

SCOOP

THE NEWSMAGAZINE FOR HOUSING CO-OPERATIVES IN BC



Inside:

Manhattan building turns 100
New smoking laws affect co-ops
Equity co-ops: Part II



Plus new commercial service partnership and more

NOVEMBER 2008 \$3

Thanks to lots of hard work by members across the country and a strong organization at the heart of the campaign, housing co-ops can in some ways count the 2008 federal election as a “win”.

Let's take stock.



The new Harper minority – where do we stand?

Canadians elected a minority government, but this one will be different. Because forcing an election has disappeared as a threat, all parties will need to work together more closely. Past minority governments have been very good for Canadians who care about social and economic inequality – and so this result may also bring positive changes as the new Harper government has to find compromises on key issues that are important to the opposition parties.

Affordable housing may be one of those. During the campaign, the Liberals, NDP and Bloc Quebecois presented significant affordable housing proposals, and all of them included co-operative housing. Wide agreement exists among all three parties that more affordable housing is desperately needed, and that the federal government has an important role. In a minority Parliament, those election promises will likely make a difference.

And let's not forget that many Conservative MPs, old and new, are themselves concerned about housing, and positive about housing co-ops. Co-op members used the campaign wisely, to make new political friends – sending nearly 800 emails to candidates in all parties. MPs who toured housing co-ops before the campaign started, or who met co-op members at more than 20 events during the campaign, have positive feelings about the value of housing co-ops, and understand our willingness to work with them. So many doors on Parliament Hill are open to us.

Other factors are at work, too. Just before the campaign began, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, representing Canada's towns and cities, released an action plan for housing that sharply criticized federal and provincial dithering. Big city mayors weighed in on the side of the national affordable housing groups, like CHF Canada and the Canadian Housing Renewal Association, that have been pressing the federal government to act.

And during the campaign, seven provincial and territorial housing ministers met with national housing stakeholders in Ottawa, to add their powerful voices to a growing chorus that something must be done.

So, the prospects for co-operative housing in the new Harper minority are not bad. Although the Conservatives made the fewest election promises, affordable housing was included in their platform. Other parties' promises will weigh more heavily in a minority Parliament. And strong allies will stay with us to push hard for more affordable housing.

Of course, making things happen in Ottawa is never easy. Perhaps one of the very best results of the 2008 campaign is a co-op housing movement across the country that is active, well organized and well connected, unified in its purpose, and ready to continue to build bridges to Canada's elected leadership and move our agenda forward.

CHF Canada's Director of Corporate Affairs, **Nick Sidor**, managed the national campaign in support of co-op housing during the 2008 federal election. For more election news, see pages 11 and 19.

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Co-op notices are published separately.

Co-op notices are available at www.chf.bc.ca (in the 'Co-op Directory'), by calling 604.879.5111 (toll-free 1.866.879.5111) or by email to info@CHF.bc.ca. You can get a free copy by contacting our offices at 200-5550 Fraser Street in Vancouver or 410-1105 Pandora Avenue in Victoria.

ON THE COVER: The Manhattan building in the heart of Vancouver's downtown is 100 years old. Since 1982 it has been the home of the Manhattan Housing Co-operative. See their story on page 8.



hot dates Mark your calendars for upcoming co-op housing events you don't want to miss.
Mainland **5** Island **13**

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up front

LETTERS

Dear SCOOP,

Our co-op has always had a policy that puts a limit on how much the board can spend without getting approval from the members. The limit used to be \$500, but we recently increased it to \$1,000. Even with the higher limit, we sometimes have to wait longer than we should for the next members' meeting to approve an expense we all agree is necessary. How can we overcome this problem and still protect the members' control over co-op finances?

Many co-ops have a policy like yours, but CHF BC thinks that there's a better way for members to keep an eye on co-op finances without making it difficult for the board to conduct business or respond to emergencies.

Members adopt a budget for each year, including the amount they need to raise in revenue from housing charges. You should think of that budget as the approval the board needs to manage the finances of the co-op. For example, if the budget notes include the purchase of new maintenance equipment, that's all the authority the board needs to make that purchase. It doesn't need to be approved by the members a second time.

