative Assistant, Sector Development. And **Salam Kawadri**, whom many members know from her friendly voice on the phone at our Ottawa office, will provide accounting support and take on responsibility for the AGM bookstore. Meanwhile, **Eric Bailey** has rejoined CHF Canada as a part-time government relations co-ordinator for our national campaign in Ontario. Congratulations, everyone, and good luck in your new jobs. ★

New Nova Scotia federation

The formation of the Nova Scotia Association of Housing Co-operatives Ltd. means that Nova Scotia now has two federations. The new federation, which has met the CHF Canada requirements for membership and now joined the national federation, is meeting in September to elect its first officers. ★

Co-ops join gay pride parade

An enthusiastic group of CHF/BC volunteers participated in Vancouver's Gay Pride Parade on August 6. The group decorated CHF/BC director **Wayne Callaghan's** truck with a cut-out picture of a house, as well as the CHF/BC banner and the banner of CHF Canada's Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Transgendered caucus. **Tony Legare**, CHF Canada's BC regional director, said, "We were very well-received and we had a great time." Participants handed out pamphlets and buttons to the crowd. This year's parade was led off by BC Premier **Ujjal Dosanjh** and featured a surprise appearance by long-time Vancouver city councillor **George Puil** in drag. ★

Happy 10th anniversary to Payuk Inter Tribal Housing Co-op

Payuk Inter Tribal Housing Co-operative celebrated its 10th anniversary on June 2.

Situated in Winnipeg, the 42-unit housing cooperative is Manitoba's first and only housing co-operative built under the post-1985 Urban Native Housing Program. In another first, the members of Payuk used their articles of incorporation to establish the cooperative as a drug and alcohol-free zone.

A Pow-Wow with singers, hoop dancers and performances by native entertainers, including the Summer Bear Dance Group, highlighted the anniversary celebrations. There were magicians and face painters for the children, and a barbecue for the members and guests.

Wes Hosler, president of CHF Canada presented a plaque to **Mike Guimond**, president of the cooperative, on behalf of the CHF Canada's Manitoba office. The day closed with the cutting of a huge tenth-anniversary cake. ★

Contact the Golden Horseshoe

The new E-mail address for the Golden Horseshoe Co-operative Housing Federation is ghchf@primus.ca. ★

New staff at CHFNS

The Co-operative Housing Federation of Nova Scotia has hired **Lynn Drinovz** as their Co-ordinator. Lynn is a member of a Halifax Co-op and has been involved with the federation for the past six years in many capacities. In June of this year Lynn graduated from the Nova Scotia Community College with a Certificate in Business Information Technology, she will be staffing the federation office 15 hours per week. CHF/NS has a new E-mail address as well. Contact them at chfns@chebucto.ns.ca ★

Come to the Co-op Fair

Housing co-ops in mainland British Columbia are invited to the Co-op Fair. Co-sponsored by CHF Canada and the Co-operative Housing Federation of BC, the event takes place on Sunday, October 1, from 1-4 pm, at the Westminster Club, 713 Columbia Street, New Westminster, B.C. Bring the whole family for music, door prizes, children's activities, and a chance to learn about the services your federations and other organizations can provide to your co-op. For more information, call **Pat McClain** at our Vancouver office, (604) 879-4116 or E-mail pmclain@chfc.ca. ★

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For information, call toll-free
1-877-885-9961