

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

# Anthill

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## Research on Malcolm Island

During the week of the 17<sup>th</sup> through 21<sup>st</sup> of February 2003, a BCICS research team visited Malcolm Island, off the Northeast tip of Vancouver Island. The main centre of the island, Sointula, has long been a centre of co-operative action: a Finnish intentional community was established there in 1901 and though long ago defunct, it continues to inform the residents' understanding of their collective responsibilities and capacities.

One of the main formal expressions of this action is The Sointula Co-operative Store Association, incorporated in 1909 (the oldest running co-op in BC, and as every resident seems to know, the longest continuous running co-op store in Canada). The co-op operates the only grocery, hardware store and gas pump on the island. The credit union, incorporated in 1940 as the Sointula Credit Union and a member of Evergreen Savings since 1999, and the store are the traditional co-operatives of the island. Kevin Wilson and Dr. Ian MacPherson conducted interviews and studied documents relating to these older co-operatives during the visit (see page 3 for more on Wilson's research).

A new generation of co-ops incorporated during the last five years. Malcolm Island Shellfish Co-operative (1999), Wild Island Foods Co-operative (2000) and B.C. Maritime Resource Co-operative (2001) are participants in *BC in the New Economy*, a 3-year study by BCICS that looks at the emergence

and performance of co-operatives in rural and remote settings of British Columbia. Dr. Ana Maria Peredo, Dr. Merdith MacLean, BCICS research co-ordinator Kathleen Gabelmann, and researcher Ryan George conducted interviews relating to these organisations.

While the technical team at Malcolm Island Shellfish Co-operative (MISC) is busy with R&D on abalone production (grown on land in tanks), the co-op is negotiating a new partnership to ensure it has adequate finances to complete its first production cycle which can be up to 5 years in length. MISC hopes to expand from its current location to a larger facility and to increase its number of employees from the current four up to ten to fifteen over the next decade as conditions permit. These jobs would help revitalize a fishing community that has been economically depressed since the Mifflin Plan (1996) and now worries that its remaining commercial fisheries may be endangered by in-water finfish farms located in the area. Wild Island Foods Co-operative currently runs the island's only scratch bakery and commercial eat-in restaurant, and is poised to become a major hub of economic activity on the island. The multi-stakeholder (consumers, producers, employees and investors are all members) co-op will soon open a food-processing plant that will allow entrepreneurial members of Malcolm Island to add value to available seafood and wild and cultivated fruits and vegetables

for sale in commercial centres elsewhere in BC.

Wild Island and MISC are both members of the BC Maritime Resource Co-operative, which will provide accounting, managerial and marketing services to them and other shellfish and maritime produce co-ops once the businesses are in full operation.

During their visit BCICS researchers learned about the incredible amount of work that is done for the community by non-profit organisations and informal networks of island residents. The gift-economy accounts for a considerable amount of services in the areas of construction and care for children and individuals at risk.



Life-time Sointula resident and retired fisherman and logger, Dave Siidor with 'new' Sointulan Susan Harvey (15 years), a director of Wild Island Foods and member of MISC. Uncle Dave had just purchased a membership in Wild Island Foods Co-operative.

# BCICS Welcomes Research Associates



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University of Victoria.**

Dr. Cheryl Lans and Robby Tulus are joining BCICS as Research Associates. Cheryl will be studying co-operative involvement in the alternative food economy, and Robby will be researching co-operatives in Asia.

## Dr. Cheryl Lans

Dr. Cheryl Lans has a background in sustainable agriculture and did both her Masters and Doctorate at Wageningen University in the Netherlands. In 1998-1999 Cheryl conducted research with two groups based in Trinidad: the *Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development* (CNIRD), and the Women and Development Studies Group. In 1998 Cheryl was a part time lecturer at the *Centre for Gender and Development Studies*, teaching feminist epistemology to nine students enrolled in the M.Phil programme at the University of the West Indies in St. Augustine, Trinidad. Cheryl is currently visiting faculty in Sociology at the University of Victoria. In that capacity she has begun research with Dr. Nancy Turner and Dr. Gerhard Brauer on medicinal herbs used for animal health in BC. In Summer 2003 Cheryl will be teaching a course for the Department of Anthropology on Veterinary Anthropology and Creolization.

Cheryl recently received funding from SSHRC to do postdoctoral research in co-operative studies with guidance from Dr. Ian MacPherson and will commence research in July 2003. The title of her project is 'Movement towards an alternative food economy? Social economy, co-operatives and sustainable agriculture in British Columbia.'