Some spending doesn't involve a real choice. You can't decide to skip the mortgage payment, or not to call in a plumber to fix a burst pipe. You wouldn't think of calling a members' meeting to approve those expenses, so use the budget exercise to identify other expenses that you can also approve in advance.

The board should also be able to respond to situations that weren't anticipated in the budget. Some co-ops put a limit on this kind of spending so the members can have their say when the impact will be material. But the Co-op Act obliges the board to manage the business of the co-op, so you won't want to make it more difficult for the board to carry out its legal responsibilities.

Members will always know how the board is exercising its spending authority if they review the co-op's financial statements regularly. The board should be willing to report the co-op's financial results to the members and explain any variances against the budget.

Part of good governance is making sure that everyone knows the role they should be playing. The members' job is to set the financial targets and priorities. The board's job is to manage the business of the co-op to achieve those results and report outcomes to the members.

You'll find a sample spending policy based on this approach on CHF BC's website at www.chf.bc.ca/pages/policy.asp?id=10.



hot dates

Come and get all fired up about co-op housing at these mainland events:

- Nov 29** Annual General Meeting (see p. 7)
- Jan 12** Delegates' Forum
- Feb 9** Delegates' Forum
- Mar 9** Delegates' Forum
- Mar 28** Spring Education Conference

chip rates

Preferred rates for CHF BC member co-op operating accounts. These rates were effective November 1, 2008 and are subject to change.

CCEC – variable	1.38%
CCEC – fixed 12-month	2.55%
Coast Capital (Vancouver Island)	1.75%
Prospera	0.90%
Vancity	1.943%

Wanted: your stories

SCOOP – your co-op magazine – wants to hear from you! All submissions qualify for our prize draw.

Send photos, stories, questions, anything to CHF BC, attention: SCOOP, 200 – 5550 Fraser Street, Vancouver BC V5W 2Z4 or email scoop@chf.bc.ca.



Above: Conference organizer Alison Eagles and Sue Moorhead welcomed members at the registration table. Below: (left) Participants and workshop leaders relax during the break. (right) Co-op members take in one of the ten workshops.

Fall Education Conference



CHF BC's Fall Education Conference on October 18 was another huge success! With eight brand new workshops and 152 people from 65 co-ops in attendance, the Executive Hotel in Burnaby was buzzing with excitement and activity. From maintenance to long-term financial planning to becoming a 2020 certified co-op, this conference offered everyone the opportunity to go back to their co-op with a renewed commitment to making their community an even better place to live. Thanks to all of the members, boards of directors, and workshop leaders for making this a terrific event.



Dear Co-operative Housing Federation of BC,

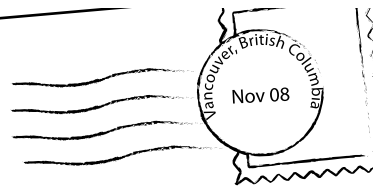
Thank you so much for sending me to grad camp!

I had an amazing time. I learned co-operation, looking at life from other perspectives, and that giant pillow fights are fun! At camp we did many fun things, such as Big Buddy and Cops and Robbers. But my favourite thing about camp has been the love.

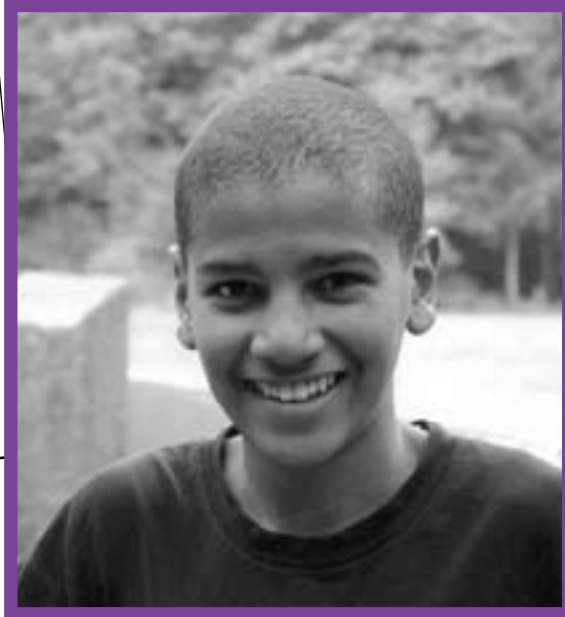
Your sponsorship allowed me to come to camp, and I am so thankful!

