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# Newsbriefs

NATIONAL EDITION

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## NEWS FLASH

### New Secretary of State

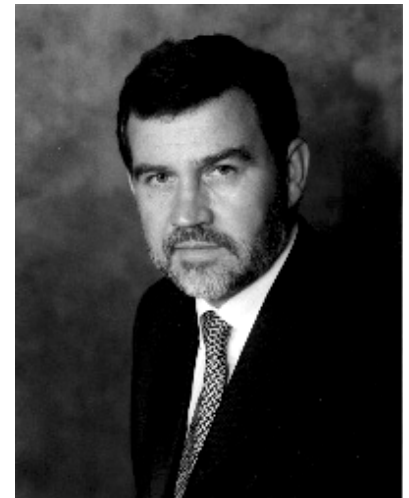
Steve Mahoney, MP for Mississauga West, has been named Secretary of State for selected Crown Corporations, including Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). CHF Canada welcomes the appointment of Mahoney, who has shown a strong commitment to housing issues.

CETTE PUBLICATION EST DISPONIBLE EN FRANÇAIS.

## Get an international perspective on co-op housing

### Hear guest speaker David Rodgers on co-op housing in Britain

Members attending CHF Canada's annual general meeting in Halifax will have a unique opportunity to learn more about housing co-ops in another country. **David Rodgers**, founder and executive director of Britain's **CDS Co-operatives** will be the special guest speaker.



CDS Co-operatives is the largest co-operative housing service agency in London and southern England. It provides services to 80 housing co-ops representing 3,000 homes. David has been a key player in developing the co-op housing movement in Britain.

The International Perspectives seminar – on Friday, June 6 at 9 a.m. – will provide insight into the history and development of co-op housing in Britain. On Saturday, June 7, David's keynote address on the revitalization of the co-operative movement in Britain will give us new ideas for the Canadian housing co-op movement. These events are just two of the highlights of CHF Canada's AGM, June 4-7 in Halifax, Nova Scotia. For more information, visit the AGM Information Centre on our Web site at <http://members.chfc.ca/eng/pages/agm.asp>, or call your nearest CHF Canada office. 🏠

**Progress on national agency**

Federal housing co-ops in B.C., Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and P.E.I. are looking forward to the day their programs will be administered by a new co-op program agency.

CHF Canada and CMHC have been discussing the scope of the work the agency will do, the benefits the agency will provide to both co-ops and government, and the agency's proposed budget.

The CHF Canada Board has appointed a reference group to advise staff and consult with members during this process. They are:

- **Savo Djuretic**, President, Co-operative Housing Federation of BC;
- **Joanne Mick**, Director at-large, CHF Canada; Executive Director, Southern Alberta Co-operative Housing Association;
- **Tom Clement**, Executive Director, Co-operative Housing Federation of Toronto;
- **René Daoust**, President, CHF Canada; Directeur Général, La Fédération des coopératives d'habitation montréalaises;
- **Jim Clow**, Regional Director for PEI, CHF Canada.

For more information, visit the Members' Network section of our Web site at <http://members.chfc.ca/eng/pages/agency.asp>, call **Merrilee Robson** at 1-877-533-2667, ext. 122, or e-mail [mrobson@chfc.ca](mailto:mrobson@chfc.ca).

A resolution on Agency negotiating principles is being put forward at the annual meeting. The resolutions package has been mailed to each member and you can find a copy on our Web site at [http://members.chfc.ca/eng/pages/agm\\_Res3.asp](http://members.chfc.ca/eng/pages/agm_Res3.asp). A workshop on the proposed agency is scheduled as part of CHF Canada's Member Education Forum in Halifax.

# Beyond the Valley of the Glamazons – don't miss it!

CHF Canada's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered (LGBT) Caucus is once again organizing the Mr and Ms CHF event. The fourth annual Mr and Ms CHF event will take place during *Beyond the Valley of The Glamazons*, a spectacular fundraising event on Friday, June 6 at Club NRG, 2099 Gottingen Street, in Halifax. Join co-op housing members as we bid a fond farewell to Mr and Ms CHF 2002, **Arthur Ittis** and **The Lady Butterfly** (aka Carol Fishburn and Amanda Yetman), and crown a new Mr and Ms CHF 2003. Application forms have been posted in CHF Canada's electronic discussion group at <http://members.chfc.ca/eng/pages/forum.asp>. You can get more details by contacting [tabaslotbproductions@hotmail.com](mailto:tabaslotbproductions@hotmail.com).

