

**Director's Report  
to the  
Management Advisory Board**

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**Centre  
for the Study  
of Co-operatives**

**Murray Fulton  
Director**

April 1999

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## Centre Overview and Highlights

In addition to the normal round of classes, administrative work, research, and extension activities, Centre faculty and staff have been involved in a number of other events requiring an enormous output of energy and organizational skills. Negotiations for the contract renewal have been on-going; along with the advisory board and others from the co-op network across the Prairies, we were all involved in an intense Planning Session in early January; and taking our direction from that meeting, Centre faculty and staff then took part in a two-day retreat to formulate a vision for the Centre as well as a five-year directional plan to carry us over the period of the next contract.

In February, the Centre sponsored and organized two successful conferences held in Saskatoon—“Networking for Success” and “Co-operatives in the New Agriculture” (see details below). Although Mona was largely responsible for the organization of the first one, and Roger for the second, preparations for these two events involved the time and energy of almost every member of faculty and staff, particularly that of Marianne and Karen in the office, whose invaluable support in these matters needs to be acknowledged.

Much of March has been spent planning and organizing a major international conference to be held at Kananaskis in June—“The Co-operative Summit: Case Studies in Business Strategy” (see details below). Murray provided the original vision, Roger has been responsible for the overall organization, with Nora creating a “look” for the event and writing and designing the conference brochure and other materials. We hired Wendy Peters to help create the database for invitees and handle the mailing, and once again, relied upon the tireless logistical support of Marianne and Karen.

In addition, we have continued our monthly seminar series; carried on with our informal in-house discussion group, which maintains an enthusiastic attendance, possibly because of the food that has become part of the ritual; and also found time to exchange information and experiences with the ongoing stream of visitors who come to us from around the world.

### *The Contract Renewal*

The contract renewal for 1 July 1999 is going well, with all our sponsors supporting the proposal. A new contract will be signed in the next few months.

### *The Contract Renewal Planning Session*

January 12 saw the advisory board, members of what we have come to think of as The Co-op Network from across the Prairies (Ian, Harvey, and Brian), plus all Centre faculty and staff come together for an intense Contract Renewal Planning Session to discuss the role and focus of the Centre over the next five years. Murray brought to the table a document that supplied background material and a framework for discussion. It included details about a number of broad issues such as faculty renewal, co-operative education, research priorities, a graduate program, outreach activities, international exposure, consulting work, and the profile of the Centre. The ensuing discussion was lively, thoughtful, occasionally surprising, and most useful in helping us to define our strategic plan and vision for the Centre over the period of the next contract. Nora took copious notes during the session and produced a comprehensive document that was circulated to all in attendance. Centre personnel found the event an extremely valuable exercise, and several people suggested that similar reviews should be undertaken at regularly scheduled intervals.

### *The Retreat*

Taking our direction from the planning session, Centre faculty and staff then took part in a two-day retreat to formulate a vision for the Centre as well as a five-year directional plan to carry us over the period of the next contract. Although we discussed many issues, two in particular seemed to elicit the most spirited response. One was the education initiative, which seemed to receive general support during the planning session, and which we dealt with in great detail. We came up with a proposal for an interdisciplinary graduate degree and also a set of courses for the undergraduate level that would be available to students across campus. The second item concerned our vision for the Centre, which came up repeatedly during the planning session even though it was not an agenda item, suggesting it needed some

attention. In response, we developed a comprehensive “mission statement that is not really a mission statement” (to assuage the concerns of those whose eyes glaze over at the mere mention of the term). A draft for discussion with stakeholders is attached to this document.

### *The New Website*

Rachel has continued to work on the development of the site over the past few months, adding to the almost two hundred links to other co-op organizations around the world, completing the Biographies section, refining existing portions of it to make it more user friendly, posting Centre publications in pdf format, and regularly updating the News and Events section. With work from both her and Nora, we now have all the Centre booklets available on the website, as well as a number of occasional papers. And after months of software problems originating in the program itself, our library collection is finally searchable on the Web! Check out our website at <http://coop-studies.usask.ca/>. Maintenance of the site is on-going.

### *Conferences*

The Centre sponsored and organized two conferences in Saskatoon this term—“Networking for Success: Strategic Alliances in the New Agriculture” and “Co-operatives in the New Agriculture: Meeting the Challenge.” They were held back to back, 17–18 February, and both were well attended and well received.

