

\ˈant-,hil\ n. A bustling centre of activity, where the interests of the group come before those of the individual.

# Anthill

Newsletter of the British Columbia  
Institute for Co-operative Studies

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## Research on BC's Northwest Coast

On June 24, 2002 two of BCICS' summer student researchers, Katie Rollwagen and Julia Smith, arrived at their "home away from home," the Moby Dick Inn, in Prince Rupert, British Columbia. This was no summer holiday. The "City of Rainbows" has a rich co-operative history. It has been home to producer and consumer co-ops and credit unions since the 1930s. Katie and Julia had left sunny Victoria to search out the secrets of this fallen co-operative empire.

The local credit union welcomed the researchers with open arms and invited them to delve into their basement archives. In the 'dungeon,' Katie and Julia unearthed the records of the Prince Rupert Fishermen's Co-operative Association, once the largest co-operative fishing venture on British Columbia's coast. Amid the many boxes they also divulged the past of the Kaien Consumers' Co-operative and the credit unions.

Although Katie and Julia reveled in the sheer mass of historical documents, the most enjoyable aspect of the trip was interviewing former co-op members. Ken Harding, former manager of the Prince Rupert Fishermen's Co-operative, enlightened the pair on the day-to-day operations of the co-op. Retired fisher Foster Husoy had much to say about the co-op's relationship with the co-

op and the unions. Lee Bodie and Helen Stammes provided insight into the demise of the consumer co-op. Mike Tarr, CEO of Northern Sav-

operative Association for over 30 years and became a board member for Federated Co-ops.

Though research kept them busy, Julia



Photo by Julia Smith.

ings Credit Union, offered his opinion on the future of credit unions in British Columbia, while Eric Ross, longtime director of the credit union, discussed the role of credit unions on Haida Gwaii (Queen Charlotte Islands).

Before returning home, Katie and Julia traveled along the mighty Skeena River to Terrace to visit longtime co-operator Corbin King. Over coffee and scones, Corbin told them about his involvement in the Rural Leadership Society, a co-operative formed in 1940 by young people participating in a course at the University of British Columbia. Armed with this co-operative knowledge, Corbin went on to manage the Terrace Co-

and Katie still found time to sit on the patio at Breakers Pub (located in the former co-op supply building), and enjoy the sunshine, soaring eagles and sparkling blue water.

Back in Victoria, Katie and Julia did an exemplary job writing up some of the co-operative history of Prince Rupert for the Galleria and other research projects. Thanks to everyone in Prince Rupert and Terrace who made the trip so successful.

### Q- How did you become a co-op board member?

A- Pressure, from the other guys! That and a big mouth... you know that if you stand up and speak at meetings everybody wants you to do all the work. I never could keep my mouth shut. That's what my mother said, I was vaccinated by a gramophone needle.

**Foster Husoy** - former director of Prince Rupert Fishermen's Co-operative



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## British Columbian Co-operatives in the 'New Economy' – BCICS receives three-year research grant

BCICS has been awarded a three-year grant of \$219,000 from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council to study the roles of BC's rural co-operatives in the so-called New Economy. The underlying premise of the research is that communities are being transformed by the impact of a 'new economy'. In British Columbia this means the decline of jobs in the traditional industries, such as the fishery and forestry, restructuring to build new economic activities, efforts to further develop tourism; it also means the changing role of the state. The project will document the development, progress and challenges that new co-operatives encounter in the early years of their development. BCICS is approaching individual co-ops and co-op federations, which have formed since 1996, to participate in the three-year study. About twelve co-operatives located throughout the province are expected to be involved.

In addition to Ian MacPherson and Kathleen Gabelmann from BCICS, the other key researchers in the project are Dr. Ana-Maria Peredo of the U Vic Faculty of Business, and Dr. Eric Morse, formerly in the Faculty of Business and now the Directorship of Entrepreneurship at Richard Ivey School of Business, University of Western Ontario. In addition, students will be hired to work as research assistants.