Sincerely,
Emile Wilson
Four Sisters Housing Co-op, Vancouver

Emile Wilson was one of four young people sponsored by CHF BC this year to attend YES Camp, a co-operative summer camp organized by the BC Co-operative Association.



To: CHF BC
200 - 5550 Fraser Street,
Vancouver BC V5W 2Z4



up front the inside scoop

November 29

AGM

Mark your calendars now!

The Co-operative Housing Federation of BC's Annual General Meeting will be held on November 29 at the Executive Hotel in Burnaby. The cost is \$45 per person, GST included, and covers meeting, lunch and refreshments. To register, call 604.879.5111 (1.866.879.5111) or email info@chf.bc.ca.

November 29
10:30 am - 4:30 pm
The Executive Hotel and Conference Centre
4201 Lougheed Hwy, Burnaby
604.879.1111 (1.866.879.5111), info@chf.bc.ca

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Right: Manhattan Housing Co-op in Vancouver celebrates its 100th anniversary (2008). Below: Manhattan Co-op in 1911.



CHF BC welcomes three member co-ops

A warm welcome to Lang Cove Housing Co-op in Victoria, Riverbend Housing Co-op in New Westminster, and Waldon Place Housing Co-op in Surrey. CHF BC now serves a record 236 member co-ops, representing 12,276 units.



Manhattan Co-op celebrates anniversary of historic building

On September 26, 2008 members of Manhattan Housing Co-op in Vancouver celebrated the 100th anniversary of their award-winning heritage building. Anyone walking the famous tourist stroll of Robson Street in the heart of downtown Vancouver will recognize the beautiful building at the corner of Robson and Thurlow. When it was built in 1908, it was the first high end, three-story apartment block in Vancouver's affluent West End, with beautiful finishings, an inner courtyard, and an electric elevator!

Many years later it fell into disrepair, and was saved from demolition in the late 70s by a determined group of tenants who formed a housing co-op. Several founding members actually squatted

in the building without heat or electricity for months during the fight with the landlord. The co-op later won architectural awards for its tasteful restoration of this heritage landmark.

Now, almost three decades after the co-op's founding, Manhattan members are celebrated their unique and beautiful home, with its beautiful rooftop deck and many of the original fixtures and woodwork.

As the co-op says in its anniversary brochure, "with ever increasing high-rise development and destruction of heritage buildings, the Manhattan is a welcome anomaly in Vancouver's city centre."

Congratulations, Manhattan members!

Heritage Housing Coop adds more units

Heritage Housing Co-op in Vancouver has come up with a creative way to add more affordable housing. When the co-op found out that the city had approved a new 17-storey building across the street, they took advantage of city rules requiring that the developer contribute money towards community amenities, like community space or affordable housing. The result was an agreement to build four to six affordable homes owned by the city but managed by the co-op. The units are scheduled for completion in two years.

Leaky co-op update

There has been a great deal of progress for leaky co-ops over the past year.

Four additional co-ops have completed repairs, and there are seven more co-ops with approved financing. Only eight co-ops remain in the assessment phase, and three of these are relatively new to the list of leaky co-ops.

Several co-ops are so badly damaged that it would cost too much to repair them. CHF BC and CHF Canada will be working closely with these co-ops to look at every

option open to them. In the meantime, most of these co-ops have opted to also apply for seed funding from CMHC, to do preliminary research into their re-development options.

CHF BC has also been working actively this year with many co-ops that do not have building envelope failure but need to do major repairs due to aging buildings. On November 13, the leaky co-ops committee hosted a well-attended question and answer session on piping repair and replacements with a mechanical engineer and plumbing contractor.

