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Notable Quotes

"Behold, my friends, the spring is come; the earth has gladly received the embraces of the sun, and we shall soon see the results of their love!"
 - *Sitting Bull*

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March 17, 2010

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Here it Comes!

The rapidly approaching spring is working its seasonal magic. Just as the crocuses and daffodils poke their heads from the soil and the robins begin to appear here and there, there is optimism, excitement, and spiritual uplift in the Belfast Cohousing & Ecovillage community. Our membership continues to grow, our engineering paperwork has been submitted to the Town of Belfast and to the DEP, and the beautiful prototype house on Crocker Road is nearing completion.

The monthly Open Houses at the farmhouse on Edgecomb Road continue to be well-attended, and ground-breaking this spring or early summer is looking good. We're still looking for another nine families to fill our roster, and hope to have many more names on our waiting list by move-in day. We hope you'll join us on this grand adventure!

The Clan Hat
 - **Coleen O'Connell**



While happily knitting away during one of our cohousing meetings, I realized that I could knit a clan hat for every person - child and adult - that would become a Belfast Cohousing and Ecovillage member. In our small coastal area of Maine, you will know the clan by their hats. How was I inspired to take up such a task as knitting everyone a hat?



Years ago, on a visit to the Hudson Bay area of Quebec, Canada I was on the Cree Indian Reserve and stepped into an indigenous craft store. If you want to learn about a culture, I have discovered, check out what crafts they are engaging in... what artforms are they producing and sharing? I wasn't disappointed in my exploration of the Borealis Craft store as I left with a local photographer's night time photograph of an aurora borealis similar to the one I had experienced the night before in that vast expanse of northern sky. What was also in my bag was a finely crocheted cornflower blue hat, banded with a zig zag design emblazoned boldly in bright contrasting colors complete with a large tassel hanging from the top. Aside from being beautiful, it was the label sewn into the hat and the story that came with it that sold me.

I had purchased a "Pang" hat made in the Inuit settlement called Pangnirtung on Baffin Island. Baffin Island lies off the coast of Quebec but is officially part of the new Province of Nunavut. Pangnirtung is situated on a deep fiord that cuts through the mountain peaks of the Penny Ice Cap from Cumberland Sound to Auyittuq National Park. Located at the arctic circle, the Inuit people experience long, snowy, dark, cold winters in this climate. Living close to nature and each other, the Inuit women had identified a brilliant way to locate their children, husbands and relatives at a glance in the snowy, all-white terrain... they each chose a color & a design which they knitted into hats and mittens their family wore. One glance at the children playing outdoors and they would know if any of the bundled children were theirs. Or one look out onto the waters to see what kayaks were coming home would inform them if it was their husband or father. I was humbled with the knowledge of how people in community all over the world come up with creative ways to solve problems.

I cherish the idea that I own a Pang hat of an Inuit family. My hat came with the information of the family to whom my hat design belonged and also a thank you for contributing to the cottage industry that was helping to sustain their community. I was invited in the brochure to enjoy the warmth and beauty that came with these clan hats.

It was in one of these first meetings of Belfast Cohousing and Ecovillage that I realized that the colorful jester hats I love to knit with Maine Peace Fleece could become, like the Inuits, a tribal hat for our forming Ecovillage. We are in the process of building a village with the intention of living together in one place, while raising our children, and listening to the land and our elders as we figure out what living sustainably really means. As one member commented a few weeks back, "We

are doing something really BOLD, RECKLESS and CHALLENGING." Maybe not living at the edge of the sea on the Artic Circle, but no less living on the edge of our culture as we explore what it means to bring the old concept of neighborhood back into our lives, to live intergenerationally caring for both young and old; living sustainably in energy efficient homes, and growing as much of our own food as the Maine summer allows us. What will living sustainably really look like at Belfast Cohousing and Ecovillage?

I am excited and proud to be part of this bold, reckless and challenging project. We must come up with new structures of living if we are to birth the ecological era that is calling to us. May what we are forming at Belfast Cohousing and Ecovillage last 12,000 years and beyond as the Inuit culture has. Someday the children will be asking, just where did this design for a hat come from? How did our family end up with reds and greens and their family end up with blues and purples? Let us hope we are knitting together something that will endure and be generative. You too could have a clan hat!



**Robin Rendezvous
- Mike Shannon**

In late February, my wife and I were on our way to drop off some documents at the Cohousing's Farmhouse on Edgecomb Road. Just before we reached the driveway, we encountered a sizeable flock of robins



flying across the road in front of us. Many of these birds settled down onto patches of bare ground adjacent to the house. I estimated there were about 75-100 birds.



Over the winter, several friends have been seeing more robins than usual. They were surprised to see these birds and wondered if this was normal behavior or a response to a warming climate.