As well as being a fun evening, the event is also a fundraiser. This year the organization selected to receive the donations is the Family Pride Camping Association, a Halifax non-profit group. **Jason Moore**, one of the hosts of *Beyond the Valley of the Glamazons* says, "the Family Pride Camping Association is dedicated to providing positive and safe recreational experiences in an environment where the children of LGBT parents can be openly proud of their families, have an opportunity to socialize and play with other children living in families like their own, free of ridicule and social stigma." Donations will be shared with the **Co-operative Housing Federation of Toronto's** Charitable Fund, which is used to help members in need and expand the education program.

Come and join in the fun! The evening will be hosted by **Morgan James** (Ms CHF 2000) and features a mix of the best local and national talent. This promises to be an event not to be missed! 🏠



The Lady Butterfly (Amanda Yetman) and Arthur Ittis (Carol Fishburn) celebrate as they are announced as Mr and Ms CHF at the 2002 annual meeting.



# Your co-op and the Personal Information Protection Law

By Diane Saibil

Is your co-op ready for the PIPED Act? The name is short for the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*. It is a federal law designed to protect the privacy of personal information.

Personal information is any information about an identifiable individual, whether it is written, electronic or verbal. As of January 2004, the law applies to any organization in the course of commercial activity.

Housing co-ops collect a great deal of personal information from applicants and residents. Some examples are:

- household composition,
- income,
- employment,
- health and special needs information.

The *PIPED Act* will regulate all activities that involve collecting and keeping personal information. Co-ops will need to review these

activities to make sure they are in line with this law.

The law sets out:

- what personal information you may collect from applicants and residents
- the co-op's accountability – you must explain how and when you will use the information and get consent from the individual
- when you may share the information with others
- how long you may keep the information
- the need to keep the information secure
- the rights of individuals with respect to personal information you have about them
- a complaints process regarding personal information.

The law is based on ten principles of personal information protection. The general theme of these principles is that you may only collect, use and disclose personal information if you have a good reason to do so. Good reasons

include the need to fulfill legal obligations and the need to ensure good management in your co-op.

The law requires you to have:

- a personal information protection policy,
- someone assigned to ensure that you follow the law and to receive complaints, and
- a procedure to deal with complaints about how you handle personal information.

The Privacy Commissioner of Canada regulates the *PIPED Act*.

CHF Canada has prepared a practical guide to the *PIPED Act*. The guide includes:

- what is and is not covered by the Act,
- what steps your co-op can take to bring your policies and practices in line with the law,
- a sample personal information protection policy.

The Co-op Housing Bookstore will be publishing the guide in time for the AGM in Halifax. Visit the AGM Store to purchase your copy.

Diane Saibil is a consultant with a long history of involvement in co-operative and non-profit housing. She has been looking into the *PIPED Act's* impact on housing co-ops for a number of months and will lead a workshop on this topic at the upcoming AGM.

Ontario-program co-ops that have been transferred to their municipal service manager have additional standards for the collection and sharing of personal information. Regulation 368/01 of the Social Housing Reform Act (SHRA) sets those standards. Therefore this guide will not apply to Ontario-program co-ops.

# Regional update

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## NEWFOUNDLAND

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### New faces at CHANAL

There have been some changes at **CHANAL**, the Co-operative Housing Association of Newfoundland and Labrador. The federation's long-time staff person, **Dave Adams** has left after 11 years of service to housing co-ops. **David Boyde** has taken on the financial management services for member co-ops and the bookkeeping system has been upgraded. The federation has also hired **Rosalind Langer** as the new Co-ordinator, Co-operative Management Services. CHANAL's annual meeting, April 25-26, attracted over 25 people. CHF Canada's regional director **David Kelly** gave a presentation on the Canadian Co-operative Association's new orientation resource, *The Co-operative Advantage in a Global Economy*.

