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Notable Quotes

"Cohousing is kid heaven" - Charles Durette, co-author (with Kathryn McCamant) of [Cohousing: A Contemporary Approach To Housing Ourselves](#)

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September 4, 2009

In This Issue:

- [Calling All Players!](#)

A call to arms (and legs, and heads...)

- [Member Profile - Sheik Hassan](#)

Not every member of the community is human...

- [Musings - Paul McKinney](#)

Paul shares a few observations on meetings, terraced gardens, trips to Denmark, and the difference between a "discussion" and a "dialogue."

- [Holy Work - Arielle Bywater](#)

Arielle brings her poetic sensibilities to the seemingly prosaic topic of "facilitation." Surprising changes are possible where minds are open!

- [Membership Information](#)

Welcome to our newest Exploring Members!

Joline Blais and **Jon Ippolito** teach at the New Media department at the University of Maine. They and their children Kai (11) and Ryan (9) have recently moved from Orono to Bayview Street right here in Belfast. **Nessa and Christoph Dertnig** are currently living and working on dairy farm outside of Salzburg, Austria. They and their children Gabe (3 1/2) and Alma (10 months) are contemplating a move to the States. Nessa is originally from Illinois and studied French before doing an apprenticeship on an organic farm where she met Christoph, an Austrian with a background in IT.

Calling All Players!

We are nearing game time! The "Human Chess Match" will take place at our Open House on Sunday, September 13, at the farmhouse on



Edgecomb Road in Belfast (sure to be the social spectator event of the season), and we need **you** to play a piece on the board. All you have to know to be eligible is that a chess game has a number of pieces and that they move from one square to another - in this case guided by a fearless team captain. Russell Kahn, local artist, teacher and favorite activity-creator of all kids under the age of 50, will likely be our fearless captain, telling us all how to move so we obliterate the other team - in some kind of politically-correct, environmentally-benign fashion, I'm sure!



Email Sanna (sanna@mainecohousing.org) if you're willing and able to jump in.



**Member Profile -
Sheik Hassan
(as told to Denise Pendleton)**

Sheikh Hassan ("Sheiky") is a beloved member of the Pendleton (Denise) - Lightner (John) household, although he divides his time among several siblings and seasonal homes in the greater Belfast area. Sheiky is a Congo type African Grey parrot who was trapped in central Africa during the early 1960's. He came to be a member of the Lightner household in

1965 when he was presented as a gift to John's mother Dottie by the then Queen of Libya. John's father Allan was serving as the US Ambassador to Libya, and Queen Fatima and Dorothy developed a strong friendship. The family actually received two parrots. The first, Sheikh Saleem, made a bold escape from a tenth floor Manhattan apartment in the late 60's and was never seen again. Sheikh Hassan has a broken wing, presumably the result of the live trapping, and is unable to fly, which has its benefits - his cage is open most of the time, so he is able to climb to its top. He sometimes resides in the branches of nearby trees as well. Our pet cats and dog know better than to get close to his sharp beak; his verbal capabilities make it clear that he is in charge of them.

Now approaching his 50th birthday, Sheiky is the life of the party wherever he goes. African Greys are noted for their intelligence and mimicking ability. Sheiky is a particularly talented whistler, having been taught by Allan Lightner since he was a young bird. Favorite numbers include "The Bridge on the River Kwai" and "Heigh Ho Heigh Ho." He is currently working on perfecting the theme song from the old Andy Griffith Show. When the mood takes him, he can serve up an endless melody of tune segments. His other particular talent is in mimicking an entire cocktail party. His rendition includes all kinds of laughter, clinking glasses and general chatter. He does speak and can belt out a few classic pirate lines, taught by John's father, such as "Yo Ho Ho and a bottle of rum" or "pieces of eight." His best line is perhaps "I'm really an Eagle and I can fly like a rock." The family is particularly proud to note that Sheiky doesn't swear like so many foul-mouthed parrots. He can, however,

deliver all the respiratory sounds of family members coughing and sneezing as well as a full-bellied belch when the urge seizes him. (It is unclear who taught him this although there are suspects.)