“Networking for Success” dealt with the growing interdependence of individual segments of the agrifood industry, coupled with the necessity for increased specialization. The workshop component of the conference helped participants understand the structure of strategic alliances, how to form and maintain them, and how to help these alliances succeed in their individual enterprises.

“Co-operatives in the New Agriculture” tackled the dramatic changes taking place in the agricultural landscape. The purpose of the conference was to outline the changing nature of agriculture and to examine how co-operatives are responding to these changes. Special features included an in-depth analysis of how changes in the agricultural sector are changing co-operative structures, operations, and services; and personal accounts from people who are working

to transform their co-operatives. This last section, which drew presenters from high-profile co-operatives in both Canada and the US, was particularly interesting and instructive.

Roger spent much of March planning and organizing a major international conference to be held at Kananaskis in June—"The Co-operative Summit: Case Studies in Business Strategy." The idea grew out of Murray and Marvin Weins's experience at the PENSA Conference in Brazil in October. It is being planned as an exclusive forum for senior executives and elected officials from co-operative and other business organizations around the world. A unique blend of academic and industry perspectives, The Summit will offer case-study-based exploration of trends and issues in contemporary co-operative business. The case studies—from Canada, the US, Europe, and South America—will be prepared and delivered by academics, then discussed and analysed by groups of individuals from a variety of business backgrounds. The insights from this exchange are intended to help participants develop innovative strategies for coping with the demands of change in their own particular industries, organizations, and agencies—issues such as new product development, heightened consumer demand, mergers, takeovers, and strategic alliances.

This conference is a huge undertaking for the Centre, probably the most significant event we have ever organized. With the international contacts we have developed over the years, we are confident of a positive response, which will go some way towards raising the Centre's profile, one of the issues identified as needing attention during the Planning Session in January.

### *Staff News*

Byron is on research leave in Provence, from whence he continues to send quaint messages and digital images of various idyllic settings, which have begun to drive Centre personnel into paroxysms of envy. Nora, who receives most of the messages, has begun to censor what gets circulated. Byron will be returning to the Centre in July.

In January, Michael began a six-month sabbatical in Costa Rica and Chile, where he will be studying the role of co-operatives in sustainable rural development. Fortunately, Michael does not have a digital camera and even communication via e-mail seems uncertain, thus saving faculty and staff from further petty jealousies.

Although Lou is on extended leave from the Centre at the College of Commerce, she retains a strong interest and involvement in co-operatives, and continues her connection with Centre activities, though on a limited basis.

Mona Holmlund, a freelance writer, was with the Centre for a few months working on an AIMS contract with Murray. She quickly made herself at home and was a cheerful addition to the office mix. Her work concluded in March and she has moved on to other projects.

Also with us for a brief period is Wendy Peters, who was hired initially to help with the database and handle the mailing for “The Co-operative Summit” conference coming up in June. We have been taking advantage of her other talents and putting her to work in the library and the main office as well.

### *Visitors to the Centre*

Nial Kuyak from CCA Ottawa, here for the CCA Region Council meeting in early January, spent a day at the Centre with Murray and Roger preparing for the meeting of co-op educators from across Canada that took place in Ottawa at the end of January.

On 15 January, we hosted fourteen Saskatchewan Wheat Pool delegates and two district representatives, in town for the day visiting facilities and locations associated in some way with the Pool. Murray and Roger spent the morning with them explaining who we are and what we are about, and then the rest of the Centre staff joined them for lunch and an informal discussion. We had an extremely animated exchange and really appreciated the opportunity to talk to people at the grassroots of one of our major sponsors. It was an eye-opener for both sides and a valuable exercise in communication, in addition to being an excellent supplement to our in-house discussion series. All of us felt we should try to find ways to communicate more personally with members of our sponsor organizations, but thus far have not had the opportunity to bring a similar group through the Centre.

For two weeks in early February we hosted a delightfully enthusiastic and bright young student from Brazil—Rodney Geraldi, who is studying agriculture with a focus on importing/exporting related to co-operatives. He is based at Escola Superior de Agricultura “Luiz de Queiroz” in the city of Piracicaba.