## NEW BRUNSWICK

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### BRUNCH holds annual meeting

**BRUNCH**, the co-op housing association in New Brunswick, held its annual meeting April 26 at **Wright Street Housing Co-operative**, in Saint John. Members discussed CHF Canada's annual meeting. Regional director **Ken Elliott** covered each of the resolutions and discussed the Governance Review process in detail. BRUNCH is approaching New Brunswick's Ministry of

Family and Community Services for a grant to help smaller co-ops attend CHF Canada's AGM.

## NOVA SCOTIA

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### Farewell to CHFNS

The **Co-operative Housing Federation of Nova Scotia** closed its doors on April 30. CHF Canada is providing services to Nova Scotia co-ops through the new office in Halifax and members are now active in CHF Canada activities. Former CHFNS Board member **John MacDonnell (Kabuki Housing Co-op)** is the Atlantic representative on CHF Canada's Governance Review Task Force. He has also joined the new Nova Scotia Advisory Committee, along with **Tammy Brunet (Fresh Start Housing Co-operative)**, **Terry Dalby (Privateers)**, **Charlie Paddock (Four Corners)** and **Avril Holden (North Harbour)**. **Nancy Landon**, another member of the former CHFNS Board, is now active on the local committee planning the Halifax AGM.

## QUEBEC

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### CQCH announces new group buying partners

The **Confédération québécoise des coopératives d'habitation** (CQCH) has announced three new partners in their group-buying program. Member co-ops can save money on paint from **Bétonel**, water heaters from **Hydrosolution**

and hardware and other supplies from **RONA**.

## ONTARIO

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### Toronto public housing becomes Atkinson Co-op

Congratulations to **Atkinson Housing Co-operative** in Toronto, which successfully converted 410 units of public housing to form a co-op. The co-op is named after the late **Sonny Atkinson**, the former President of the **Alexandra Park Residents Association**, who launched the co-op project almost 10 years ago. The credit for the conversion goes to the determination of the tenant leaders in the Alexandra Park community and the dedication of **Mark Goldblatt**, CHF Canada, and **Tom Clement**, Executive Director of the **Co-operative Housing Federation of Toronto**. Funding for the conversion came from volunteer fundraising efforts. This is the first conversion of a traditional, 100 per cent low-income public housing project in Canada. For more information, contact Mark Goldblatt at 1-800-465-2752, ext. 222, or e-mail [mgoldblatt@chfc.ca](mailto:mgoldblatt@chfc.ca).

## ALBERTA

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### Information, discussion focus of annual meetings

Both Alberta federations held their annual meetings in April. At the April 5 meeting of **SACHA**, **Isabel Evans**, CHF Canada's director at-large gave a presentation about

B.C.'s leaky co-op crisis. Co-op members had a chance to talk about CHF Canada's governance review and other issues at the **NACHA** meeting in Edmonton.

## Congratulations

**Emil van der Poorten**, CHF Canada's Alberta Regional Director, received a Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal from the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta on April 17 for "outstanding contributions to the community." Emil was nominated by his MLA, **Laurie Blakeman**.

## BRITISH COLUMBIA

### Lore Krill wins design award


Congratulations to **Lore Krill Housing Co-operative** in Vancouver. The co-op's design won the Lieutenant Governor's Certificate of Merit for architect **Gregory Henriquez**. Co-op member **Darren Kitchen** and **Stuart Thomas**, from the new co-op's resource group **Terra Housing Consultants**, joined the architect on stage to receive the award at the Architectural Institute of B.C. ceremony on May 3.



(left) Patricia Matthews, chair of CHF Canada's Governance Review Task Force, and Isabel Evans and Joanne Mick, both CHF Canada directors at large, outside SACHA's new offices in Calgary. (right) Marilyn Calkins and baby Maisy enjoy all the activity at the NACHA annual meeting in Edmonton.

