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**Next Open House:**

Saturday, April 11  
*Family Fun: Decorating  
 Easter Eggs, Planting  
 Seeds and Cohousing  
 Updates 2:00-4:00 pm*  
 Waterfall Arts  
 256 High St, Belfast



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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!

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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

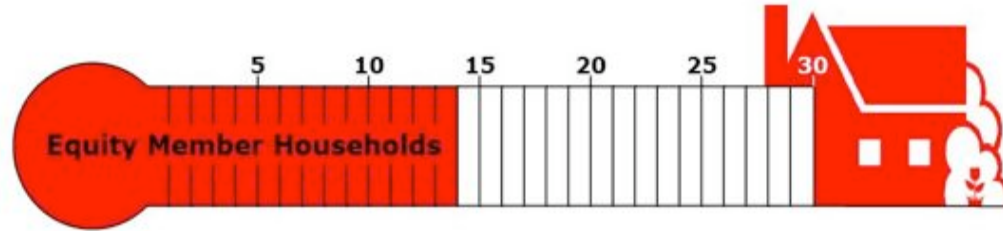
Membership Information

Membership levels and current enrollments

Our Mission

Sustainability, affordability, farmland preservation

## Project Update - Denise Pendleton



**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:** Not all progress can be measured in physical terms: many less tangible signposts, such as our recent workshop with Diana Leafe Christian, mark the way as well.

On March 20th, our Cohousing community's weekend workshop with Diana started with a fascinating and inspirational Friday evening slideshow on ecovillages around the world, "Ecovillages: Where They Are, What They're Doing, Why They're Important." This was recorded on video and will be available on DVD as well as shown on Belfast Community Cable in the near future.

For the next two days, a group of 25 of Exploring and Equity Members gathered for an informative and stimulating weekend of strategies that foster healthy community life. In Saturday's workshop "The Heart of Healthy Community," we learned how conflicts in community life can be minimized by setting up healthy structures and developing techniques that build social capital, social trust and connection. We also learned community is created by building trust and connection, and that the very fabric of our project is woven strand by strand in many small but vitally important ways: attending that meeting you'd rather skip, completing a committee task, participating in a work party, offering an insightful word or a warm glance, sharing cares and concerns, cleaning up, resolving a seemingly insignificant conflict—all are the glue that bind a community together. Without these efforts, our fabric will have holes in it and not be as strong.

Sunday's workshop provided an in-depth and engaging training on consensus, defined as the "group decision-making process in which all members of a group present in a meeting must agree on a decision before action is taken." Diana helped us explore its many facets and variations. She was impressed to learn that we had not only already created our own consensus decision-making guidelines but also that we had incorporated the "modified, super majority-vote" form of consensus.

Diana's humor and wisdom made this intensive weekend workshop a lively and bonding experience for members, who left feeling energized and ready to help build the new path to community life that cohousing offers.

Diana lives in Earth Haven Ecovillage in Asheville, NC and is the author of *Creating a Life Together: Practical Tools to Grow Ecovillages and Intentional Communities* (2003) and *Finding Community: How to Join an Ecovillage or Intentional Community* (2007).

## On The Land - Mike Shannon

Last week my friend Seth Benz and I visited the cohousing land to see if the

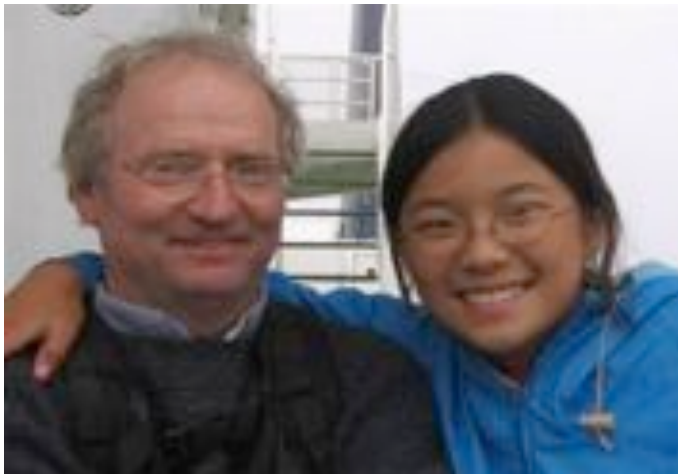
woodcocks had indeed returned this early spring. Upon our arrival at the appointed hour (a bit after 7 pm), we stepped out of the car and immediately heard the whistle call of a saw whet owl (our smallest NE owl). The owl was calling from the evergreen woods along Edgcomb Road, opposite the Keene farmhouse.



As we stood captivated by the owl's call, the dwindling light of dusk was fast approaching. It was time to check out the haunts of the shy, secretive woodcock. We checked out several promising locations and were pleased and surprised to find woodcocks active at each site. At one site we were able to watch the bird 'peenting' and then taking off in a low arc as it spiraled upward into the night sky. What a thrill it was to again stand in awe of this engaging spring ritual.

On the way back to the car, we heard the owl calling again. Seth said, "Let's try calling it in." We did, and it responded and flew to the lilac hedge where we were standing. We both saw it silhouetted in the evening darkness!

So, cohousers, get up and get out there! Overwhelm yourselves with the wildness of this place! Enjoy!



#### **Member Profile - Paul & Mika McKinney**

"It doesn't get any better than this" was a comment I heard a local resident say last weekend as we emerged from our annual Town Meeting in Montville, Maine. There's something undeniably real and connecting when people participate with others in ways that substantively shape the social and physical landscapes that hold their lives.

I grew up in a small fishing village (population 421) on the coast of Maine. Aside from the "Tom Sawyer" like boyhood I experienced, I had the benefit of literally knowing every person in town and they knew me as the..."preacher's son." Community was a way of life. When the gales blew, both men and women would stand vigilant over all vessels in the harbor, and when I'd try to ride a winter ice cake across the cove, I had many surrogate parents ready to scold me back to my

senses.

Perhaps it's this shared sense of responsibility and accountability that now draws me like the tide to join a group of other seekers looking to (re)create a lifestyle based more on mending the nets together than fishing alone.

Our lives are all stories strung together and mine is no different. I've woven my way through schooling and a graduate degree, a taste of military experience, creative adventures in crafting musical instruments, traditional boats, relationships, parenthood, and a continuing search for where the sweetgrass grows.

A good friend recently reminded me of the Chinese belief that an invisible red thread joins those who are destined to connect in this life. My 13 year old daughter Mika and I are trusting that belief as we imagine and actively plan our membership in Belfast's cohousing community. As Mika often declares, "I'll be close to my horse, my friends, and won't have to eat my dad's cooking every night." And guess what... neither will I.

### **Notable Quotes**

*"We go into community with our rough edges and they get smoothed off like stones in a stone polisher. Interpersonal issues get illuminated and reflected back and we get lots of feedback, and we become more thoughtful." - Diana Leafe Christian*

### **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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