He was in Canada studying English, and joined us for a time to do some work with Murray. While he was here we arranged for a major blizzard with whiteout conditions, a ski trip, and encouraged his consumption of unusual foods and alcohol when we took him out for dinner, all of which he embraced with unbridled enthusiasm, adding numerous words to his English vocabulary in the process.

In late March we had a visit from Boris Krotov, chief agronomist and deputy manager of an agricultural co-operative in Russia. He was on a six-week visit to Canada, part of the Yeltsin Democracy Fellowship Program of the Russian Business Management Initiative. He spent a day at the Centre with Murray and Roger, and some time in the resource centre.

And we have just heard that Mario Carrier, who came to see us last November, will be spending his sabbatical beginning in September here and in Edmonton. Mario heads a research group funded by the Desjardins movement in Québec and wants to establish a working relationship with the Centre. He is also affiliated with the New Rural Economy Project and hopes to collaborate with Michael on some aspects of this study when he is here.

### *The Seminar Series*

The Centre's seminar series, designed to showcase our current and on-going research projects, as well as complementary work by others, continues to be well received and attended by the university community, the co-op sector, and other interested parties. Rocky booked two for this term. The first, at the end of January, was "Community Economic Development and the Inner City," presented by Len Usiskin, Community Economic Development Manager of Quint Development Corporation. Coming up in early May is an as-yet-to-be-titled presentation by Patricia Paton, Policy Analyst, Government and Public Affairs, for Credit Union Central. Trish recently went to Costa Rica as part of a CCA visit to study co-operatives and credit unions there. Her main interest is in international development.

### *The In-House Discussion Group*

The in-house discussion group offers Centre staff an informal opportunity to ask questions or offer opinions on matters related to co-operatives or other relevant areas of interest. Enthusiasm for these discussion *cum* lunch meetings

continues unabated, partly perhaps because of the growing number of food fetishes among staff; it is amazing how the promise of something special to eat brings us all out of the woodwork. January's topic, "The Professionalization of Management," was pre-empted by the visit to the Centre of a number of Sask Wheat Pool delegates and district reps, so we carried it over to February (Murray's wonderful chunky chocolate chip cookies were all devoured before the meeting even began). In March we discussed the changes occurring in the credit union system (set against Rocky's delicious pumpkin pecan muffins). And April 9 we will use the failed Surrey Metro Credit Union takeover bid to explore issues around democratic member control (under the influence of Marianne's fabulous blueberry muffins).

## Teaching, Research, Presentations, Publications, and Administration

### Murray Fulton

#### *Teaching*

Murray taught two courses this term—Economics 231.3: Co-operatives, and Agricultural Economics 340.3: Agricultural Prices and Marketing. He also taught part of another course, Agricultural Economics 842.3: Agricultural Market Organizations.

#### *Research*

Murray completed a paper with Julie Kennett called "New Generation Co-operative Development: The Economic Environment in North Dakota and Minnesota, and Lessons for Saskatchewan," prepared for the Saskatchewan Department of Economic and Co-operative Development.

#### *Presentations & Extension*

3 February: Presentation on the changing nature of agriculture to "Strategies for Rural Survival," Davidson.



17 February: Presentation on “Strategic Alliances and the New Agriculture” at the “Networking for Success: Strategic Alliances in the New Agriculture” conference sponsored by the Centre, Saskatoon.

18 February: Presentation on “Co-operatives and the New Agriculture” and on “New Generation Co-operatives” at the “Co-operatives in the New Agriculture” conference sponsored by the Centre, Saskatoon.

1 March: Presentation on “Strategic Alliances and the New Agriculture” at the “Managing Risk in the New Millennium” workshop sponsored by Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food, Saskatoon.

2 March: Presentation on “New Generation Co-operatives and the New Agriculture” at the “New Generation Co-operatives” workshop sponsored by the University of Manitoba Agribusiness Chair in Co-operatives and Group Marketing, Winnipeg.

4 March: Presentation to Agri-Business Management Development Program on “Strategic Alliances and the New Agriculture,” Saskatoon.

### *Other Activities*

Murray and Roger attended the “Conference on Co-operative Education” in Ottawa, 29–30 January. Along with representatives of other universities across Canada, the CCA, the CCC, and the Credit Union Institute of Canada, they discussed the current co-operative education initiatives in Canada, the gaps in co-op education, and how we might better collaborate to meet these gaps. Murray and Nicole St. Martin have been appointed as co-chairs of a Steering Committee on Co-operative Education that will follow up on how best to develop a collaborative relationship.

