

To view this email as a web page, go [here](#).



#### Notable Quotes

"A community is democratic only when the humblest and weakest person can enjoy the highest civil, economic, and social rights that the biggest and most powerful possess."  
- A. Philip Randolph

#### Contact information:

Belfast Cohousing & Ecovillage  
P.O. Box 100  
Belfast, ME 04915  
207-338-9200

[info@mainecohousing.org](mailto:info@mainecohousing.org)

If you're not currently an active subscriber to this mailing but would like to be, click [here](#). To forward this to a friend, please use the link below rather than your email program's "forward" button. To unsubscribe or modify your email address, see the bottom of the page.

#### [Visit our website](#)



## December 16, 2009

#### In This Issue:

- [Envisioning the Barn](#)  
*Anne Hallee is keeping an eye out for wayfaring travelers...*
- [The Character of the Wind](#)  
*For Margie Shannon, the wind is more than just moving air...*
- [Member Profile](#)  
*It's a brand-new world for urban transplant Allison Piper...*
- [Membership Information](#)

#### Welcome New Exploring Members!

Maureen Foye and Matt Murphy wed three years ago after meeting at a music festival in Nova Scotia. Maureen works as a nurse in Belfast and is starting an energy healing practice. She grew up in New Jersey and lived in Boston for twelve years before moving to Maine. Matt works as the general manager at WERU-FM Community Radio. He moved to Maine from Massachusetts in the 80's to attend college. They enjoy music, hiking, and cross-country skiing and qi gong in the morning. Maureen and Matt are excited by the prospect of living in a neighborhood of people interested in community and sustainable living. They have a loveable cat named Pixie.

Abby and Geoff Gilchrist have lived in Unity for the last 9 years or so, doing the typical Maine thing of working on the house, barn, gardens, and flock of sheep. We have two great children, Noah and Claire. Noah just turned three, and Claire is eight months, turning one in March. Abby grew up in what used to be rural Pennsylvania, and Geoff grew up in New Haven, CT. In the trying-to-make-a-livelihood department, we have been working on energy efficient renovations of residences and small

apartment buildings, hoping to improve the livability and lower the environmental impact of old and inefficient buildings while preserving their character.



### **Envisioning the Barn - Anne Hallee**

As a youngster growing up "in-town" Waterville, I spent all my available time planning escapes, trips and adventures out of town. Roaming an uncle's expansive woodlots in Norridgewock and working as a "chorehand" at a horseback riding farm in Winslow (just 10 minutes from home) offered release from my asphalt and fenced yard habitat into the wild place that I so desperately longed for. From any window in my home in town I could count over 20 buildings and rooftops, but when I was at the barn - only trees, fields, brooks, and fencelines as far as the eye could see.



At the barn, life slowed down to an audible rhythm - one that pulsed with the sweet nickering of a horse at bay, herds chewing lazily as they roamed the paddock in search of the perfect bit of grass. It was here, in this working environment, that I heard the whispered wisdom of what magic life has to offer those who listen close, and came to understand that these animals share with us, through the day's chores, a measure of intimacy one can easily feel. In a barn there is a feeling anyone can connect to - of bounty and good fortune - seeing rafters hung heavy with garlic and dry beans, stalls with soft bedding and munching mouths in quiet comfort, hens clucking in gentle protest, and tools hung and ordered, awaiting their next call to service.

When I think about living in cohousing, I smile at the images I can see of my daughter and her friends finding comfort and refuge in the sanctuary of our cohousing barn. Kids exploring for themselves the role of animals as teachers, companions and providers - working at the daily chores of cleaning stalls, sharpening tools, oiling leather, and cleaning hooves. As the Yule season approaches it's worth remembering that, in the Christian tradition, it was in a barn that the King of Bethlehem was born, his outcast parents finding solace amongst the lambs. Who knows what wayfaring travelers our barn might host someday?



### **The Character of the Wind - Margie Shannon**

Did you ever hear of the Thornton Burgess books for children? They are about humanized animals and natural truths. One character is Mother West Wind, who is always pleasant and predictable, as is our own West wind. When one monitors the wind daily, as I do, you realize that the South wind brings warmth and often rain, and the East wind can be an ill wind, coming off the ocean and bringing poor weather. The

Northeast wind brings storms and maybe lots of snow in winter, and the North wind brings cold from the Canadian Arctic. Sitting high on a lightly forested rise, I expect our community will become quite familiar with the various characters of the wind!

### **Member Profile - Allison Piper**

My mother has been trying to get us to move to Maine for years. Since I started the path to becoming a dentist five years ago, she has been sending me clippings from newspapers with headings like "Maine Needs Dentists" and "Maine State Legislature Passes Gay Marriage". We have such a wonderful core of friends in Jamaica Plain, a part of Boston, that I didn't think we would ever leave.



