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Contact information:

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

info@mainecohousing.org

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March 4, 2010

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Open House Coming Right Up!

Please join us for our next open house on March 14th! There will be some wonderful puppetry for the children, presented by Toki Oshima Pranio who is the early childhood teacher at the the Ashwood Waldorf school in Rockport. There will also be an ongoing slide show, a prototype house tour and opportunities to walk the land. Please join us for a fun and informative afternoon at the farmhouse at 45 Edgecomb Rd. in Belfast. Call 207-338-9200 for more info. See you there!

**A Declaration of Interdependence
- Mitch Henrion**

A declaration can change the world.

Hard to believe that it's been only about a month since we finished our "BELFAST COHOUSING & ECOVILLAGE DECLARATION OF CONDOMINIUM." So much has happened in the last month-and-a-half that it seems like



it must have been a year ago. We've brought in six new equity-member households and five new exploring-member households. We've had two packed, family-oriented Open Houses. We've honed in on the final floor plans for the homes and the Common House. We've had the first of our new, monthly, consensus-decision-making conversations. We've had a two-hour, heart-felt conversation on what sustainability means to us. We've confirmed the importance of a barn and a root cellar in our lives. We've wrestled with the location of unheated storage (garages). We've done energy analyses of the proposed Common House. The list goes on... For me, the most palpable growth over the last month has been our maturing as a group in the face of the ever-tougher decisions leading up to our planned spring ground-breaking.

Have you forgotten about the Declaration, yet?

Our own Declaration, unanimously accepted on January 28, 2010, is a cornerstone now in place. *Our country's Declaration*, unanimously accepted on July 4, 1776 comes to my mind. Another Declaration.

Reading the opening paragraphs of *that* revolutionary document, I'm struck by the consistency of human longings and our inherent wisdom when we've taken the time to reflect. A sentence jumps out at me: "Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes..."

Editor's note: To read the remainder of Mitch's thought-provoking piece on our blog, [please click here](#).



Consensus, Kid-style

This is a story told by cohouser and consensus facilitator Evan Richardson, who lives at Westwood Cohousing in Asheville, North Carolina.

Evan's daughter Lila and other 8, 9, and 10-year-olds at Westwood Cohousing began gathering in May, 2008, for a twice-monthly meeting to solve problems, share appreciations, and discuss plans for fun things to do.

Generally Evan or two other adults facilitate, with the kids setting the agenda.

In early November, 2009, Evan arrived at the meeting a couple of minutes late. She assumed that what was happening there had been discussed by the group before she got there. As it turned out though, the adult in charge that week had been waiting for Evan to arrive. So, since no one had taken charge yet, Evan's daughter Lila just jumped in and started facilitating, with Evan and the other adult present just watching, amazed.

First Lila offered a summary of the two agenda items which had been introduced at

previous meetings, asked the kids where they wanted to start, and started calling on kids with raised hands. After a while Lila asked two kids who hadn't spoken yet what they thought. Then, as time was running out, Lila actually said, "Well, it seems that we need to bring this conversation to a close for tonight. We've heard a lot about Raminta's idea; is this the solution we want to live with?"

"I was so stunned to see them all in action on their own," Evan writes. "Wow! It makes me feel so great about living in community!"

Much appreciation to Evan for sharing this great story.

Member Profile - Barbara Chiasson

I am an adventurer, and I have always loved finding and being involved with community. During college in Rochester, NY, I lived in several communal houses, finally moving to a farm outside the city where we shared organic gardening, chicken care and goat-milking responsibilities. After college, I worked for three years as one of the teaching staff of an alternative elementary school in Rochester. It was a strong and committed community, working to enrich the educational experience for young people. An interest in counseling led me to become a teacher of Re-Evaluation Counseling (sometimes called RC or co-counseling), a community with which I continue to be involved. I also have a Master's degree in social work, and have been an elementary school counselor for 24 years.



When I moved to Maine in 1977, I married Steve and we began the long adventure of transforming eighteen acres of woods into a beautiful home. We built our house, overlooking the constantly burbling Higgins Stream, from trees harvested on the site. Over the years we have added a small orchard, a pond, gardens, and trails along the stream. As our two children were growing up, we were involved with another tightly knit community - the Wassookeag School in Dexter, Maine. From the close connections forged during our time there, I now have a great group of adventuring women that I count on to keep my life full of fun and laughter and new experiences.