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## *Federations Committee looks at services to co-ops*

At the Federations Committee meeting in Ottawa, March 1-2, the Committee adopted a *Core Federation Services Model*. The Committee thought that it would be useful to establish a minimum set of services that housing co-ops can expect to receive, regardless of their location in Canada. You can ask your federation for a copy of the document or you can download it at <http://members.chfc.ca/eng/pages/federations-ctee.asp>. 

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## *Funds for staff development*

We are pleased to announce that both the **Co-operative Housing Federation of Toronto** and **CoAction Staff Association** will receive grants in 2003 for co-op staff training projects. CHFT's project includes the development of a resource about office management. CoAction's project will result in a new resource about building security for co-op administrative and maintenance staff.

The Co-op Staff Development Fund is part of CHF Canada's Shared Revenue Program. Funds are granted annually to projects that provide training for co-op housing staff and benefit as many of CHF Canada's member housing co-ops as possible. The deadline for applications for 2004 funding is September 30, 2003. For further information please contact **Karla Skoutajan** at [kskoutajan@chfc.ca](mailto:kskoutajan@chfc.ca) or 1.800.465.2752 (230.2291 in Ottawa) extension 241. 

## CHF Canada resources on seniors issues

The average age of housing co-op members is increasing, reflecting the general trend towards an older population in Canada. This means more members over 65 years of age, and increasingly more members over 75. The housing needs of older members are often quite different than those of families or younger singles. Seniors may need physical changes to their units to allow them to continue to live safely. And as seniors age, they need to know where to find community resources that can support their continued independent living.

Anticipating this trend a number of years ago, CHF Canada began studying the needs of older members and developing resources to help housing co-ops meet these changing needs.

We put together these guides, which are available from the Co-op Housing Bookstore ([www.coophousing.com](http://www.coophousing.com); 658 Danforth Avenue, Suite 306, Toronto):

- *Aging Together, Aging in Place (video and guide)*
- *Seniors Co-ops: Making them work, keeping them strong*
- *Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia: The challenge for housing co-ops*

You can find CHF Canada's Diversity in Action leaflet on seniors on CHF Canada's Web site at [http://www.chfc.ca/eng/chf/about\\_2\\_3\\_1.htm](http://www.chfc.ca/eng/chf/about_2_3_1.htm).

We're enclosing a copy of a poster on statement of principle for seniors and housing co-ops with this issue of Newsbriefs. In the fall, we'll be sending out a certificate that your co-op can use if your members pass a motion to adopt the principle.

# A safe haven: Housing co-ops and domestic violence

By Yolande Mennie

Safe and affordable housing is a crucial issue for women and children trying to escape a violent situation. But because of long waiting lists, co-ops can be inaccessible to such families at the time when their need is greatest. How can co-ops help?

In Ontario-program co-ops, victims fleeing family violence are given special priority on the centralized waiting lists for RGI units. Federal co-ops in Ontario and co-ops in other provinces have no such requirements but will sometimes designate units for this purpose.

**Cardinus Housing Co-op** in Ottawa has received several families who were living in shelters. **Sandra Estabrooks**, a member of Cardinus, says the Board supports the principle of giving priority to families coping with violence. "But the issues can be complex, and need to be part of ongoing co-op discussions," she says. "The co-op has a dual responsibility, towards its membership and towards the applicant family. If safety issues come up, how does the co-op develop a safety plan while maintaining the family's confidentiality?"

B.C. Housing Management Commission has a priority placement policy for women with children in domestic violence situations. Co-ops are encouraged (but not required) to use their central registry, and some have developed their own relationships with transition homes in their area. BC Housing's **Erin Smandych** says a pilot project is underway with a second stage transition house. They will work with housing applicants up to four months before the women move to permanent housing. This could prove to be a potential model for co-ops.

Co-op members have raised a number of other concerns, such as how to protect the integrity of waiting lists, especially in cities where there is a general housing crisis. What happens if spouses reconcile? And what should co-ops do if the violent spouse moves into the co-op after the family has settled there? Co-ops need to educate themselves and discuss these questions in order to help women in crisis while meeting the needs of their own communities.