This research will explore the evolution of an alternative food economy and the responses to this by actors in conventional agriculture. The research fits in with existing research being conducted by BCICS on the involvement of co-operatives in building an alternative food economy (for example the multi-stakeholder Growing Circle Food Co-operative on Saltspring Island). Case studies will be conducted on agrifood co-ops on Vancouver Island, the Southern and Northern Gulf Islands (including Salt Spring and Malcolm Island), and Vancouver.

## Robby Tulus

Robby Tulus pioneered the Credit Union Movement in Indonesia in the late 1960s, and co-founded the Credit Union Counseling/Central Organization (CUCO) in Indonesia as well as the Asian Confederation of Credit Unions (ACCU) in 1971. He started his career as managing director of CUCO Indonesia (Jakarta 1971-80), Training Specialist of ACCU (Seoul, Korea 1981-83), Asia Region Director of the Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA, Ottawa, Canada, 1983-1993), Senior Policy Advisor of the International Co-operative Alliance (New Delhi & Manila 1993-96), and Regional Director for Asia Pacific of the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA, in New Delhi and Singapore 1996-2001). During his tenure with the CCA and ICA, he worked closely with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), NGOs, specialized agencies of the United Nations, and multilateral agencies, and was instrumental in instituting biannual ministerial conferences in the Asia Pacific Region to create a more enabling environment for co-operative policy and legislative reform.

In addition to his duties as an associate with the Centre for Asia and Pacific Initiatives, Robby will be doing research with Co-operatives in Asia and teaching courses.

# Co-operative Community Partnerships

## Sointula History Revisited

*Editor's note: Kevin Wilson is a Masters student in the Department of History at the University of Victoria. The following is his account of research and writing he is undertaking, in conjunction with other BCICS researchers on Malcolm Island. Support for Kevin's research comes from several sources including the Co-op and Credit Union sector, the Sointula Museum, the Community University Research Alliance (CURA), the University of Victoria's Co-operative Education programme, and the Center for International Mobility in Finland.*

At the beginning of January this year I started working with BCICS on a research project focusing on the community of Sointula, Malcolm Island. Malcolm Island lends itself well to co-op studies in a number of ways: it has the longest consecutive running co-operative store in Western Canada, the Sointula Co-op (1909 to the present); BC's first fishing co-op, the British Columbia Fishermen's Co-operative Association (BCFCA -1929-1932); and it has developed a number of other co-operatives in the past several decades, including tree planting, shellfish, and multi-stakeholder co-operatives.

My main focus has been on the island's historical development. Specifically, I have been tracing the ideological development of the people living on Malcolm Island, noting cultural changes, and, in particular, detailing the changes that have occurred in the co-op store over the years. This has given me the opportunity to engage several research methods. I have examined primary documents in the Provincial and National Archives, conducted interviews, and looked through records at the Sointula Museum. During this time my original focus has been expanded somewhat and I am now working as a co-author in the development of popular book about the people of Malcolm Island, from the early Finnish settlement to the present day. The prominent themes in the book include the intellectual and cultural traditions of communitarianism as they have played out on Malcolm Island, co-operative and communitarian strategies, changes that took place between 1960 and 1995, and the activities since 1996, when the effects of Mifflin Plan instituted by the federal government served to devastate the island's fishing industry.

For those not familiar with the community, there is a great deal of fascinating material to study. The community began as a socialist utopia in 1901, settled by Finnish immigrants under the leadership of the charismatic Matti Kurikka.. Throughout the twentieth century, Malcolm Islanders have devoted much of their time to larger issues and organisations, leaving a record of strong union support, socialist politics, and a connection to Finnish communities throughout Canada. However, any study of Malcolm Island would be incomplete without a heavy focus on the Sointula Co-op store. Beyond being simply a successful consumer co-op, the store has acted as the uniting force in the community over most of its existence; from its all day community meetings, to its role as a bank, property owner, and fishing gear supplier, the co-op has been the heart of the community, and a primary focus for me. --Kevin Wilson

## Victoria Car Co-op Hits the Road

The Victoria Car-Share Co-op (VCSC) is a non-profit cooperative (established in 1996), which shares the ownership and use of vehicles.

It offers members an opportunity to utilize alternative modes of transportation, such as transit, walking, and cycling, but still have access to a vehicle for other needs.

Car sharing is affordable because the ownership, insurance and maintenance of the vehicles are shared among members of the Co-operative. Membership costs include a one-time refundable share, a small monthly administration fee, and any usage fees accumulated. Usage fees are based on distance and the amount of time the vehicle has been booked.