Leaky co-ops at a glance

Category	Co-ops	Units
Fixed	17	850
Under construction	6	485
Design/tender	10	480
Loan approved	10	558
Analysis	7	411
Redevelopment	8	258
Other	8	629
Total	66	3,671



David Wetherow in Vancouver is one of six housing co-ops in the construction phase of building envelope repairs.



The 2020 Compass launched in BC

At the Fall Education Conference on October 18, CHF BC launched the newest addition to the 2020 Vision tool kit and a new federation service: the 2020 Compass.

The 2020 Compass is a facilitated, step-by-step process that will help co-ops chart a course for their future beyond the expiry of their operating agreements with CMHC or BC Housing. The 2020 Compass is a key part of CHF Canada's 2020 Vision project. CHF BC has partnered with CHF Canada to assemble an expert team of 2020 Compass facilitators.

Besides being a roadmap for the future, the 2020 Compass brings other benefits to your co-op. It will

- improve morale
- show you how to make your meetings fun and productive
- focus your members' attention on the things that really matter to your co-op community
- help you choose between competing priorities in the short and long term.

The Compass will also prepare you to meet the challenge of all eight 2020 standards, qualifying your co-op for official certification as a 2020 Co-op.

CHF BC will offer several free information sessions on the 2020 Compass to show you how it can work for your co-op. Watch the events section of www.chf.bc.ca for the dates of these sessions.

For more information on how your co-op can arrange its customized 2020 Compass consultation, contact CHF BC at 604.879.5111 (1.866.879.5111 outside Greater Vancouver) or info@chf.bc.ca.



At CHF BC's Vancouver Island Council meeting on October 15, Frances Gardens directors Leanne Coxford (pictured) and Stacey Chislett shared their experience as the first co-op in Canada to complete the 2020 Compass process.



For more analysis and news from the federal election, see pages 2 and 19.

And stay tuned to our election central webpage at www.chf.bc.ca/pages/election.asp for more interesting and important campaigning to come. By the time you read this issue of *SCOOP* there will be news from the November 15 municipal elections on the website. And there will be a provincial election next year in May.



2008 Federal Election

CHF BC's election campaign began with a bang, as Liberal leader Stéphane Dion visited Pine Ridge co-op in Burnaby to discuss his plans for affordable and environmentally-friendly housing. Dion placed housing co-ops firmly in the Liberal campaign platform and, while he did not win the election, we hope that this commitment will remain in future Liberal platforms.

In addition to the Dion meeting, co-ops hosted "meet and greet" events in three different ridings.

First up was a Vancouver Island meeting for candidates from the neighbouring ridings of Victoria and Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca. Candidates from the Liberals, Greens and NDP attended and met with over 20 co-op members from the two ridings. On election day, the incumbents in both ridings – Dr Keith Martin for the Liberals in Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca and Denise Savoie, NDP Victoria – were returned to Ottawa.

Halston Hills Housing Co-op hosted a meeting in the riding of Burnaby-Douglas,

featuring two good friends of co-operative housing: incumbent NDP MP Bill Siksay and rival Liberal Bill Cunningham. Siksay held his seat for the NDP.

And at Sojourn Housing Co-op in Vancouver Centre, incumbent Liberal Dr Hedy Fry, NDP candidate Michael Byers and the Green Party's Adrienne Carr answered questions from members of several co-ops in the riding. Dr Fry was re-elected on October 14.

In addition to these gatherings, Darren Kitchen, CHF BC's government relations director, attended numerous campaign events and met or spoke on the phone to many candidates to ensure that co-op housing remained on candidates' radar screens during the election.

Thanks to the many co-op members who mentioned co-op housing to candidates, attended the "meet and greet" events, and voted with housing in mind as an election issue.

Above: At the very beginning of the election campaign, Liberal leader Stéphane Dion visited Pine Ridge Housing Co-op in Burnaby. **Left:** Halston Hills president Lil Cameron with Burnaby Douglas candidates Bill Siskay and Bill Cunningham at a 'meet and greet' hosted by her co-op.



