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You're Invited to Our Open House

Open Houses are held on the second Sunday of every month (*except this April, sorry! Given Easter, our April Open House will be held on Saturday April 11*). They regularly include family-friendly activities and presentations on topics relevant to our project. Our next Open House:

Sunday, March 8, 2009

2:00-4:00 pm
Permaculture *with*
Keith Zaltzberg
Reception/Seed Planting
4:00-5:00
Waterfall Arts
256 High St, Belfast

Contact information

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[Visit our website](#)



Greetings!

You are receiving this newsletter because we thought you'd be interested in hearing about our evolving cohousing neighborhood in Belfast, Maine.

In each issue, we will try to share what we've been working on, where we're headed, and how you can get involved if you are so moved. If ever you want to unsubscribe from this newsletter (though we can't fathom why you would!), see the bottom of the page.

Welcome, and read on!

Project Update

Latest developments in our community-building efforts

On The Land

What's happening in the natural world around us

Member Profile

Get to know a member of the community

Notable Quotes

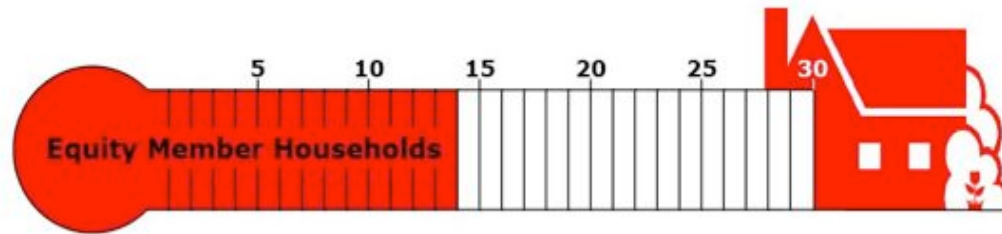
What folks have to say about Belfast Cohousing & Ecovillage, and about cohousing in general

Membership Information

Membership levels and current enrollments

Our Mission

Sustainability, affordability, farmland preservation

Project Update - Sanna McKim

Membership Update: To date we are 14 Equity Member households and 16 Exploring Member households, but we have room for a few more! Join now as an Exploring Member if this project is of interest to you as we hope to be full this summer.

Project Progress: We kicked off the design phase of our project recently with an inspiring Site Programming Workshop led by Chuck Durrett, cohousing pioneer and author of [Cohousing: A Contemporary Approach To Housing Ourselves](#). Chuck started off with a slide talk open to the public highlighting dozens of cohousing communities and the evolution of the cohousing movement in the U.S. The next morning, our Equity and Exploring Members embarked on a four-day design programming adventure together. (Programming is essentially the process of identifying what a place or building should accomplish, what it should feel like, etc.) Having designed some aspect of 55 cohousing communities around the country over the past decade, Chuck proved to be an excellent guide for our process.

Between identifying what we wanted to do together on our land (gardening, outdoor dinners, skating and woodworking), playing with little scaled down homes (that the kids decorated) on a huge map of the property, and hearing heartwarming stories of cohousing neighbors having meaningful daily relationships with each other, we experienced a real sense of community not possible in our monthly business meetings.

The end result was that many of us moved from feeling a real need for an assurance of lots of privacy (for who knew what our neighbors would be like!?), to a realization that, in our culture, our choice usually is between privacy and...well, *more* privacy. And what we were looking for was actually a balance of privacy and community outside our front doors. Here's the site concept we ended up with which, after briefly being called "The Boomerang" layout, was soon changed to a more ecovillage-y, "The Crescent."





Next on the design horizon is common house programming, followed by "unit" (house) programming. It's getting pretty exciting, so stay tuned!

Also coming up (if you miss this weekend's Open House on Permaculture), is a slide presentation, "Ecovillages" by the editor of Ecovillage Magazine, and cohousing professional, Diana Leafe Christian. That will be held Friday evening, March 20th at the University of Maine's Hutchinson Center here in Belfast.

Hope to see you soon!

Sanna McKim

On The Land - Mike Shannon

Here in the Northeast, it is tempting to view the chill of winter as a season of loss. All around us, the world seems to be hiding and hunkering down to survive. But wait . . . let us not wish away the winter. Let's celebrate! The leafless woods are not lifeless.

As a naturalist, I like winter with its anticipation for new adventures in the changing landscape. Watching birds is a favorite pastime of mine and I don't despair when winter arrives. This season can be an exciting and challenging time to watch birds. The arrival of 'snowbirds' heralds for many the real beginning of winter.