In the last year, VCSC has doubled the number of vehicles (4 cars, 1 van, and 1 truck with a locked canopy) in its fleet and increased membership by 40 per cent. Its vehicles are located in Downtown Victoria, Fairfield, Fernwood, James Bay, Oak Bay, and the University of Victoria. Additional vehicles will be added to other

neighbourhoods as membership continues to increase.

The success of the VCSC is due to the hard work of an elected volunteer Board of Directors, the co-operation of members, and a part-time Operations Manager. VCSC Board members are working to sustain and expand membership throughout Greater Victoria.

The idea of car sharing is not just local. It exists all over Canada and Europe, and there is a local co-op in Vancouver. To further develop the functionality and accessibility of car sharing, a working relationship between VCSC and Vancouver's Cooperative Auto Network (CAN) has also been established. VCSC members have access to CAN's vehicles and vice versa. This co-operation helps decrease the number of automobiles on the ferry between the two cities.

For more information about VCSC call: 995-0265, email: [info@victoriacarshare.ca](mailto:info@victoriacarshare.ca) or visit our website:

<http://www.victoriacarshare.ca>

*-contributed by Tara Tompkins, Marketing Director, Victoria Car Share Co-op*

## Updates...

The crew at BCICS has always been a busy one! For the past five months **Ryan George** has been working on the project, BC Co-ops in the New Economy which included a week of research on Malcolm Island, seven hours north of Victoria. **Ryan** left for Toronto at the beginning of May where he will begin a Masters in Economics at the University of Toronto. He will be continuing to assist with aspects of BCICS research.

**Chris Garrish** has had his paper, "Unscrambling the Omlette: Understanding British Columbia's Agricultural Land Reserve," published in *BC Studies*. **Chris** is currently working as an intern in Canberra, Australia on Land Use Issues until August.

**Sol Kinnis** just returned from Cuba. Congratulations to **Sol** on her marriage to Luis Mario Guerra-Beliz on March 19, 03!

Welcome to **Andre Vallillee** who is preparing a paper on co-operative land use. An overview of **Andre's** initial work on co-operative land use will be posted to the BCICS website soon. **Andre** is an undergraduate student in Environmental Studies and Political Science. **Anna-Marie Krahn**, who prepared a report on Child Care Co-ops last year, will be joining us again this summer for general research assistance.

Welcome back to last year's student summer researchers, **Katie Rollwagen** and **Julia Smith**. **Katie** has just returned from a trip to Romania and Turkey and **Julia** recently travelled from Newfoundland to Victoria by train.

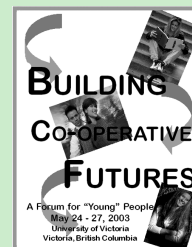
## CO-OPERATIVE STUDIES PROGRAM TAKES CANADIAN CO-OPERATORS TO BOLOGNA

The Bologna Summer Program for Co-operative Studies provides co-operative and credit union leaders, managers, practitioners, and students of co-operative studies with an opportunity to follow advanced level topics of co-operative economics, philosophy, history, and methodology at the heart of one of the most vibrant co-operative economies in the world--Bologna, Italy. The program begins with a one-week orientation in Vancouver, June 23-27 and then moves to Bologna from June 30 to July 18. Register early; only 25 participants will be accepted into this year's program. For more information, go to [www.ccabc.bc.ca/home.html](http://www.ccabc.bc.ca/home.html).

## Conferences at BCICS

BCICS is hosting a forum for young people, May 24-27, 2003. The word "young" has been used as an operative term, and although the conference was originally intended for people aged 18 to 25, those who have registered range in age from 17 to 44. Participants will take part in Plenary Sessions, Workshops, and listen to "True Stories" about Canadian co-operatives.

Participants' active participation and interaction during presentations and in workshops will contribute to the overall success of the forum. Facilitators include Greg MacLeod, of the University College of Cape Breton; John Restakis, General Manager of the Canadian Co-operative Association, BC Region; and Linda Shaw and Mervyn Wilson of the Co-operative College, United Kingdom. So far, conference participants from a variety of co-op backgrounds will be coming from across Western Canada, Ontario, and the United Kingdom.



On the heels of the Youth Forum, BCICS is hosting "Mapping Co-operative Studies in the Millenium," an international conference at the University of Victoria from May 28 to 31, 2003 sponsored by the Research Committee of the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) and the Canadian Association for the Study of Co-operation. International in scope, the conference will be attended by over 100 presenters from over 25 countries including Argentina, Nigeria, Ghana, India, France, Japan, Bulgaria, United States, and Iran. Topics covered reflect the interdisciplinary nature of Co-operative Studies. Key features of the conference include defining and exploring the theoretical aspects surrounding Co-operative Studies as a field of inquiry and exploring the roles Universities play in this process.

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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.