Vancouver Island Council report

Island members held their most recent Vancouver Island Council meeting on October 15. Island Directors Candice Bunting and Larry LeSage reported on the federal election, leaky co-op progress, the upcoming Annual General Meeting on November 29, Rooftops Canada, succession planning and CHF BC's sustainability initiatives.

Island delegates elected Avis Michalovsky of North Ridge Co-op to the position of Vancouver Island Director (see page 13). Avis will assume her duties at the conclusion of CHF BC's Annual General Meeting on November 29.

Members thanked outgoing Island Director Candice Bunting for her dedication and hard work.

Frances Gardens Directors Leanne Coxford and Stacey Chislett shared their co-op's experience as the first co-op in Canada to complete the 2020 Compass process (see page 10) and to register on CHF Canada's website as a co-op pursuing the 2020 Vision certification for co-op excellence.

The meeting also featured a presentation on the Victoria Community Health Co-op by Dr. Mark Sherman.

The CHF Canada report, given by BC/Yukon Regional Director, Yanna Dancer, focused on the CHF Canada AGM scheduled for May 28–30, 2009 in Victoria. Susan Barron, the local conference co-ordinator, invited Island members to join the planning committee and volunteer at the conference itself. ■

Island director Larry Lesage thanked outgoing director Candice Bunting for her dedication and hard work.





For info about Island services, contact Kerry Panter in CHF BC's Victoria office at 384.9444.

Island delegates elected Avis Michalovsky to the board of CHF BC.

Introducing new Island Director Avis Michalovsky

Along with my husband Peter, I have lived at North Ridge Housing Co-op for over ten years. We raised our daughter here and have our grandson living with us. I have been active since the day we arrived, having served on the Board as treasurer, and currently on the Membership Committee and as CHF BC delegate.

I was the first co-ordinator when COHO Management Services opened their Island office. While there, I gained valuable experience and skills to work with boards

and their co-op members. I have attended many CHF BC workshops which provided immeasurable information for my co-op and for me. CHF BC has taught me just how co-ops work.

Living in a housing co-op is a lifestyle that allows the members to have a voice; a sense of community; a sense of permanency. Affordable housing is needed desperately on Vancouver Island. Our co-ops are aging – we need support to preserve the old, damaged and leaky co-ops. Our governments need to find funding to sustain our subsidies for our most vulnerable co-op members.

There is work to be done. As in the past, I am ready and willing to roll up my sleeves and get busy as we look to the future of co-op housing in BC. ■

island dates

Come and get all fired up about co-op housing at these great events:

- Nov 29** Annual General Meeting (see page 7)
- Feb TBA** Vancouver Island Council
- Mar TBA** Island Education Day
- 28** Spring Education Conference

island chip rates

Preferred rates for CHF BC member co-op accounts. Rates effective November 1, 2008 and subject to change.

Coast Capital (Vancouver Island)	1.75 %
Vancity	1.943 %

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News you can use

New smoking regulations apply to housing co-ops in BC

Smoking and second hand smoke is a potentially contentious issue in housing co-operatives where members live and work together closely. Here is a summary of laws, bylaws, and co-op rules that may apply to your co-op.

As of March 31, 2008, new provincial bylaws (the Tobacco Control Act and Regulation) restrict smoking in public places. For co-ops, this could mean no smoking in any common or public areas such as shared walkways, parking garages and common rooms. The Act also states: "a person must not smoke tobacco, or hold lighted tobacco" within three metres of a doorway, window or air intake.

This new legislation has yet to be tested on multi-unit residential buildings such as co-ops or stratas. Provincial tobacco enforcement officers have not yet ticketed or given warnings to anyone in a residential building.

Depending where you live there may also be new municipal rules that add to these restrictions. On March 31, 2008 the City of Vancouver enacted its own bylaw requiring signage that explains any smoking restrictions. Smoking in Vancouver is prohibited within six metres of an entryway, "openable" window or air intake of a building. And in July 2008, the City of Surrey created its own bylaw requiring a distance of 7.5 metres from doorways or air intakes for allowable smoking.