Speaking of snowbirds . . . my wife and I stopped by the Keene farm on a late January day to do some snowshoeing. We parked the car next to the farmhouse and barn. A strong northwest wind and temperature below zero stopped us in our tracks. Brrr, it was just too cold to venture out! We took a few tentative steps down toward the cultivated field along Edgecomb Rd. Suddenly, and to our surprise and delight, we stood captivated and surrounded by a swirling flock of snow buntings!



These snow buntings are winter visitors from the Boreal forest of the north. They, along with other winter snowbirds, like pine siskins, redpolls, bohemian waxwings and pine grosbeaks are often referred to as 'irruptive' species. Unlike common winter residents, like juncos and tree sparrows, these irruptive species are typically non-migratory, but come south when their preferred foods of seeds and berries are in short supply. Lucky are those of us fortunate to encounter these flights of

wildness in winter. Now glad to see these beautiful migrants on the land we are just beginning to know.



Member Profile - John Lightner

I was born in Belfast but my father was a Foreign Service officer so I moved around a good bit as a child. I went to college in New Hampshire and then spent most of the next decade working as a river guide. I went back to school and got an MS in Computer Science and have been working as a software engineer for the past fifteen years. Denise and I moved to Belfast from Portland (Maine) two years ago, with our two kids (ages 8 & 12). Our kids miss the neighborhood they spent their early years in and we see cohousing as giving them the best of two worlds-neighborhood and country life. We know it will also allow us to better balance parenthood, work and pursuit of our own passions. Mine include sailing, skiing and river running.



What I'm looking forward to as a future member of Belfast Cohousing: noisy meals in the common house; collaborating on a bunch of stuff I never seem to get to: garden/greenhouse; a decent workshop; sauna.

Notable Quotes

Cohousing is a hoot - it really is. When I walk onto the site after a hard day at work and chat with a couple of the 37 kids, or see cutie one-year-old August smiling in his mother's arms, well, it makes my life worth living. When I walk into the common house an hour before dinner, and Dyann and Frank tell me they can easily accommodate my Danish guests (who fed us seven nights a week when we stayed in their cohousing), sometimes it seems just like one long party.

- Chuck Durrett, of McCamant & Durrett Architects, founder of the cohousing movement here in the states (with his wife, Kathryn McCamant) and founder of Spaces for Children, as well as author of Cohousing: A contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves.

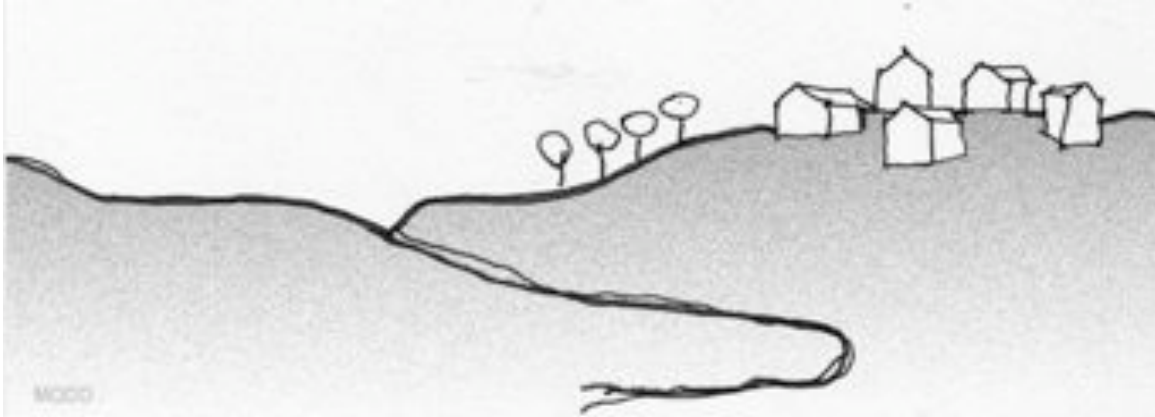
Membership Information

Equity Members are those households who have already committed to purchasing a home in the community. There are currently fourteen of a projected thirty Equity members. Exploring Members are those households who have an interest in becoming Equity Members, but are not yet ready to fully commit. There are currently sixteen Exploring members. Friends are those who are interested in our

project, but are not members. See the [Membership](#) section of our website for further details.

Our Mission

To be a model environmentally sustainable, affordable, multi-generational cohousing community that is easily accessible to Belfast, includes land for agricultural use and open space, and is an innovative housing development option for rural Maine.



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