

# GROW CO-OP!

## Portland conference celebrates achievements and looks ahead

BY DAVE GUTKNECHT AND DAN NORDLEY

**U**nder remarkably sunny skies in Portland, Ore., some 450 co-operators from the United States and Canada attended the 52nd annual Consumer Cooperative Management Association (CCMA) conference on June 12–14. While we looked along the Columbia River to the magnificent snow-covered peak of Mount Hood, the ragged remains of Mount Saint Helen's and shocking images of Midwest flooding reminded us of the power of nature and the challenges ahead.

“Grow Co-op!” was the conference theme, and the program and recognition awards reflected the strengths and diversity of the cooperatives present. Ann Hoyt, a professor at University of Wisconsin, Madison, had organized an outstanding program of workshops, keynote speakers and sharing of co-op resources. Sponsored by the National Cooperative Business Association, CCMA brings together co-op board members, managers and other leaders to a different city each year. This year's conference was hosted by Portland's Food Front and People's Food Co-op.

Special recognition was awarded to the following:

- **Cooperative Excellence:** City Market in Burlington, VT., continues to fulfill a vision of excellence in serving its community and supporting local food producers.
- **Cooperative Board Service:** Martha Whitman, board president of La Montañita in Albuquerque, N.M., has contributed dedicated service and leadership in co-ops for over 20 years.
- **Cooperative Service:** Margaret Lund, for 16 years the executive director of Northcountry Cooperative Development Fund, guided that regional loan fund through strong growth and expansion of services to co-ops in many sectors.
- **Cooperative Innovation/Achievement:** Sacramento Natural Foods Cooperative has bounced back from a difficult, and ultimately failed, second store development to record high levels of member owners and sales (see general manager Paul Cultrera's report on page 12).
- **Cooperative Hall of Fame:** attendees also congratulated Walden Swanson and Kate Sumberg, who recently, during

ceremonies in Washington, D.C., had been recognized for years of outstanding contributions to co-op development. CCMA attendees and their co-ops also raised over \$38,000 for the Howard Bowers Fund, which provides scholarships for co-op manager and board training.

Filled with camaraderie and inspiration, the gathering advanced the leadership resources our co-ops need and helped prepare us for many challenges ahead. ■



Crossing over from Canada, these Kootenay Co-op conference goers celebrated the kickin' cruise on the Columbia.

PHOTOS: DAN NORDLEY



Conference goers did their co-op wardrobe shopping at the Bowers Fund silent auction. The auction raised \$9787, quilt sales raised \$28,350.