Civil law could also come into play in situations where a non-smokers' health and enjoyment of their home is compromised by smoking. In 2007, a condo owner in North Vancouver attempted to sue her neighbour who smoked on a next-door balcony, for exposure to smoke. There has been no outcome to that case announced yet and the neighbour has countersued.

And of course, housing co-operatives can and have set their own policies covering whether and where members and residents may smoke. ■



Provincial smoking bylaws affecting co-ops:

BC's Tobacco Control Act and Tobacco Control Regulation, Section 4.22(1) states "No smoking near doorways, windows or air intakes". For Vancouver smoking regulations: visit <http://gw.city.vancouver.bc.ca/ctyclerk/newsreleases2008/NRsmokingregs.htm>. For Surrey: visit <http://www.surrey.ca/Living+in+Surrey/Bylaw+Compliance/Smoking+By-Law.htm>

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Electrical	10%
Furniture	10%
Hardware	10%
Millwork	10%
Paint	10%
Plumbing	10%
Tools	10%
Gardening	5%
Kitchen Cabinets	5%
Seasonal	5%
Building Materials	2%
Lumber	2%

Net price catalogue available. Discounts applicable only at participating RONA stores.
*Discount policy valid until December 31, 2011.

commercial services news

Services for CHF BC member housing co-ops

Fall 2008

CHF BC announces new partnership with RONA

After a comprehensive request for proposals, extensive research and member feedback, CHF BC is proud to introduce a new commercial services partner for our member co-ops' hardware and building supply needs: RONA Inc.

RONA sells tools, hardware, maintenance supplies, building materials, lumber,

paint, plumbing and electrical products, gardening supplies and much more.

And their vast network of retail outlets means that this new partnership will serve CHF BC member co-ops across the province. Coop's that currently have accounts with RONA will realize even greater discounts across a wider selection of products, including the best available pricing on a select list of 100 most frequently purchased items. Members not currently shopping at RONA will be surprised at the vast selection of products and services they provide.

In addition to discounted prices and great service, RONA offers CHF BC member

housing co-ops purchase options to suit you, whether your co-op prefers to shop at one of their many retail locations or by direct order. Delivery service is available for whichever shopping method you choose.

RONA is a Canadian company—the largest Canadian distributor of hardware, home renovation and gardening products. Its roots go back to 1939 when a group of Quebec hardware store owners organized to get around a monopoly that was threatening their access to supplies. As the group expanded, its member-merchants acquired all of the shares in their growing company, which they operated on a co-operative basis.

Through a series of mergers and acquisitions, RONA's expansion reached Western Canada in 2001. RONA now operates more than 620 stores in all regions of Canada.

"We look forward to our new partnership with RONA and encourage you to visit one of their stores soon," says CHF BC commercial services director, Julie Hunter.

Information about how your co-op can take advantage of this group buying opportunity has been sent to all CHF BC members.

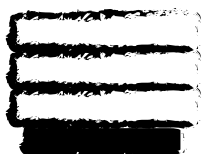
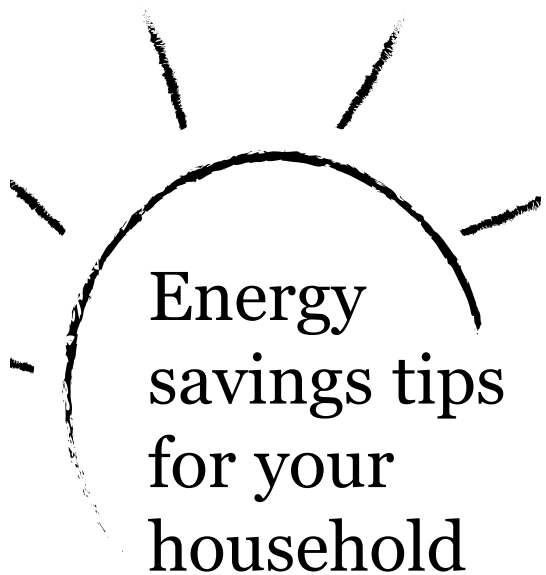
For more information, contact Julie at 604.879.5111 ext 138, toll-free 1.866.879.5111 or jhunter@chf.bc.ca.

