



# 2017 Provincial Co-op Conference

People, Planet, Prosperity:  
Co-operatives and Sustainable Development

September 28, 2017

Speaker & Moderator Biographies



## KEYNOTE ADDRESS



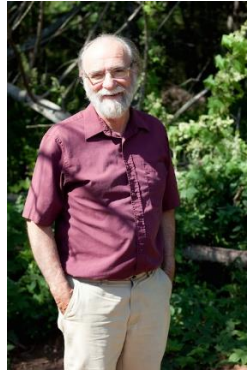
**Michael Barrett**

President & CEO, Gay Lea Foods Co-operative

Michael Barrett is currently the President and CEO at Gay Lea Foods Co-operative – the largest Dairy Co-operative in the province of Ontario. He has been with Gay Lea for almost two decades. Michael has served in many different roles within Gay Lea Foods and also serves his community by being a School Trustee for the Durham District School Board for the city of Oshawa.

Michael, in his spare time, besides helping to parent his now grown family of six children, grand-parenting five, he likes to play with his “big boy toys” (his old cars) and spends anytime that he has left enjoying his farm located in the rolling hills of Selwyn Township.

## MORNING MODERATED PANEL DISCUSSION



**Peter Hough**  
(Moderator)

Principal, Affinity Consulting

Peter Hough is the principal of Affinity Consulting, a practice engaged in co-operative development, research, training and management. Peter recently retired from his long-term position as Financial Officer of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation (CWCF). He is a Board Member of Sustainability Solutions Group, and the Fund Manager of “Tenacity Works”, the CWCF’s revolving loan fund. Peter has 25 years of experience as a member, manager and director of worker and consumer co-operatives. In addition, he has assisted with many co-operative start-ups, developing bylaws, conducting training programs, completing feasibility studies and business plans and providing post start-up mentoring.



**Rob Wesseling**

President & CEO, The Co-operators

Since joining The Co-operators in 1997 as a Programmer Analyst, Rob has held increasingly senior leadership roles within the group of companies, culminating with his appointment as President and Chief Executive Officer of The Co-operators Group Limited on December 1, 2016. From 2007 until 2016, he was Chief Operating Officer of The Sovereign General and, in November 2011,

assumed the additional role of Executive Vice President, National Property and Casualty (P&C) for all P&C operations across The Co-operators group of companies.

Rob has been instrumental in leading flood resiliency efforts in Canada and engaging all levels of government, the academic community and various industries to develop a complete solution for Canadians. He is an acting member of the International Co-operative and Mutual Insurance Federation (ICMIF) Board of Directors and Executive Committee; member of the ICMIF's Development Committee; and founding director and member of Partners for Action Advisory Board. He holds a B.A. with distinction in Theoretical Mathematics and MSc. of Applied Statistics from the University of Guelph where he graduated in 1996. He obtained a Chartered Insurance Professional designation in 1999.

Rob lives with his family in Guelph, Ontario and is an active volunteer in the local community, coaching youth sport and mentoring young athletes.



**Korinne Collins**

**Vice President, Professional Development & Education, CCUA**

Korinne is a seasoned executive with 20 years of learning, business consulting and leadership experience, ranging from an entrepreneurial training start up that she built and subsequently sold, to leading learning teams at CIBC, IBM and PwC and currently at the Canadian Credit Union Association (CCUA).

Korinne's current role as Vice President of Professional Development & Education is focused on the delivery of educational services to the credit union system for over 28,000 employees and 3000 directors in more than 285 credit unions across Canada.

Korinne served on the Board of the Institute for Performance and Learning holding the role of Chair and is a member of the Steering Committee of the 30% Club Canada, focused on bringing more women onto Canadian Corporate Boards.



**David Cork**

**Managing Director, The Renewable Energy Co-operative (TREC)**

David is the newest member of the TREC team, responsible for broadening & strengthening the relationships with our clients, our partners and our funders. He brings a wealth of experience in the solar industry and was a co-founder of the Ottawa Renewable Energy Co-op. David has enjoyed success in the world of high-tech start-ups and acts as a mentor to entrepreneurs.

David holds a BSc in Electrical Engineering from University of Waterloo. In his off-hours you can usually find David outside – skiing, sailing, cycling or golfing, dependent on the season.



**Jennifer Springett**

**President, Cloverbelt Food Co-operative**

Jennifer is a Registered Veterinary Technician and the Northwest Coordinator for Local Food and Farm Co-operative (LFFCC), with a keen interest in animal ethics, food security & sustainable farming. She and her family strive to produce as much of their food as possible on their small hobby farm in Dryden.

She is actively involved in the leadership of various agricultural associations in her community, and was a lead founder of the Cloverbelt Local Food Co-op in 2013, of which she is currently the President. She has provided presentations all over Ontario on local food and the practical aspects of the online local food co-op model; the model was initiated in Oklahoma, and is now developed in numerous municipalities in North America. She recently received an Influential Women of

Northern Ontario Award (2017). The Co-op has been awarded the Premier's Award for Agri-Food Innovation Excellence.

