

Newsbriefs

SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO EDITION Fall 2006 – Volume 1, No. 2



Twin Pine Village

Southwestern Ontario co-op holds tight to its founding principles

by Denise McGahan

As housing co-ops start to think about the end of their operating agreements we take a look at the oldest continuing housing co-op in Southwestern Ontario, Twin Pine Village Housing Co-operative in London.

On November 3, 1969, a small group of people got together to discuss starting a non-profit housing project in London. They came from labour unions looking for a way to provide quality low-cost housing, from churches with concerns about inadequate housing for low-income individuals and families, and for **John Campbell**, from King's College in [2] ▶



2

Fall education event

Don't miss CHF Canada's Fall Education Event in London on October 21.

3

Dollars and sense

Local dues to be considered in October consultations during CHF Canada's Education Event.

4

AGM

Local volunteers welcome AGM delegates in style at the 2006 AGM in London.

cover twin pines

◀ [cover]

London, with the idea of co-operative housing. A type of housing, he told the group, which involved a whole way of life.

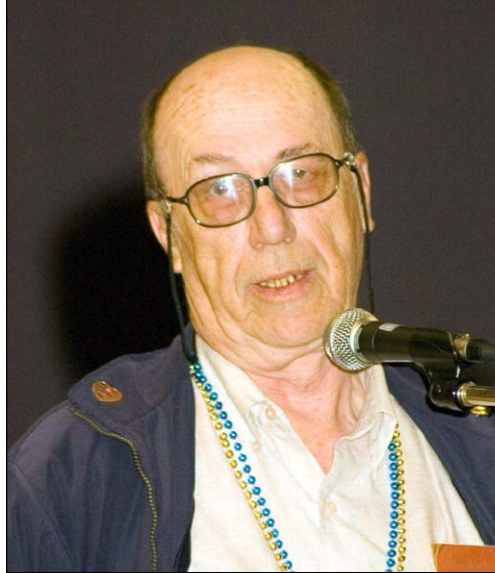
The group incorporated in December 1970 as Co-operative Homes Association (Corporation) of the London Area, known as CHALA. Then in June of 1971, CHALA changed its name to Twin Pine Village Co-operative Inc. They chose the symbol of Twin Pines to stand for strength and unity.

Their 84-unit complex is a unique stacked townhouse design that won an award in 1972 from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). Top units have balconies on the roof of another unit and only the end walls of buildings are exposed to the elements. The co-op continues to benefit with lower heating costs and praise from a recent environmental audit for its efficiency.

On December 1, 1971, a couple and their eight children were the first members to move into the co-op. They wanted a better environment for their family and they sold their house to join Twin Pine Village.

From this inspired beginning the Southwestern Ontario co-operative housing movement has grown to include 72 co-ops today.

And Twin Pine Village continues to be driven by its original co-operative vision. **Bob Sexsmith** was part of the



▲ Delegate **Bob Sexsmith** addresses the national meeting.

founding committee and a member on the first board of directors. He still lives at Twin Pine Village and serves as their second vice-president.

“It’s always been a group effort – never just an individual thing – a group effort that, back in the late 60s, finally clicked.”

“If you act in the best interest of your members – not the individual but the membership as a whole – you will not go too far wrong.”

And Sexsmith knows this approach will continue to serve the co-op’s interests.

“I’ve seen a lot of exciting changes over the years at Twin Pine Village. I look forward to helping our co-op move past the end of its operating agreement with the federal government in 2012 and into the future as a flourishing co-op community – still holding tight to the original principles.” ☺

Don’t miss this education event

Don’t miss out! CHF Canada’s Fall Education Event is Saturday, October 21st at the Lamplighter Inn in London, 591 Wellington Road. The deadline for early bird registration is September 29.

Workshop titles include: “2020 Vision: Securing our future,” “Vacancies will kill your co-op,” and “Co-ops and the Agency: Where our paths cross.” Other workshops will look at good governance for housing co-ops, ways your co-op can save energy and money, and what you can do to prevent fraud.

In the afternoon, CHF Canada will ask members to have their say at a discussion on what local services are needed for co-ops in Southwestern Ontario. (For more on this see “2007 Local Dues to be Considered in October Consultations” on page 3)

If you live more than 100 kilometres from the London area, there is a \$100 travel rebate available per co-op.

For more information, visit CHF Canada’s website at www.chfc.coop or call Denise McGahan, Member Services Officer, at (519) 453-0999.

This is your newsletter

This is the second issue of CHF Canada’s newsletter for members in Southwestern Ontario. Is it giving you the information your co-op needs? Are there things you want us to include? Write us, send us your ideas, tell us what you think.

2007 local dues to be considered in October consultations

On Saturday, October 21, as part of CHF Canada's Education Event in London (Lamplighter Inn), time has been set aside from 3:15 to 4:30 p.m. for co-ops to review the benefits of local service delivery, to consider what level of local dues might be affordable and fair, and to begin the development of a permanent local committee to represent Southwestern Ontario co-ops.