Commercial sales team leader, Aaron Stephens, shows off Rona's line of eco-friendly cleaning products.





sustainability



Electricity rates are going to go up again next year in BC. Here are a few hints on how to reduce your energy bill:

Option	Savings/Year*
Switch off computer when not in use	\$10
Turn down the heat by 4-5° C when out	\$39
Set thermostat 1° C lower	\$8
Replace three old 60W bulbs with 15W CFLs	\$10
Replace halogen floor lamp with CFL version	\$32
Install one low-flow showerhead	\$7
Shorten your shower time by one minute	\$26
Hang two loads of laundry to dry per week	\$18

* Based on electric heat and hot water in a standard townhouse-style unit.

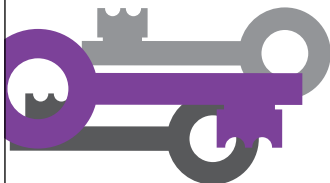
For more tips and energy saving information, including how to qualify for their free Energy Savings Kit (with compact fluorescent lightbulbs, weatherstripping, and low-flow showerhead) visit bchydro.com/powersmart or call 1.800.BCHYDRO. ■

MemberGuard®

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Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada



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Equity co-op profile

The last issue of SCOOP featured an article explaining the difference between equity and non-profit housing co-ops (ABCs of Equity Co-ops, July 2008). In this follow-up we look more closely at one equity co-op and how it works, as a home and as a community.

Norkam Seniors Co-op

Robert Perry is a proud founding member of Norkam Seniors Housing Co-op in Kamloops. “It’s the best looking place in the neighbourhood,” says Perry of his 144-unit complex.

Of course, he has a right to be proud. He helped bring the place into being in 1995 as part of a seniors group advising Kamloops city council on how to provide affordable seniors housing. The city provided a plot of land and the original members came up with the capital to construct a building from scratch.

And indeed this complex is a valuable source of affordable seniors housing in Kamloops, even though members make a larger capital investment than in a non-profit co-op. In fact, 19 of the co-op units are subsidized rental units for seniors under BC Housing’s SAFER program.

To get in, applicants purchase a \$250 share, which gets them on the waitlist. Then when it’s their turn, they have the option to buy the next suitable unit, generally at about one third of the comparable market value. They also pay a small monthly maintenance fee based on square footage.

When they leave (and the rules stipulate they can’t pass on the unit to inheritors) they sell the

unit back to the co-op, and any capital gains are split between the co-op and the member, with a small percentage going to the City.

Norkam Seniors Co-op (also known as Cottonwood Manor) has a board of directors and a finance committee, and they have a full time paid coordinator.

Although in some ways this co-op seems to operate like a strata, Perry insists the co-op identity is very important to them.

“The fact that we operate under the Co-op Act is a big reason for our success.” says Perry. “We’re a true co-op. We’re a community – not a private enterprise. When we do social events or dinners in our community centre, we open it to the public, and we never charge non-members any more than our members.” ■



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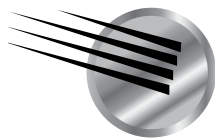
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GROUP OF COMPANIES

During the recent federal election, Conservative incumbent Peter McKay attended a meeting hosted by Landview Housing Co-op in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia.

Cross country election snapshots

During the recent federal election, federation staff and co-op members across the country met with candidates to talk about the importance of affordable housing in general and the effectiveness of co-operative housing in particular.

Members from Ideal and Aldergrove housing co-ops in Edmonton managed a 45-minute meeting with the Conservative candidate in their riding, incumbent MP Rona Ambrose. Andrea Rogers, CHF Canada's election co-ordinator in Edmonton, says they managed to get that much time with a candidate during a busy election campaign simply by being the first to arrive at the campaign office opening. Now that Ambrose has been re-elected, co-op members are planning to arrange a follow-up meeting.

In Ontario, co-op members in Peterborough were part of a Global TV newscast broadcast live from their city. CHF Canada election co-ordinator Janine McDonald was also on CTV news as a participant of an election forum.