A workshop for Ontario-program co-ops will be held at the AGM in Halifax. For more information, go to the Members' Network at [www.chfc.coop](http://www.chfc.coop). For information on Ontario regulations on priority placement, contact **Judy Shaw** at [jshaw@chfc.ca](mailto:jshaw@chfc.ca) or call 1-800-268-2537.

## Meet Mel Willis, Manitoba Regional Director

**Mel Willis**, CHF Canada's Manitoba regional director, grew up in Britain hearing about co-ops. His parents were members of the local retail co-op but he had never been involved in a co-op until he moved into **Westboine Park Housing Co-op** 24 years ago. "At the time, it was almost by chance," he says. "We had a couple of dogs and I saw a notice saying that pets were allowed. It was a pleasant place to look at and the grounds were well maintained. Then I got involved and what I thought was a temporary place to live turned into a lifetime commitment." Mel served on CHF Canada's Education Committee in the 1980s and was elected to the Board in 2000.

One of the things he wants to accomplish is to help housing co-ops look at ways to allow older members to remain in the co-op as they age. And, if that is no longer possible, to develop new co-ops where members can get the help they need. He is currently talking to the provincial government about a plan to convert an unused hospital building into a co-op that would provide assisted living facilities. "So many of us have lived in co-ops for so long. Why change that now? We just need to come up with plans to make that possible." 🏠



## Manitoba co-ops turn to tribunals to deal with membership termination

In 1999, when the Manitoba government was planning changes to that province's *Co-operative Act* housing co-operatives were concerned about how the changes would affect them. Two of the co-operatives, **Carpathia** and **Westboine Park** appointed their general manager **Rudy Comeault** and lawyer **Laurent Roy** to act on their behalf. Their work resulted in a new Act with a separate section for housing co-operatives, including a new tribunal system to deal with disputes around membership termination.

Now, when a member of a housing co-operative in Manitoba has their membership terminated, they have the right to appeal the termination to the Registrar of Co-operatives and Credit Unions within seven days. The Registrar will notify the member and the co-operative of a tribunal to be held within seven days. A three-person tribunal is chosen by the Registrar from a list, made up of co-operative members. No member can sit on the tribunal if their housing co-operative is party to the dispute.

The tribunal then meets at a time and place set by the Registrar. Both the member and the co-operative can be represented by legal counsel, if they wish. Once the tribunal has heard the presentation by both the member and the co-operative, it forwards a decision, in writing, to the Registrar, who informs the member and the co-operative of the decision. The decision of the Tribunal is final. 🏠

Manitoba director Mel Willis talks to Eleanor McDonald from Hugh Garner Co-op at last year's AGM.



# Newsbriefs

THE LAST WORD



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Federation of Canada

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## What works best?

### Share your feedback on board structure

Imagine you are thinking of changing your co-op's Board of Directors. What's the best number of directors? How do you get representation from all the committees? Do you want representation from each building? Does the Board reflect the diversity of your co-op's membership? How can you ensure the opinions of all members are heard? That's the process CHF Canada is going through this year – on a national scale.

Since it was incorporated in 1968, the CHF Canada Board has changed five times. The first Board was made up of representatives of founding organizations. The goal of the organization was to promote co-op housing. As new co-op housing was developed, the focus of CHF Canada changed. As well as promoting new co-ops, CHF Canada now needed to provide support and services to existing co-ops. At first the Board was elected at large but changed to include representation from co-ops in different regions. In 1993, the Board was expanded to 16 people. There are five directors elected at large, 10 representing provinces and one representing the Aboriginal community.

At last year's annual meeting in Hamilton, members passed a resolution to look at CHF Canada's Board structure. CHF Canada has sent a discussion paper to each member co-op. A copy is also available on CHF Canada's *Members' Network* at <http://members.chfc.ca/eng/pages/governance.asp>. You can send in your feedback by mail, electronically on the Web site or by e-mail to [governance@chfc.ca](mailto:governance@chfc.ca). You can join the Governance Review discussion group in *Co-op Talk* at <http://members.chfc.ca/eng/pages/Forum.asp>. There will also be a workshop in the AGM's Member Education Forum and a discussion in the business meeting. 🏠