

# COMMUNITIES

JOURNAL of COOPERATIVE LIVING

\$6.00

(\$8 Canada)

Summer 2005 (Issue #127)

## *The Face of Cohousing in 2005*

*Chuck Durrett on Senior Cohousing*

*"Green" Architect Joseph F.*

*Kennedy on Cohousing Design*

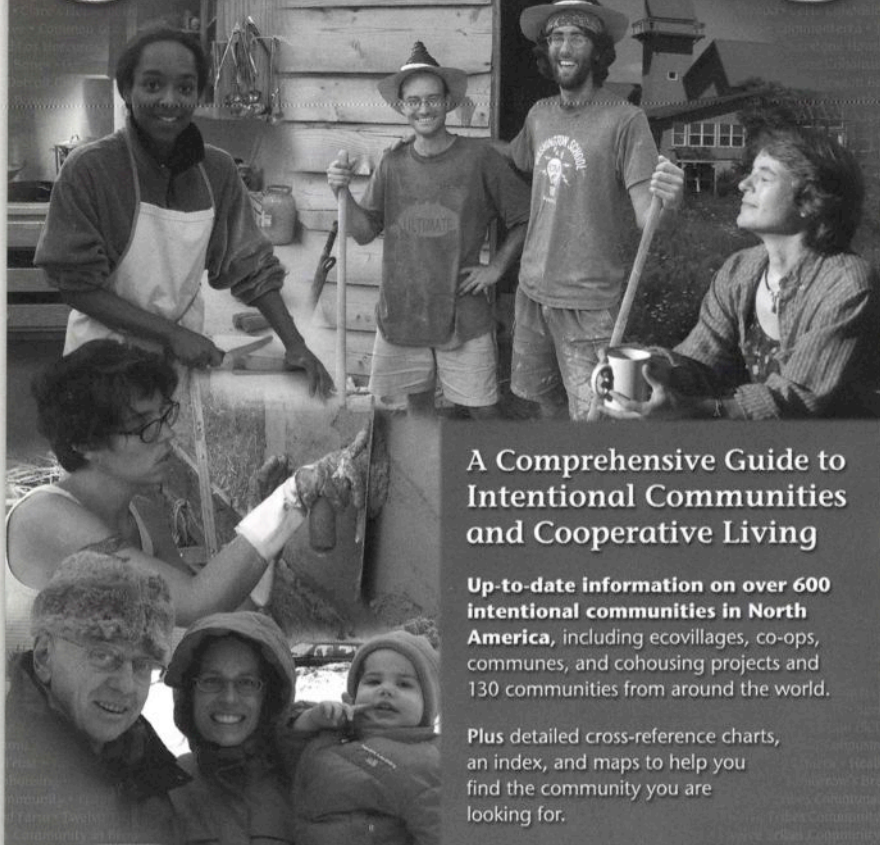
*Sildur Jackson: From Cohousing to Ecovillages (a Feminist Vision?)*

*Practical Steps to Join a Cohousing Community*



NEW EDITION – UPDATED FOR 2005

# COMMUNITIES



A Comprehensive Guide to Intentional Communities and Cooperative Living

Up-to-date information on over 600 intentional communities in North America, including ecovillages, co-ops, communes, and cohousing projects and 130 communities from around the world.

Plus detailed cross-reference charts, an index, and maps to help you find the community you are looking for.

# DIRECTORY

## COMMUNITIES DIRECTORY

Over 600 North American communities, plus 130 from around the world, provide contact information and describe themselves—their structure, beliefs, mission, and visions of the future.

Includes articles on the basics of intentional communities and tips on finding the one that's right for you. You'll also find information on how to be a good community visitor.

## MAPS

Complete maps show locations of communities in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. See at a glance what's happening in your area or plan your community-visiting adventure.

## CROSS-REFERENCE CHARTS

These charts allow you to quickly scan for the communities that fulfill your criteria, including size, location, spiritual beliefs, food choices, decision making, and more.

All data is based on the Online Communities Directory at [directory.ic.org](http://directory.ic.org) (see below).



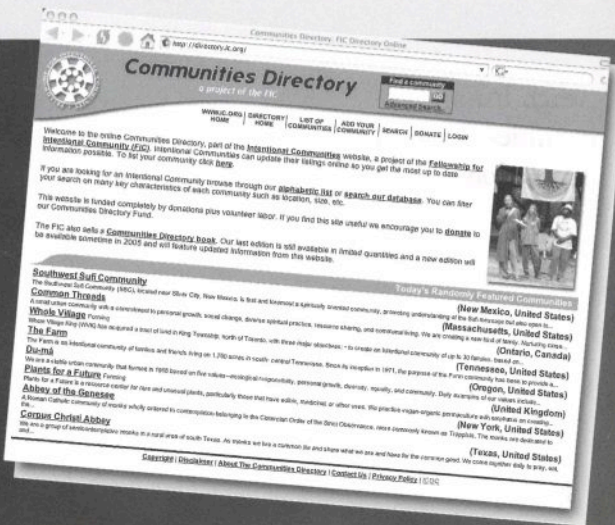
**Scheduled for release summer 2005. Order it NOW online!**