Edmonton housing co-ops also hosted candidate "meet and greet" events in two ridings. The only New Democrat elected in Alberta, Linda Duncan, attended the event at Abby Road Housing Co-op in Edmonton Strathcona, along with the local MLA Rachel Notley.



(Duncan won by fewer than 500 votes in a surprising win over incumbent Rahim Jaffer, who did not attend the event.)

Now that the election is over, CHF Canada will be congratulating the new MPs and following up with them about housing issues. CHF Canada will also be seeking a meeting with the new Minister responsible for CMHC, Diane Finley. ■

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international

Mary Mathenge receiving a CHRA award recognizing NACHU's work responding to the crisis in Kenya.

Co-ops deal with aftermath of post-election violence in Kenya

When post-election violence erupted in Kenya in January 2008, 800 people were killed and over 300,000 displaced. The victims included many members of housing co-ops affiliated with Rooftops Canada's oldest overseas partner, the National Cooperative Housing Union (NACHU).

NACHU is made up of 220 housing co-operatives with over 200,000 members. Co-ops that were affected include Upendo Wa Jirani Co-op that benefitted from housing loans supported by Fédération des coopératives d'habitation intermunicipale du Montréal métropolitain in Quebec.

"Dealing with the psychological impact of violence has proved challenging," says Mary Mathenge, general manager of NACHU Kenya.



"Some co-op members were suddenly withdrawn and afraid to go back to their homes. Some have been gone from the Rift Valley since January and have started coming back after NACHU offered counseling services. Counseling really helped and 90% of the members have come back to start all over again. The remaining members still do not want anything to do with their neighbours."

They burnt my shop, my house, I lost everything I had...I need help to start a new life again.


**Alice Kinyanjui,
Upendo Wa Jirani Co-op Society**

Rooftops Canada is working with NACHU to implement its plans for social support, reconstruction and income-generation for the affected housing co-ops.

The 2008 Annual Congress of the Canadian Housing Renewal Association presented Mary Mathenge with their International Award as a signal of support and solidarity for the efforts of NACHU in responding to the crisis.

NACHU and the housing co-ops in Kenya need our assistance. The survivors have the will, courage and strength to rebuild their lives. We cannot take away their sorrow and painful memories, but we can help by supporting NACHU's emergency response.

You can organize a fundraising event to help NACHU and its members, or make a donation to Rooftops Canada designated to rebuilding NACHU. Thank you for your support! ■

 For more information, contact Rooftops Canada at www.rooftops.ca 416.366.1445.

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the co-op connection

Co-op Week event features exciting leadership initiative

On October 14, not to be overshadowed by a federal election on the same day, the BC Co-operative Association (BCCA) hosted its annual Co-op Week luncheon event at the beautiful VanDusen Botanical Garden, with close to 80 guests representing a broad spectrum of co-operatives from around the province.

BCCA acting executive director, Carol Murray, welcomed a high-profile panel of BC leaders to the stage, who took part in the Vancity Leadership Program conducted this summer in Bologna, Italy: a famous hotbed of successful and widespread co-operative enterprise. Jim Sinclair, president of the BC Federation of Labour; Virginia Greene, president and CEO of the Business Council of BC; Tamara Vrooman, CEO of Vancity;

and Ellen Pekeles, senior vice president of Vancity; shared their experience with luncheon participants.

The panel spoke of their enriching experiences in Bologna and their observations on the differences in the cultural context for co-ops in Emilia Romagna and British Columbia. For instance, the speakers noted that while the population in Emilia Romagna is

relatively static with little in-migration, to the point where the population is declining, there is great population diversity and growth in BC, posing different opportunities and challenges to foster economic and co-op development.

The panel members discussed how they plan to work together with representatives from labour, business, government and the non-profit sector to determine how the practices they observed in Bologna could be applied in BC. With the support of BCCA and Vancity the panel is considering the creation of a co-op development project.

For more information on this and other BCCA projects, call 604.662.3906 or check out their great new website at www.bcca.coop. ■

Jim Sinclair and Tamara Vrooman took part in a co-op leadership panel at the BCCA's Co-op Week luncheon.



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