## AFTERNOON PLENARY PRESENTATIONS & BREAKOUTS



**Joel Lalonde**  
(Moderator)

President & CEO, Your Credit Union

Joel currently holds the title of President and CEO at Your Credit Union, a position he has held since 2013. He has been with Your Credit Union since 2009. His prior role was that of Executive Vice President. Previously, he held a number of management positions with caisses populaires in Ontario after his early work as an analyst with the Deposit Insurance Corporation of Ontario (DICO). Joel also sits as a Director of the Ontario Credit Union Foundation and of the Credit Union Services Association (CUSA). He has both a Bachelor of Commerce and Masters of Business Administration from the University of Ottawa.



**Kerr Smith**

Manager of Co-operative Community Engagement, Gay Lea Foods Co-operative

Prior to joining Gay Lea Foods in 2017, Kerr entered the co-op sector in 2010 working with the Ontario Co-operative Association. In his role as Education Manager, Kerr created and illustrated the “All 4 Each” Co-operative Education Outreach Program - which won the award for Mobilization & Involvement at the 2014 International Summit of Co-operatives. He also received the 2012 ACE William Hlushko Award for Young Co-operative Educators, and in 2013 his workshop entitled “From Beards to Eternity: Our Co-operative History” was awarded “Best Presentation” by the Co-operative Communicator’s Association.

In his current role, Kerr is focused on Gay Lea Foods’ engagement with the co-operative community: supporting and building strong relationships with fellow co-ops, while also implementing the vision of creating a collaborative, year-round Co-operative Education Centre (CEC) for our sector at the 98-acre Gay Lea Dairy Museum property located in Aylmer, Ontario.

In 2017, GLF’s site hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Co-opalooza Community Picnic and On Co-op’s first ever “CYL Base Camp” (for youth aged 12-13 yrs.), as well as 1000+ local students. In 2018, the CEC will look forward to hosting another brand new program: On Co-op’s “CYL Start-Up”- assisting young adults in creating a viable co-operative business plan. This program was made possible thanks to a grant from Libro’s Prosperity Fund.

Previous to joining On Co-op, Kerr worked for the Peel District School Board as an elementary teacher, while also creating and selling two animated children’s television shows.



**Curt Hammond**  
Chief Listening Officer, Pearl Street Communications

Curt's career has been a step-by-step journey toward his passion of helping organizations tell their story. These steps started professionally by selling rings and year books for a Fortune 500 company. Fun, but not exactly fulfilling.

Curt then pretended to be a graphic designer for a few years but when the technology was moving faster than he was, he decided it was time to hang up the mouse. Already working in the

non-profit sector, fundraising was the next natural step in learning how to grow strong and resilient organizations. Through capital campaigns, membership drives and sponsorships, Curt has helped to raise millions of dollars in the social service, education and health sectors, learning the art and science of raising capital.

Realizing that raising money was a patient person's career, Curt left the comfort of a regular pay cheque for the thrill of building company. Curt is the Chief Listening Officer at Pearl Street Communications a crazy-cool marketing and training company based in Ontario's most beautiful village of Elora. Over the past 15 years Pearl Street has worked in the business, energy, health care, education and community sectors delivering creative communication and engagement projects. Pearl Street's mission is to tell the stories of passionate organizations through kickass marketing and communications.

Curt has a long history and passion for systems change. He was worked with national and local organizations kicking down walls and building bridges in the energy, social service and health care sectors.



**Simone Swail**

**Manager, Government Relations, CHF Canada, Ontario Region**

Simone Swail is the Manager of Government Relations for the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada (CHF Canada) Ontario Region. She recently completed her term as Chair of the Ontario Co-operative Association and Conseil de la coopération de l'Ontario (CCO) joint Government Relations Committee in July 2017, and has been active member of the committee since its inception in 2015. She brought to the committee almost a decade of experience in government relations with CHF Canada and a passion for the co-operative model.

Outside of her work on government relations, Simone has also played a lead role in creating CHF Canada's Young Member Engagement Strategy.



## HIGHLIGHTS & TAKEAWAYS



**Alisdair Smith**

Facilitator, Dare Communications

Alisdair is one of North America's most sought after coaches, speakers and workshop leaders. His clients include organizations as large as Microsoft, and as small as local NGOs in India and Solomon Islands as well as credit unions large and small from St. John's to Victoria. He brings wisdom, experience and humour to his practice. He challenges people with respect and humour and is known for helping groups drive to outcomes.

Some of Alisdair's most important work has been in helping teams and boards of directors work through challenging and difficult decisions and issues, such as, intra-team conflict, dramatic change in strategic direction, ethical dilemmas and fragmenting board/CEO relationships. That he is consistently invited back to work with these groups is a testament to his work. He is passionate about the future of credit unions, and especially enjoying his work with the next generation of leaders across Canada.

Alisdair is Deacon and Business Chaplain at Christ Church Anglican Cathedral in Vancouver and is an Accredited Credit Union Director.