The research will include in-depth case studies, extensive documentation of challenges and opportunities, the recording of best practices and explanations for any failures that occur. Researchers will work with the co-ops to identify the key questions, useful resources and expertise that the researchers could offer to the co-ops. When the researchers are in the communities they would arrange to facilitate workshops and present information sessions to interested co-op members focussing on these areas.

BCICS believes the study is important for three groups in particular: people involved or interested in co-operative organisations and activities; scholars and students involved or interested in the field of Co-operative Studies; and decision and policy makers concerned with finding ways to build and sustain healthy communities.

### BCICS welcomes new co-operators!



#### Wren Amelia Mahon Sjolie (left)

Wren was born on April 13, 2002. She is the first child for BCICS researchers and happy parents Laura Sjolie and Michael Burdge.



#### Maya Robyn Sinats (right)

Maya Robyn was born on September 2, 2002. Her brother, Andreas, is delighted with the arrival of his sister, as are her parents Kristen and Toby Sinats. Kristen has been working with BCICS since May 2000.

## Seikatsu Club Consumers' Cooperative Union visit BC's West Coast

BCICS was delighted to host nine representatives from the Seikatsu Club, a Japanese consumer co-operative, from October 16 to 22. The delegation included Mr. Eiji Kono, its President, Mr. Yoshiyuki Fukuoka, the managing director of the Club's central union, three board members from clubs located in Yokohama and Tokyo, the executive director from Nagano, a member of the planning department at the Saitama Club, and two members of Seikatsu's Policy Making by the Citizens' Sector.

The Seikatsu Club is one of the most interesting co-operatives in the world. It was formed in 1965 by housewives concerned about the quality of the milk in local stores and has since grown to include 230,000 households in eighteen co-operatives that are associated in a central union. Most of the food sold through the co-operatives is delivered in special vans to neighbourhood groups of 8-12 families called hans.

Seikatsu is particularly concerned about the quality of the food its members eat, about reducing the costs of goods by eliminating advertising, and by presenting a limited but adequate choice of quality goods. Having established close relationships with farmers and farm organisations the Seikatsu Club has special programmes to deliver high quality, organically produced milk, poultry and pork products to its members. Members can

choose to go to the countryside and talk to farmer suppliers about their crops and the issues confronting rural societies. This procedure is part of what the club calls a "mass audit" approach, in which members play a significant role in appraising the co-operative's daily activities.

Seikatsu has undertaken special campaigns to reduce the use of soaps harmful to the environment and it has sponsored candidates in local elections who are interested in enhancing environmental practices in communities and resisting the development of genetically modified foods. The club has been successful in placing 150 people, many of them women, in local councils and assemblies.

Women form about 99 percent of the memberships of the club and many of the board members of the local co-operatives and the central organisation are women. The club has undertaken special programmes to address issues confronting Japanese women. It has, for example, organised 150 worker co-operatives, (called collectives in Japan because there is no law covering working co-operatives), most of which employ women in service industries. In recognition of its outstanding record in environmental,

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### ***How-to Guide for Co-operative Development***

BCICS is pleased to offer a new how-to guide specifically for co-operatives. *Co-operatives by Design: Building Blocks for Co-op Development* is a clearly written guidebook intended to guide people through the process of developing a co-operative. It grew out of the demand for resources on co-op development and is the result of the input of a number of people with various experiences in co-operatives and co-op development. The manual is divided into eight modules, allowing people to acquire the sections they want and to use them in the order that suits their co-op's needs. In addition to the eight modules there is an intro-



*Sol Kinnis happily shows off the completed Co-operatives By Design.*

ductory section and an extensive list of resources, both of which are included in an order for modules or the complete manual. One of the key persons working on the manual was BCICS researcher, Sol Kinnis, who spent many hours making sure the content was comprehensive (although it is by no means exhaustive) and the language clear. Sol also worked hard to make sure the language used in the manual reflected the spirit of co-operation and that the format of the manual flowed easily and sensibly. *Co-operatives by Design* can be ordered from BCICS.