## **Brett Fairbairn**

### *Teaching*

Brett has lost no time taking over his responsibilities since returning from sabbatical in January. He taught two classes this term—History 288.3: Co-operatives in the World, and History 438.3: The Nazi Catastrophe and its Postwar Consequences.

### *Research*

Brett has begun a new research project on co-operative development, the role of the state, and state-co-operative sector partnerships, funded by the Co-operatives Secretariat of the Government of Canada. The study will examine co-operative development in the United States and in Australia, and will compare and contrast the experiences in these countries with those in Canada.

He has been collecting manuscripts (with Ian MacPherson and Nora) for a book on "Canadian Co-operatives in the Year 2000," an anthology to be published this summer.

### *Publications*

"The Rise and Fall of Consumer Co-operation in Germany," in Ellen Furlough and Carl Strikwerda (eds.), *Consumers Against Capitalism? Consumer Cooperation in Europe, North America, and Japan, 1840-1990* (Lanham, Md., etc.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999) pp. 267-302.

"Balancing Act: Crown Corporations in a Successful Economy," in John R. Allan (ed.), *Public Enterprise in an Era of Change* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1998), pp. 181-91.

### *Other Activities*

Brett resumed his position as Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of History, administering a graduate programme for fifty MA and PhD candidates.

He carries on as chair of the Saskatchewan Archives Board, guiding a strategic planning and consultation process for the organization.

In late March, Brett attended a conference in Bamberg, Germany, on "German Discontinuities in the Twentieth Century," sponsored by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, which also provided funds for his sabbatical last year. While there, he travelled to visit historical researchers in Göttingen and Berlin, including those he worked with last year during his co-operative history project (all at the Foundation's expense).

Brett also serves on a number of university-based committees—the PhD committee of the College of Graduate Studies and Research; the Executive Committee and the Graduate Committee of the Department of History; and two search committees for new appointments in History.

### **Michael Gertler**

Michael is currently on sabbatical in Costa Rica and Chile. During his time away, he will be studying the roles of co-operatives in sustainable rural development. He has established links with the CCA regional office in San José, Costa Rica, and with researchers at Universidad Nacional, Costa Rica; Universidad de La Serena, Chile; and the Universidad de Chile, Santiago. The last is the home of an organization similar to the Centre—the Programa de Investigación y Formación en Organizaciones Asociativas y Cooperativas (PROCOOP). Researchers from this group have proposed a program of comparative research on co-operatives in Canada and Chile.

### **Lou Hammond Ketilson**

Lou temporarily abandoned her duties in Commerce to take part in the Centre planning retreat in February. It was really nice to have her back with us for the day and to see that her interest in and commitment to the Centre remain strong. She has maintained her position as vice-chair of the ICA Research Committee and will be involved in the ICA Congress coming up in Québec City in August. She will be presenting a paper at the meetings and helping to organize a global women's committee whose interests will focus on the role of women in co-operatives.

### **Byron Henderson**

Byron is on research leave and is continuing to prepare research papers in the area of online education. He is currently working on a program design for applying recent developments in online communities to support research and teaching in co-operative organizations.

## Nora Russell

Nora has been working on a variety of projects since the last director's report. Relatively minor tasks included revising the text pages for the presentation folder of information about the Centre we take to conferences and hand out to Centre visitors; preparing an ad for our two February conferences for inclusion in the *Manitoba Co-operator*, the *Western Producer*, and *On-Campus News*; preparing postscript files of our booklets and occasional papers for Rachel to post to the website; putting the final touches on the *Proceedings* from the Women in Co-operatives Conference and sending it to the printer; and creating new front matter and making adjustments to the interior pages and cover for *Research for Action*, a Centre publication that needed reprinting. She also supervised the printing of these two documents.