\$27 Postpaid (book rate in US, call or visit [store.ic.org](http://store.ic.org) for other shipping destinations and options) [store.ic.org/directory](http://store.ic.org/directory) • 1-800-462-8240

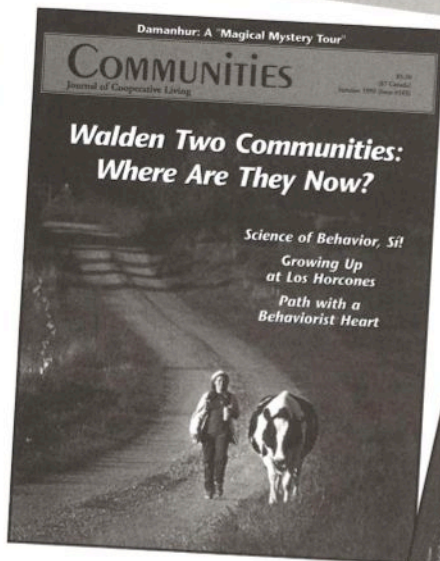
## ONLINE COMMUNITIES DIRECTORY

Don't miss the latest community listing information, available at [directory.ic.org](http://directory.ic.org). All the data in our book and more. Browse our alphabetical list or search on a variety of characteristics to find the community of your dreams.

**Hey Communities!** You can update your listing online at [directory.ic.org](http://directory.ic.org). Our interface allows you to update all aspects of your community listing so seekers will get the most up-to-date information possible. Update your information today!



# SUBSCRIBE TO COMMUNITIES MAGAZINE



*"Offers fascinating insights into the joys and challenges of communities... by their foremost pioneers."*

Corinne McLaughlin, co-author,  
*Spiritual Politics*, cofounder,  
Sirius Community

Your source for the latest information, issues, and ideas about intentional communities and cooperative living today!

Each issue is focused around a theme: Conflict & Connection; Ecovillages; Growing Older in Community; Love, Romance, & Sex; Christian Communities; Cohousing...

Reach listings—helping communities looking for people and people looking for communities find each other.

## COMMUNITIES MAGAZINE

**Communities magazine** (Outside U.S. prices in parentheses)

- 1 year, quarterly - \$20 (\$24 Canada, \$26 other)  2 yr \$34 (\$42 Canada, \$46 other)  3 yr \$45 (\$57 Canada, \$63 other)  Sample of current issue: \$6 (\$7 Canada, \$8 other)

Rates are for periodical/surface mail class. Please call or visit [store.ic.org](http://store.ic.org) for other shipping destinations and options.

**Communities Directory** (See the ad on the facing page)

- \$27 US, includes shipping. Please call for quantity discounts!  
 Enclosed is my check payable to FIC in U.S. funds.  
 Charge Visa/MC/Dscvr # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Amount - \$** \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF INDIVIDUAL OR CONTACT PERSON

PHONE

GROUP NAME OR AFFILIATION (IF APPROPRIATE)

STREET

CITY/TOWN

STATE/PROVINCE

ZIP/POSTAL CODE

- Please *don't* share my name with other like-minded organizations.

Photocopy and mail to: **FIC, 138-CM Twin Oaks Rd, Louisa VA 23093. Ph 800-462-8240**

**or subscribe online at [store.ic.org](http://store.ic.org)**

# COMMUNITIES

JOURNAL of COOPERATIVE LIVING

## FRONT COVER

The Grover family at Sunward  
Cohousing in Ann Arbor,  
Michigan.

Credit: Jillian Downey, Great  
Oaks, Ann Arbor

## BACK COVER

Planting Day at Frog Song  
Cohousing in Cotati, California.

Credit: Matt Kramer.

## FOCUS

### *The Face of Cohousing in 2005*

#### 24 The Face of Cohousing in 2005

Guest Editors Raines Cohen and Betsy Morris examine the state of cohousing communities in North America, how cohousing contributes to the wider communities movement and vice-versa, “green” cohousing, affordability, diversity, and the newest trend—senior cohousing.

- Map of Cohousing Communities in the U.S.—*Raines Cohen*

#### 32 The Next Phase: Senior Cohousing

Pioneering cohousing architect *Chuck Durrett* shares his experiences researching elder cohousing communities in Denmark. Senior cohousing founders and developers in North America can learn much from the Danes’ experience, he says. Interview by *Raines Cohen*.

- Current Cohousers Consider New Options for the Years Ahead—*Neshama Abraham*

#### 40 What Have We Learned in Five Years?

Songaia Cohousing members take stock of their group’s accumulated community wisdom so far. *Fred Lanphear*.