## Mapping Co-operative Studies in the New Millenium

BCICS will be hosting an international conference at the University of Victoria from May 28 to 31, 2003. The conference is concerned primarily with "mapping" the field of Co-operative Studies. Although there are many institutes and a few hundred researchers interested in the study of co-operative organisations, movements and thought, there has been little attention paid to what characterises the field. This conference will help address that gap: we will be looking at what we are interested in, how we do our work, what we can expect to find, and where we might find allies when we "do" Co-operative Studies.

The conference is a joint meeting of the Research Committee of the International Co-operative Alliance and the Canadian Association for the Study of Co-operation. BCICS anticipates that about 100 researchers from universities, co-

operative organisations, government departments and some independent researchers will present papers. At the end of October, more than 70 researchers from over 20 countries from all the major continents had submitted proposals for papers. The range of topics extends from case studies through to co-operative theory and the committed participants include long-established researchers, graduate students, and members of B.C. co-operatives.

This conference follows immediately on the youth forum, Building Co-operative Futures (described on the following page); the two conferences will be linked by a presentation from, and participation by, a delegation from the youth forum. If you want to be present at the birth of a new field of enquiry, come to Victoria in May. Enjoy the rhodos and engage some of the best minds exploring co-operatives today.

## Conference Participation

### Canadian Association for Co-operative Studies

About sixty members of the Canadian Association for Study of Co-operation (CASC) participated at the association's annual meeting, held this year at the end of May at the University of Toronto. The CASC meeting, which took place over three days, was one of hundreds held as part of the Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities. CASC participants are from both academia and from the co-operative sectors. Presentations this year included research and discussions about the conversion of government operated social housing to co-operative housing owned by co-op members; co-operative housing possibilities; the social accountability of co-operatives; democratic issues within co-operative organisations; relations with other social economy organisations; and reflections on the field of Co-operative Studies.

Four people directly associated with BCICS attended the meetings. Professor Pamela Moss, a member of the University of Victoria's Faculty of Human and Social Development delivered a paper entitled "Social Co-ops, Housing, and Support: Exploring Models of Co-operation," which was based on her research undertaken as a BCICS Research Fellow (see article on page 6). Ryan George, a BCICS researcher who holds degrees in History and in Economics, presented a paper "Understanding Community in Housing Co-operatives" derived from his honours thesis in His-

tory. Former BCICS researcher and UVic graduate, Ian Henderson who is presently pursuing his Master's degree at the University of Toronto, gave his paper "Work, Labour and the Co-operative Experience." BCICS Director Dr. Ian MacPherson, who received the first CASC Merit Award which recognises "exemplary contributions" to the association, offered his ideas on co-operative studies in his presentation "Co-operative Studies: Thoughts About Defining the Field."

### Meeting of the Association of Co-operative Educators

The Association of Co-operative Educators (ACE), which brings together Canadian and American human resource professionals from co-operatives and researchers in Co-operative Studies, held its annual meeting in Guelph, Ontario in May 2002. The sessions, which attracted over 100 participants, were devoted to discussions of member education, board development, research needs within co-operative organisations, state relations, youths in co-operatives, new co-operatives in rural communities, and links between co-operatives and universities. Ian MacPherson presented a paper on "Developing Co-operative Studies within Universities." He also was presented with the 2002 ACE Award for Outstanding Contributions to Cooperative Education and Training.

## Building Co-operative Futures: A Forum for “Young” People

BCICS will be hosting a forum for young people, May 24-27, 2003. It will be devoted to people aged 18 to 25 who are interested in the co-operative system, model, and values. The long-term goal of the forum is to attract young people to the co-operative and credit union system in terms of careers and consumer choices. In the short run, BCICS guarantees an exciting, interactive and informative forum.

BCICS is inviting co-operatives and credit unions to “partner” in the delivery of this forum. Partnerships involve a nominal commitment of \$1,000. Partner organisations will be acknowledged in forum materials and will receive a discount registration fee for any participants they send. Current partner organisations are Federated Co-operatives Limited, Credit Union Central of BC and The Co-operators Group.