Nora took copious notes during the Planning Session held in January, and with additional material from notes taken by Michael and Roger, produced a document summarizing the day's proceedings for circulation among board members, Centre personnel, and the co-op network people who attended from other provinces. Later that month, she spent quite a bit of time helping Mona learn QuarkXpress, and did the proofreading, final formatting, and print supervision for the booklet *Networking for Success: Strategic Alliances in the New Agriculture*, one outcome of Murray's most recent AIMS contract. That printing of the booklet was part of the conference materials handed out to participants at the February conference of the same name. Later, Nora redid the front matter for the booklet as per AIMS's instructions and supervised the printing of over 300 more copies for AIMS, who will handle distribution of the booklet. She also redid the graphs and charts in Byron's paper *The Components of Online Education*, which he had pulled off the Internet in low-resolution files unsuitable for printing purposes. Once that was done, she did the layout for the paper and sent it to the printer. It is an addition to our Occasional Papers Series.

A large part of Nora's time in March was spent designing, writing, and supervising the printing of the promotional package for our upcoming conference titled "The Co-operative Summit: Case Studies in Business Strategy," to be held in Kananaskis at the end of June. She also took some time to design a "with-the-compliments-of" Centre "note card" for faculty and staff to include with packages they send out; that will be going to the printer next week.

A couple of projects that Nora had begun work on were relegated to the back burner when more pressing responsibilities took over. These included the revisions to the Centre publication *Saskatchewan Co-operatives: A Record of Community Development*, and the manuscript about the car-sharing co-operative in Winnipeg undertaken by David Leland of Red River Community College, which will eventually be an addition to the Centre's booklet series.

The majority of Nora's time during the next month will be spent editing the book pulled together by Brett and Ian MacPherson, which the Centre will publish. Tentatively titled "Mutual Aid, Memory, and the Millennium," the focus of the book is the issue of how the Canadian co-operative movement has undertaken and adjusts to change. This will be a major undertaking, but it will give us a significant publication.

Also on the agenda for publication is the document that has come out of the SANASA case study by Dan Ish, Lloyd Hardy, and Ingrid Fischer, who spent most of December in Sri Lanka. Because of other pressing work, the Centre will not be doing the editorial work on this project, but Nora will be doing the design, layout, and print supervision.

She is still looking for a window of opportunity to prepare a newsletter, which we identified as a priority at our planning retreat in early February. She is responsible for the director's reports on an on-going basis.

## Rachel Sarjeant-Jenkins

### *Library*

Rachel is still working on reorganizing the library. She has pulled all the annual reports and put them in a section of their own, and ordered some library signs to make the library more "user friendly." Cataloguing is an on-going process, but she can see progress with another 120 items completed. In addition, she continues the daily check through newspapers for relevant articles to be posted on the Current Awareness board.

Rachel has dealt with numerous information requests from on campus, in Saskatchewan, and around the world. These have come in many different ways, in person, by e-mail, and by phone. Examples of external requests include: cereals co-ops and international trade (Greece); agricultural co-ops in western Europe (New Brunswick); housing co-ops and urban design

(Vancouver); multi-stakeholder and marketing co-ops (British Columbia); and numerous requests from within Saskatchewan. She has had a large number of students in the library this term from both Brett's and Murray's classes, which she has found fun and stimulating, a test for her knowledge of the collection.

She has continued to add items to the library collection. Of note are a series of NFB videos on individual co-ops, brought to her attention during a visit from some SWP delegates, including *We're Here to Stay*, which is about a co-operative farm in Saskatchewan. New books include a series of publications from CCA Ontario, a book on Agropur, and books on globalization, credit unions, and employee ownership.

### *Website Maintenance*

The website is coming along well, although despite all Rachel's good intentions, it's not quite finished. Most noticeably, the Discussion Forum is still under construction. However, after months of phone calls, software problems, and discussions with library software providers, the library collection is finally searchable on the Web! In addition, most sections of the site are further developed—particularly in the News and Events and Links sections. Nora and Rachel have been busy making pdf files of some of our publications (with a current focus on our small booklets), which are now accessible from our website.

Throughout February and March, Rachel (and Roger) took a night class on designing and developing web-based courses. This provided her with some insight into the capabilities of WebCT, course development software available through the U of S, and taught her the practicalities of using the program. She will also be going to a couple of seminars in April on the use of the Web and technology to enhance learning in higher education.