Then my wife Lindsey's brother and his fiancée, whom we adore, moved near Belfast and we started to visit. It was a surprisingly cool place! Then her mom said she and her dad were seriously thinking of moving there, too. I looked at the ten or twelve dental practices within one mile of my home here in JP, and then I thought about the fact that I would never be able to comfortably let our (as yet imaginary) young kids run out the door. Then I heard the automated voice of the 39 bus outside my window announce its destination... again. Then I felt the bass beat of some guy's car radio on the road outside my house thump in my chest. Then my brother-in-law said, "Hey - you guys should check out the Belfast Cohousing website." Then it was all over.

I was ready to write my equity member check before I finished exploring the website. It echoed every dream, every ethic I ever hoped for in a home and a community. Now several months later, Lindsey and I are equity members and I am happy to report that I was not being overly enthusiastic as I jumped at this opportunity - it really is going to be a wonderful place to live with incredible people and so many activities available to me (albeit a little different than those in a big city). I am glad that we got in when we did - right after us, five more units were filled with fine future neighbors and there are not all that many units left! Being a distance member has its challenges, but we have been fully embraced by the BC&E

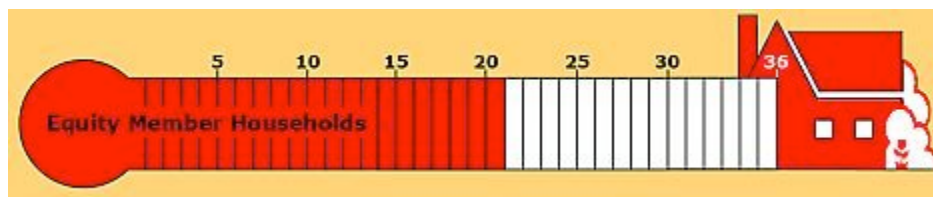
members and they do everything they can to help us participate fully in this process.

And Maine still does really need dentists, and though Prop One (banning gay marriage in the state of Maine) passing this past November crushed my little heart, I'm kinda consoled by the fact that the measure did not win in Belfast and I know my new BC&E friends will be standing right at my and Lindsey's sides for the next round of marriage equality struggles. Belfast has a wonderful, artistic vibe. I can't wait to live so much closer to my mother and stepfather. And I can guarantee you that it will not be hard to get our friends to come up regularly to visit this beautiful place.

A few evenings ago we had a variety show and potluck at our current common house - it was a great time. This community is full of talented and charming people. I was the last person to leave, after doing my part to help clean up and chatting for a while with an exploring member who stayed the night there. As I headed to my car, I stopped in my tracks. I looked across the fields where our homes will be, then up to the bright, dazzlingly rich field of stars overhead. I felt the pleasantly crisp winter air surround me. I closed my eyes and let the night's silence seep deeply into my heart. I just can't tell you how wonderful it felt.

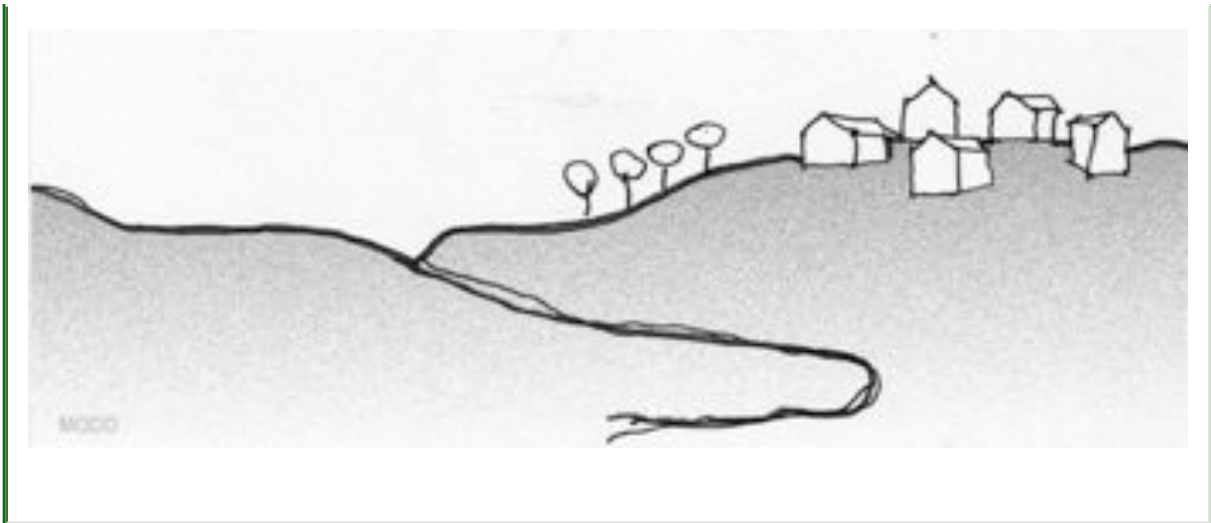
### Membership Information

Equity Members are those households who have already committed to purchasing a home in the community. There are currently twenty-one 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. 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.



Go [here](#) to leave this list or [modify](#) your email address.

This email was sent by: **Belfast Area Cohousing**  
PO Box 100, Belfast, ME, 04915, USA