"We hope that every co-op in Southwestern Ontario can be there to share in this important discussion," says **Nick Sidor**, CHF Canada's Director of Corporate Affairs.

Since 2002, local services for co-ops from Woodstock to Windsor have been part of CHF Canada's national budget – paid for by dues from CHF Canada's members across Canada. In 2007, co-ops in the region – those that benefit directly – should start to pay a share of their costs. And, like co-ops in Manitoba and Nova Scotia (where CHF Canada also has local offices) members in Southwestern Ontario will decide how this money is spent.

In many regions, co-ops pay dues to support local federations that provide these services. These dues

usually range from \$2.50 to \$3.00 per unit per month.

"Co-ops in Southwestern Ontario should plan to set aside some money in their 2007 budgets so that local CHF Canada services can continue to be strengthened," Sidor says. "With each co-op starting next year to provide a small local dues contribution, we can make sure that CHF Canada services and support continue to be delivered locally in Southwestern Ontario."

"We've heard from members that co-ops in Southwestern Ontario value the work that CHF Canada is doing. And they appreciate that services are delivered right to their doorsteps from our London office."

By combining their buying power CHF Canada member co-ops save money on insurance and on Co-op Cost Cutters products. Last year, co-ops in Ontario also saved on their property taxes after CHF Canada successfully negotiated a cut of 15% in most co-op assessments. And most Ontario-program co-ops in the region have benefited from better funding levels after CHF Canada worked with municipalities and the Province to design a new funding model. ☺

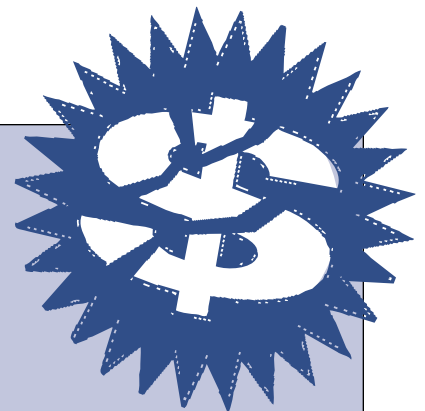
For more information on local dues and services, contact Denise McGahan at (519) 453-0999 in London.

Co-op Cost Cutters

Members in Southwestern Ontario can take advantage of the deals available through Co-op Cost Cutters.

Julie Campbell, Manager of **Tolpuddle Housing Co-operative** in London finds it's not just the low prices she likes but the prompt service too.

"I can order supplies one day from Home Depot Supply and they are delivered the next. No one has to go out to pick them up."





Publication information

Newsbriefs is published by the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada. Material may be copied. Please credit CHF Canada.

Story ideas, comments or questions? Call Merrilee Robson at 1-877-533-2667 or e-mail mrobson@chfc.ca.

Editor: Denise McGahan
dmcgahan@chfc.ca
Design and printing:
EGO Creative Solutions
design@egocreatives.com
Allegra Print & Imaging
jim@allegra-ottawa.ca

Contact information

National Office
311-225 Metcalfe Street,
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1P9
Tel (613) 230-2201
Fax (613) 230-2231
Toll-free 1-800-465-2752

Southwestern Ontario
c/o Ontario Region Office
313-720 Spadina Avenue,
Toronto ON M5S 2T9
Tel (519) 453-0999
Fax (519) 453-6854
Toll-free 1-800-644-3949

Local volunteers welcome AGM delegates with style

This June, 700 CHF Canada members came to London, Ontario for the annual meeting. **Kate Jones** and nearly 90 volunteers were ready for them.

Working with a volunteer co-ordinator, **Anne Donkervoort**, and an eight-member planning committee of volunteers, Kate started to prepare for the meeting last September.

Kate recalls they started promoting the event last October at the local education event, and followed this with mail-outs and phone calls.

“It was a massive effort but it was a success because of the volunteers – it was so crucial to have this army of volunteers.”

The bigger jobs included registering the hundreds of participants, who all seemed to arrive at once, keeping the information booth open to answer questions, and directing people to workshops within the conference centre. There was even a bus tour where

volunteers helped people out and acted as tour guides.

“We all wore neon green, you couldn’t miss us wherever we were.”

Kate came to her role after ten years away from the co-op sector where she had worked as a housing co-op co-ordinator and an education consultant.

“The enthusiasm and the energy and the commitment just reaffirmed to me what a valuable affordable housing alternative co-op housing is. I saw people who have been in the sector for 20 to 30 years and you really feel that energy at the conference. A lot of the volunteers are people who are really committed in their own co-op and it gives them an opportunity to see the sector on a larger scale.”

“Every day was just great. I kind of miss it.” ☺

Above: Volunteers Lloyd (Butch) Stevenson, Kolleen Edwards, Jo-Anne Shingler and Muriel Stilson welcome CHF Canada members to the annual meeting at the London airport.

**Get ready for 2007 AGM!
Mark your calendars and start
planning for next year’s AGM,
June 7–9 in Winnipeg, Manitoba.**