## **Roger Herman**

Roger has spent a large part of his time since the New Year planning a couple of events. The first of these was the "Co-operatives in the New Agriculture" conference, which was held in Saskatoon on 18 February. The conference was attended by eighty participants from Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Manitoba,

and included presentations by representatives of Saskatchewan co-operatives, US co-operatives, and also by Janice MacKinnon, Minister of Economic and Co-operative Development. In addition to planning and making arrangements for the conference, Roger chaired the day's proceedings. He also prepared and submitted a successful application for funding for the conference from the Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development in Saskatchewan (CARDS) program.

The second event is "The Co-operative Summit: Case Studies in Business Strategy," which will be held at Kananaskis at the end of June. Roger has been quite preoccupied making plans and arrangements for this new event (further details on the conference are provided in the Centre Overview and Highlights section at the beginning of this report).

Roger and Murray attended a meeting arranged by CCA in Ottawa at the end of January, which explored opportunities for collaboration in the area of co-operative education. Roger provided a paper for the meeting entitled "A Model for Collaborative Co-operative Education Development." The meeting resulted in the formation of a working committee, co-chaired by Murray and Nicole St. Martin, which will attempt to develop a co-operative education strategy.

Roger has participated as a Centre representative in several meetings over the past few months, including the CCA Saskatchewan Region Council Meeting, FCL's Annual General Meeting, and a meeting on co-operative development co-ordinated by the Department of Economic and Co-operative Development. He continues as the Centre's representative to the Saskatchewan Council for Community Development (SCCD) and sits on the Leadership Education and Development Saskatchewan (LEADS) committee, which is directing the SCCD community leadership development initiative.

In January, Roger arranged for a visit to the Centre by fourteen delegates and two district representatives from Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. This was an opportunity for the delegate group to learn more about the work conducted at the Centre, as well as a chance for Centre staff to meet representatives of one of our funding co-operatives.

On 22 March, the Centre hosted Boris Krotov, a Russian agronomist and participant in the Yeltsin Democracy Fellowship Program. Roger provided Mr. Krotov an overview of the Saskatchewan co-operative sector and its social and economic impact in the province.

Roger has been working with the co-ordinating group for the annual Association of Co-operative Educators (ACE) Institute, which will be held in Saskatoon at the end of April this year. Roger and Murray will lead a pre-institute workshop examining how the content and delivery of co-operative education is changing, and how groups will need to collaborate more than ever to develop collective education strategies.

Along with Rachel, Roger completed an eight-week program in the development of web-based courses. Familiarity in this area will help as the Centre explores the delivery of co-operative education and training via the Internet.

And with Rocky's assistance, Roger continues to co-ordinate our in-house discussion group, providing timely topics for the edification of Centre staff, and coercing each of us in turn to bring the tasty snacks that have become the hallmark of the meetings.

## **Rochelle Smith**

Rocky has completed all class requirements for her PhD and is into planning for comprehensive exams in early September. She also had her first official thesis committee meeting in mid-March. One of the highlights of this term for Rocky was teaching classes for Centre faculty. She was a guest lecturer in Murray's Economics 231.3 (Co-operatives) class; and also covered two weeks of Brett's History 288.3 (Co-operatives in the World) classes while he was in Germany doing research.

Rocky has had two abstracts accepted for papers to be presented at the ICA Conference in Québec City at the end of August. She is preparing for publication a paper on principal-agent theory and the implications for co-operatives. And her paper for Brett's class titled "Deposit Insurance in Saskatchewan: The Role and Significance of the Credit Union Deposit Guarantee Corporation" will be published as a Centre occasional paper this summer.

Rochelle continues to support the CCA's work with the Department of Education on improving co-operative content in the K-12 curriculae; to organize the Centre's seminar series for 1998-99; and, with Roger, to co-ordinate the Centre's in-house discussion group. She is also on the Community Clinic's board of directors and is a member of its Political and Social Action Committee.



## Andrea Harris

Though living in Vancouver, Andrea does contract work with the Centre on an on-going basis. She is working on a project with Murray titled "Machinery Co-operatives: New Models for Saskatchewan," funded by the Agriculture Development Fund. Running until the end of June 1999, the project focusses on an examination of a type of farm machinery co-op in Québec, called CUMA, and the possibility of adapting this model to Saskatchewan agriculture. She is planning a seminar/workshop around the study's findings in May or June for those interested in learning more.