Participants will take part in four Plenary Sessions (don't worry, no talking heads allowed!) that will acquaint them with co-operatives in various contexts, in Canada and around the world, and challenge them to think about ways that the principles of co-operation can be applied in their lives. As well, participants can select three of six different workshops that will provide the “nitty-gritty” on working through the

ideas stage of “hey, let's start a co-op,” to planning, marketing, operating, and governing co-operatives as well as finding a job, or volunteering, in the co-operative sector. And because everybody loves a story, the forum advisory committee has invited different co-ops to tell theirs, with the added bonus that these will be interactive learning sessions. There will be time for participants to attend three of the six True Stories. Storytellers include representatives from Calgary Co-op, Growing Circle Food Co-op, Mountain Equipment Co-op, Saskatoon Community Clinic, Student Co-op Federation (Quebec), and VanCity Savings Credit Union.

In the true spirit of co-operation a group of participants from the youth forum will be invited to share with delegates at the research congress “Mapping Co-operative Studies in the New Millennium,” which follows directly afterward.

“Building Co-operative Futures: A Forum for ‘Young’ People” is national and international in scope. BCICS hopes to foster interest in the future of the co-operative sector amongst young people and provide a solid understanding of the co-operative system.

To participate or become a partner please contact BCICS.

### Improvements to our website

The layout and navigation of the BCICS website has been reorganized in order to make the content more easily accessible. In addition to the reorganization, three new sections have been added: What's New, Events Calendar, and Features. The “What's New” section contains information on the newest additions to the website. The Events Calendar has information about upcoming BCICS-sponsored events. Finally, the Features section is filled with links to the latest BCICS projects.

In addition to these visible changes, the website has undergone some invisible ones. The website is making the transition from static content to database-driven content. The Galleria has already made this transition. Although its look has not changed significantly, the new format allows researchers to easily add and modify content through any web browser. In the coming months, more sections of the website will become database-driven. This will allow for BCICS website to grow without being encumbered by the limitations of static website development.

Please visit us again soon at <http://web.uvic.ca/bcics/> to find out what's new at BCICS.

### *BC's Co-operative Heritage*

In 2001 BCICS received a research grant from the BC Heritage Trust's Community Heritage Development programme to develop the historical aspects of the Galleria, its online project which displays the history and stories of co-operatives in British Columbia. The grant, approximately \$16,000, was used to expand and deepen research relating to some of themes that Laura Sjolie, BCICS Galleria curator, identified since she conceptualised the Galleria's development plan about two years ago. These themes include how Japanese Canadians developed agricultural and fishery co-ops as well as credit unions; the great surge of fruit marketing, packing, and processing co-ops in orchard industry in the Okanagan and Kootenay areas; the formation of dairy co-ops; the golden age of fishery co-ops; the emergence of the credit union movement during the 1940s and its rapid expansion in the 50s and 60s; and the beginnings of the co-operative housing movement. The results of the BC Heritage project will be available for viewing on the Galleria by mid-November, 2002.

## First BCICS 'Fellow'

Professor Pamela Moss, a faculty member in the University of Victoria's Faculty of Human and Social Development, was the recipient of BCICS' first Fellowship. Dr. Moss undertook her research in the 2002 Spring term. Working with a group of feminist activists, she explored the feasibility of developing a service co-operative for the delivery of supportive housing for women in crisis. She shared the synopses, interpretations, and analyses of their discussions with geographers in Los Angeles at a community-University forum and with members of CASC at its annual meet-

ing in Toronto (see article about CASC on page 4).

Another outcome of the research was that Dr. Moss and the group developed a research project that will begin January 2003. The project consists of focus groups to be held with four stakeholder groups: women who have gone through supportive housing programs; housing activists and advocates; social service workers providing supportive housing services; and potential landlords who would provide rental units.

Competitions for BCICS Faculty fellowships are announced to the University community periodically.