It is my understanding that our neighborhood robins that breed in the Belfast area have all migrated south for the winter months. The robins that we see here in the cold months of the winter are northern robins from Canada. They look identical to our native robins, but some males are darker on the back and more brightly rufous on the breast.

These northern robins do remind us that spring is just around the corner... the time to celebrate mud, greenness and renewed life. This has been an unusually mild and open winter. Last summer and fall produced an abundant harvest of natural foods available to our local birds and other wildlife. Activity at backyard feeders has been slow and disappointing throughout New England. Irruptive species such as redpolls, siskins and grosbeaks from points north have been absent as well.

Most of our resident birds have been doing just fine. This lack of backyard feeder activity is normal behavior. As early spring arrives, we should be on the lookout for red-winged blackbirds, grackles and woodcocks.



Member Profile
- Matt O'Malia

Living in Maine has a funny way of defining so much of my life. I came to this area because of the great people, beautiful landscape and simple lifestyle. What came along with those benefits are pretty dark, tough winters, and a fair amount of driving (I certainly would not complain about a nice cold winter - I think they are wonderful, with skating, skiing, and hiking) it's just that they can be uncomfortable... And as for the driving, that comes along with rural America to some extent. But does it need to?

I am the type of person who likes to solve problems when I become aware of them. So living in Maine, with all its advantages, still could be improved upon if the cold were more comfortable and the driving was less. And then came Cohousing! The idea of creating a place to live comprised of community minded people, living in super comfortable (and energy efficient houses), in a community based on the human scale (not the car, for a change), is a perfect fit for an already great Maine lifestyle. For me, that is the seed that got me involved in this great project, and after an intense few years of planning, it is amazing what progress has been made!

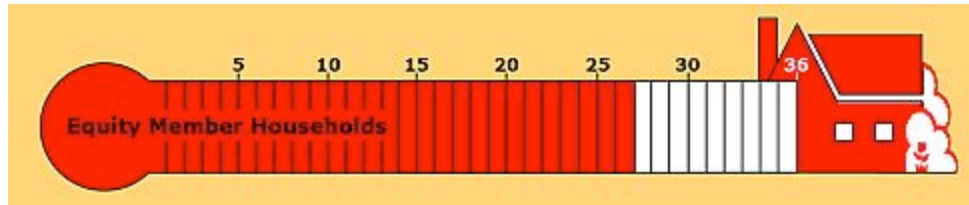
When I am not busy thinking of problems to solve, I am happily enjoying family life at home with my wife and three young children. Needless to say, with three young children and work, things are pretty hectic - and I would not have it any other way!

As a family we like to ski, skate, hike and get out in the woods. We also like to travel and see what is happening outside of our beautiful state. And along with (and during) all the other things we do, we love to eat! We try to grow herbs and vegetables and eat local (which is another great reason to travel - to try out some other "local" food!).

But always, we come back to Maine and the great people, beautiful landscape and simple lifestyle.

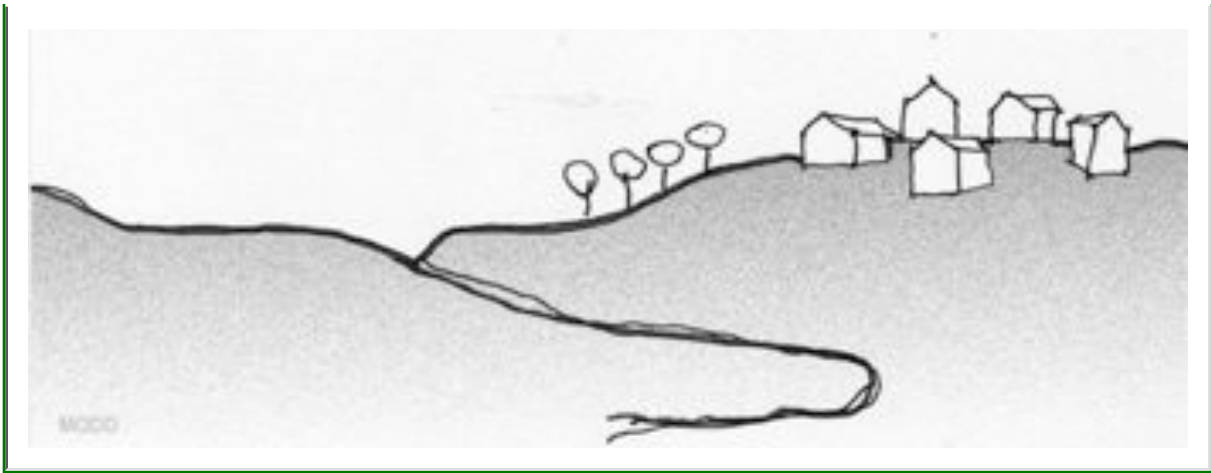
Membership Information

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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