## Marianne Taillon

In addition to her regular day-to-day office duties, Marianne once again took responsibility for a number of special events. She helped organized the "Networking for Success" and "Co-operatives in the New Agriculture" conferences, processing registrations and payments, making hotel reservations and travel arrangements for speakers, preparing name tags and conference packages, working at both registration desks, and attending the "Co-ops in the New Ag" conference to help ensure that all arrangements went smoothly. Once the conferences were over, she looked after the printing of presentations for distribution to conference participants and processed all travel expense claims for speakers.

Marianne helped organize the visit of our Brazilian guest, Rodney Geraldi, booking accommodation, arranging for office space and keys, driving him about, and taking him to a hockey game. She organized the Centre retreat at The Willows, booking the room, arranging for meals, and looking after printed materials. She processed the travel expense claims for the SANASA Case Study group, and helped Roger co-ordinate the visit of our Russian guest, Boris Krotov.

Marianne handled the hiring of a person to help with the mailing list for "The Co-op Summit," and then co-ordinated work among Karen, Wendy, and herself in order to get the mailing list completed and invitations sent out by the end of March. She co-ordinated the CASC Scholarship committee's conference call for the selection of awards, and also participated in a conference call with the CASC executive regarding invitations to members to attend the conference and funding for travel.

Finally, she made travel and car rental arrangements for Andrea Harris, who is coming to Saskatchewan to conduct interviews in connection with the ADF contract on machinery co-operatives she is working on with Murray.

## **Karen Neufeldt**

Karen continues to work for the Centre on a half-time basis, providing support in general office duties to Marianne, Rachel, and other faculty and staff as required, as well as making sure the office runs smoothly when Marianne is away. Apart from her regular office duties the past few months, Karen prepared the presentation packages for attendees at the "Co-operatives in the New Agriculture" conference in February, and more recently, has been busy preparing the CASC scholarship packages, making sure they have all their information, phoning applicants for missing documentation, and photocopying packages for the members of the Scholarship Committee. She has been helping Wendy and Marianne input names to the database and making phone calls to track down presidents and CEOs of corporations for the invitees list to "The Co-operative Summit" conference in Kananaskis in June. She has also been busy as usual in the main office helping Marianne with cash reports, forms, xeroxing, phone and fax billing, and the invoicing and mailing of publications. She provides on-going help to Rachel with library work: pockets, cards, and spine labels on new books. And she is responsible on an on-going basis for mailing and faxing the notices and invitations for the seminar series. Karen also works half-time in the College of Dentistry.

## **Peter Sprague**

Peter carries on with coursework for his MA and continues his research on alternative business organizational forms to affect positive social change in forestry-dependent communities. His research has expanded to include an examination of organizational networks and coalition building as an aid to community development.

Peter continues to consult in the areas of ownership/worker restructuring, worker co-operatives, and forestry business planning and market development. His clients include northern aboriginal groups such as the Canoe Lake Band and the Northwest Metis Development Corporation. Peter has been

working closely with the Canoe Lake Band, helping them to develop their forestry management plan and their community economic development organization.

He is also involved in the wood-processing industry, providing consulting services in areas such as new technology, funding, worker buyout options, and new product development.

## **Mona Holmlund**

Mona completed her work with Murray on a contract funded by the Agriculture Institute of Management in Saskatchewan (AIMS) entitled “Networking in the New Agriculture: Strategies for Growth in the New Economy.” The booklet she wrote with Murray, titled *Networking for Success: Strategic Alliances in the New Agriculture*, has been published; the website database of resources she developed is complete; and the “train-the-trainer” conference/workshop she organized for 17 February, with the same title as the booklet, was well received by participants.

Mona was a welcome addition to the Centre during her months with us. With the objectivity of an outsider, she was able to make many valuable comments and suggestions during our retreat in early February. We all enjoyed her cheerful disposition and droll sense of humour, but with other freelance projects looming, she resisted all attempts to keep her here a little longer.

## **Wendy Peters**

Wendy has been with us for the past month helping create the database of invitees to “The Co-operative Summit” conference. She has spent hours on the phone tracking down presidents and CEOs of co-op organizations across North America. For that personal touch we are looking for with this conference, she patiently ran more than five hundred envelopes individually through the printer, then stuffed them with conference materials, and sealed them by hand. She has been helping Marianne and Karen with general office duties, and also assisting Rachel with her organization of the library, performing many mundane tasks with good-natured competence.