I'm now fully engaged with my life's next great adventure - Belfast Cohousing & Ecovillage! I love being involved with this terrific group of people, and I'm already loving the sense of accomplishment we have together as we creatively meet the many challenges of building this community.

Membership Update

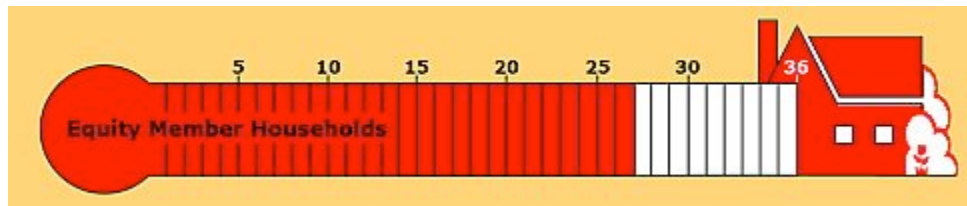
Since the last issue of this eNewsletter, we've welcomed four new Equity Member households into the fold. The addition of Pene West, Megan Lyzenga & Craig Jensen, Mary O'Herin and Jim & Paula Wheelock brings our membership total to twenty-seven households.

We'd also like to welcome new Exploring Members Sasha Kutsy and Mark Durbin and their children Mirabelle (4) and Simon (7 months), as well as Stephen Wallace and his daughter Elizabeth (3). Sasha & Mark hadn't supplied biographical info by press time, but Stephen writes:

"I am a single-father of a three and a half year old, presently living in Alna. I currently work as a computer programmer and in the past have worked as a builder, architectural designer, timber-framer, cabinet maker and for several years restored old houses for resale. My passions include sailing, music (I play piano, harpsichord, guitar, conga drums, recorders and have sung in a-capella groups in the state) and making just about anything out of wood. The thought of living in a diverse community with a focus on children excites me, as so much of my current focus and energy is directed towards my daughter."

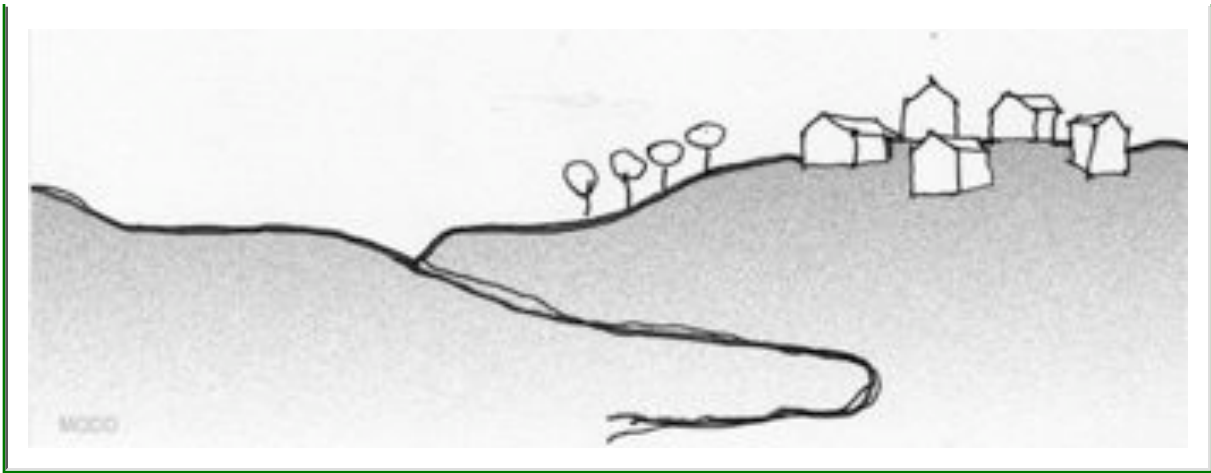
Membership Information

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



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PO Box 100, Belfast, ME, 04915, USA