"Somehow we have to find a way of marrying the localness of credit unions, which is their genius, with a national scope... in other words, we have to find a way of having our cake and eating it too. We have to find a way that we can act globally and think locally. Right now we think globally and act locally - we have to reverse that around and that's going to be a real struggle because there's 700 credit unions in the country, in English Canada, and every one of them has a general manager that thinks he's a genius."

**Mike Tarr** - manager of Northern Savings Credit Union

Continued from page 3

business and social areas, the Seikatsu Club received the Right Relationship award, the "alternative Nobel Prize," in 1989.

While in Victoria, the delegation made a public presentation at the university, entitled "Food Security and the Conscious Consumer" and two members of the group spoke to a class in Japanese Studies within the Asia and Pacific Studies Department. The presentation was repeated in Vancouver, where the group also visited B.C. Wood Co-op on Granville Island, Vancouver City Credit Union and Mountain Equipment Co-operative. The visitors attended the annual co-op luncheon, sponsored by CCA BC Region and made a short presentation.

For the last three days of the visit the delegation the group, along with BCICS Director Ian MacPherson and Research Co-ordinator Kathleen Gabelmann, travelled to several coastal communities where they learned about some of the activities of both new and old co-operatives. On Cortes Island the group visited several of the many oyster and clam operations owned and operated by members of the Cortes Island Shellfish Co-operative, who provided detailed explanations about the shellfish operations. Following a luncheon of locally grown foods at an island home, where members exchanged more information about their co-ops, the group went on to see the displays at an environmental home show at the Manson's community hall.

On the second day of the islands tour the group made its way to Telegraph Cove and embarked on a day-long boat trip to see, and learn about, the marine, air, and land ecology of Johnstone Strait, Blackfish Sound, and the lower reach of Queen Charlotte Strait.

On the final day the group journeyed to Malcolm Island and the town of Sointula, a place famous for its co-operative activities. There they toured the Malcolm Island Shellfish Co-operative, which is developing a land-based abalone fishery using new technologies.

Following this the group enjoyed a delicious luncheon at the bakery/café part of the Wild Island Foods Co-operative and heard the story of the co-op's development from two of the co-op's founding directors. Manager Jean Hadley gave a guided tour through the co-op's various operations. Wild Island is a community co-op that is establishing an ethical, innovative food processing facility and product development services.

The group then visited the Sointula Co-operative Store, the oldest co-op in British Columbia, having started in 1909. In telling the story of the co-op Pat Roper, co-op director, tantalized the curiosity of the Japanese co-operators about the co-operative history of Malcolm Island, and she graciously escorted the group to the local museum, a lively and active place filled with an incredible array of artifacts.

All the visits were featured by enthusiastic discussions and thoughtful exchanges. Much was learned and many friendships were formed.

# Co-operative Community Partnerships

The Work Opportunities Resource Cooperative (WORC), situated in Nelson, B.C., recently learned it was successful in its application to the Canadian Centre for Disability Studies (Winnipeg) to undertake a project that will increase our understanding of how people who are living with invisible disabilities experience barriers to employment and social integration within the community, and what strategies these people use to cope with the situations they encounter. Research partners at the University of Victoria include BCICS and Dr. Pamela Moss.

Lead researchers for the project are two co-op members, Art Joyce and Bill Moore, who will interview members of WORC who volunteer to participate and who are living with invisible disabilities. Once this is done the researchers will investigate government regulations and programs relating to both visible and invisible disabilities. During the third phase of the research community service providers will be interviewed in order to obtain various kinds of data including background information on the integration of those with invisible disabilities into the local workforce.

Following this the researchers will analyse and interpret the data, and then write up their findings, which will be made available to WORC members, at community meetings, at University and College colloquia, and on both the WORC and BCICS websites. WORC

will also establish a project archive and create Information Sheets with collated government information on programs, policies, and services, made available in easily readable format for the benefit of

WORC members as well as the public. It will also publish articles containing the profiles of participating WORC members in selected popular journals.