Sheiky loves to be around people and their many noises. Being alone in a quiet house from which everyone is gone for the day is pure misery for any African grey. He is happiest on the porch of our summer Bayside cottage, with numerous visitors walking by, chatting and whistling with him. We know he will be thrilled to join Belfast Cohousing, adding his jaunty whistle and jolly laughter to the happy sounds of our neighborhood life.

Musings - Paul McKinney

Two of the communication buzz words floating about this past week have been **facilitation** and **group process**. At the hand of Dyan Wiley, a community member with a passion for supporting groups in their efforts to meet and arrive at considered decisions, a new crop of would-be facilitators are sprouting up at Belfast Cohousing and Ecovillage. Our all-day workshop focused on practicing a set of mutually understood protocols and techniques which empower all members to co-create efficient and respectful meetings.



Meanwhile, down on the farm (our temporary common house), Doug Malcolm has set personal projects aside to take up company with hoe, spade and stone to create the beginnings of a lovely terraced flower garden around our temporary common house. Like an adult Tom Sawyer, Doug's ability to convince others of the joys of laying stone seem to be catching on.

While we're on the subject of creating new gardens, two of our founding members, Sanna McKim (our own Johnny Appleseed of Cohousing) and Alan Gibson, just returned from a trip to Denmark where they each had opportunities to visit with other cohousing communities and exchange thoughts and ideas for structuring our Belfast project.

And lastly, from the "communication words you might often misuse" department, a couple of words have come to my attention.

Discussion, from the same Latin roots as the words "percussion" or "concussion" means literally an opposite heaving of one's view at one another... a shaking of something around. Hence, a "discussion" is little more than a series of abbreviated monologues.

However, the word **dialogue**, from its Greek roots, means a speaking or conversation that moves back and forth such that the meaning flows through you

(or the group).

It's a great feeling to know that in spite of all the heat being generated by some of the so-called "discussions" going on in the wide world today, the art of "dialogue" is very much alive and well in our cohousing community.



"Holy Work" - Arielle Bywater

I attended a workshop this weekend with the Coho folks about facilitating meetings. Mundane topic, one would think - except that it wasn't at all. Instead, it was a group of folks from different backgrounds trying to figure out how to run meetings in which we can meet one another with compassion, curiosity, and good will in order to work toward a greater good. In the process of learning how to do this, we *had* such a meeting: lots of laughter, good food, friendship and ideas exchanged.

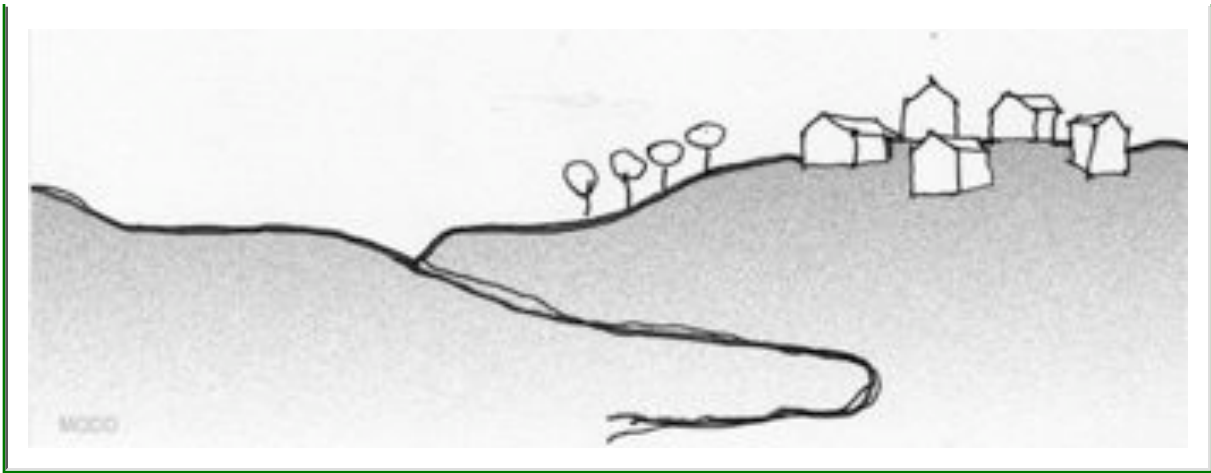
Editor's Note: This is an excerpt from a recent blog post by Arielle. [Click here to read the full text.](#)

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-six 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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