In addition to the members of WORC who are the key researchers in-kind support is being provided by BCICS staff, in particular Kathleen Gabelmann who has participated in research with people with invisible disabilities, and by Dr. Pamela Moss (Faculty of Human and Social Development), who has researched and written extensively on chronic illness and disabilities. Their involvement started at the proposal stage and is ongoing, including advice and support on pertinent literature, methodology, analysis, and whatever else is requested within the parameters of the project.

The mandate of the Work Opportunities Resource Cooperative is “to develop cooperative enterprise and employment for people with disabilities.” WORC is one of several co-operatives organised recently in B.C. that focus on the needs of people with barriers to work.

More information about WORC is available on its website: <http://www.worc.bc.ca>. Also see a case study of WORC on the BCICS website.



## New Publications

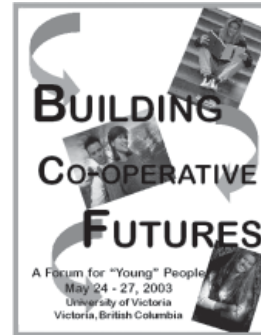
BCICS has two new publications that are likely to be of interest to readers of the Anthill. Both documents are part of the Occasional Papers Series. Kate Blomfield, a law student with the Law Faculty at the University of Victoria, researched and wrote *Co-operative Associations in British Columbia and Registered Charitable Status* as part of a course requirement for her Law degree, which she is presently completing. The paper focuses on the issue of charitable status for co-operatives. Readers are reminded that this document does not constitute legal advice; for that, a person would have to consult with a practicing lawyer. However, Kate's paper is a good place to begin exploring the issue of the charitable tax status of co-operatives today.

The other recently published Occasional Paper is *Working Together to Create the Future: Opportunities for Creative Co-operatives in British Columbia Forestry* written by Ray Travers, who is a registered professional forester and a well-known speaker and writer on forestry issues. Ray's paper presents his views on the possibilities for co-operatives within a more co-operative forestry industry in British Columbia.

You can order either of these Occasional Papers from BCICS for \$6.00 each. All issues of the BCICS Occasional Papers Series are also available for viewing on the BCICS website.

# Building Co-operative Futures

A Forum for "Young" People  
May 24 – 27, 2003  
University of Victoria



## Workshops:

- How to Get a Co-op Started
- Business Plan Components
- Marketing Co-ops
- Getting Going
- Co-operative Dynamics
- A Career in Co-ops

## True Stories: (Case Studies)

- Calgary Co-op
- Growing Circle Food Co-op
- Mountain Equipment Co-op
- Saskatoon Community Clinic
- Student Co-op Federation (Quebec)
- VanCity Savings Credit Union

Co-ops and Credit Unions are invited to "partner" with BCICS in the delivery of this forum. Partnership involves a nominal \$1,000 commitment and will be acknowledged in all conference materials. Partner organizations will also receive a discounted registration for their sponsored participants. For more information about the conference in general or partnerships specifically contact BCICS at 250.472.4539 or email [rochdale@uvic.ca](mailto:rochdale@uvic.ca).

"I remember one meeting on the west coast of Newfoundland, on a Saturday night in a high school gym. There was about 150 fishermen there. I gave my usual story about how we started things here, did it all from the ground up. And one good-looking middle aged fishermen got up and said 'Mr. Harding you have been very good what you said but I don't believe a word of it.' I said, 'Well don't you?' He said, 'it's not possible to do that without getting help from the government.' That was the attitude, and that is the thing you have to watch out for."

**Ken Harding** - former manager of Prince Rupert Fishermen's Co-operative.

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The BCICS is a catalyst for research, learning and teaching about co-operative practice and thought. The Institute was founded in January 2000 under the directorship of Dr. Ian MacPherson, and is based at the University of Victoria. The BCICS collaborates with other post-secondary institutions, the co-operative sector, governments and people and communities throughout British Columbia and beyond.

**ANTHILL – Newsletter of the British Columbia Institute for Co-operative Studies**