#### 42 Cohousing to Ecovillages: A Global Feminist Vision?

Cofounder of the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) and Danish cohousing pioneer *Hildur Jackson* examines the special needs and gifts that women have contributed to the start of the cohousing movement in Denmark, and suggests that the cohousing movement has led to the ecovillage movement worldwide.

- When Ecovillagers Use the Cohousing Model—*Diana Leafé Christian*.

#### 49 A “Green” Architect Falls in Love ... With FrogSong Cohousing

*Joseph F. Kennedy*, well-known natural building designer-builder and founder of Builders Without Borders, discovers cohousing—and likes what he sees!

#### 53 Joining a Cohousing Community: Risks and Rewards

What anyone needs to know on how to find, assess, and join a cohousing community, whether “Danish model,” developer-partner, or developer-driven; townhouse style, lot model, or retrofit; in the early stages, during construction, or after move-in. Practical, step-by-step advice by Frog Song resident *Stephen Gold*.





## COLUMNS

**8 PUBLISHER'S NOTE • *Laird Schaub***  
Not Quite Ready for Prime Time: Parting the  
Sea of Red Ink

**10 PROCESS IN COMMUNITY**  
• *Tree Bressen*  
When Meetings Aren't Just One Big Circle ...

**15 FEDERATION UPDATE**  
• *Ben and Elsa Spenser*  
Lessons from the "Hive Mind"

**18 ECOVILLAGE NETWORK OF THE  
AMERICAS • *Tami Brunk***  
Living at the Ecovillage Crossroads

**58 "NO MAD" LIVING • *Alberto Ruz***  
Temporary Ceremonial P.E.A.C.E Villages

**80 PERIPATETIC COMMUNITARIAN**  
• *Geoph Kozeny*  
Cohousing: Affordable Housing?

## DEPARTMENTS

4 LETTERS

61 REVIEWS

66 CALENDAR

72 REACH



# COMMUNITIES

Journal of Cooperative Living

## GUEST EDITORS

Raines Cohen (*Berkeley Cohousing, Cohousing Association of the United States*), Elizabeth W. Morris (*Berkeley Cohousing*)

## EDITOR

Diana Leafe Christian (*Earthaven*)

## LAYOUT

Wordsworth (*Meadowdance*)

## ILLUSTRATIONS

Darren T. McManus  
Billie Miracle (*WomanShare*)

## PHOTOS

Jillian Downey (*Great Oaks*), Chuck Durrett (*Nevada City Cohousing*), Stephen Gold (*Frog Song Cohousing*), Hildur Jackson (*Global Ecovillage Network*), Matt Kramer (*Frog Song Cohousing*), Joseph F. Kennedy, Fred Lanphear (*Songaia Cohousing*), Michael McIntyre (*Sunward Cohousing*).

## COPYEDITING

Wordsworth (*Meadowdance*)

## PROOFREADING

Wordsworth (*Meadowdance*)

## DISPLAY ADS

Diana Leafe Christian (*Earthaven*)

## REACH AND CLASSIFIED ADS

Patricia Greene

## OFFICE MANAGER

Tony Sirna (*Dancing Rabbit*)

## CIRCULATION MANAGER

McCune Porter (*Twin Oaks*)

## EDITORIAL REVIEW BOARD

Deborah Altus  
Laird Schaub (*Sandhill Farm*)  
Tony Sirna (*Dancing Rabbit*)

COMMUNITIES (ISSN 0199-9346) is published quarterly by the Fellowship for Intentional Community at Route 1, Box 156, Rutledge, MO 63563. Periodicals postage paid at Rutledge, MO, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Communities*, 138 Twin Oaks Rd., Louisa, VA 23093. Indexed in the *Alternative Press Index*.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: \$20 U.S., \$24 Canada, \$26 outside U.S./Canada for four issues via periodical/surface mail. Single copies are \$6 U.S., \$7 Canada, \$8 outside U.S./Canada. All payments in U.S. dollars. Available from *Communities*, 138 Twin Oaks Rd., Louisa, VA 23093; [order@ic.org](mailto:order@ic.org), or order online at [store.ic.org](http://store.ic.org).

BACK ISSUES: Rt. 1, Box 156, Rutledge, MO 63563; 800-995-8342.

EDITORIAL OFFICE: *Communities*, 1025 Camp Elliott Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711, 828-669-9702; [communities@ic.org](mailto:communities@ic.org).

© 2005 by Fellowship for Intentional Community. All rights reserved. Printed in the USA. Opinions expressed by authors and correspondents are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher.

FELLOWSHIP FOR INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY: Rt. 1, Box 156, Rutledge, MO 63563; 660-883-5545.

REPRINT PERMISSION: Community groups may reprint with permission. Please contact *Communities*, 1025 Camp Elliott Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711, 828-669-9702; [communities@ic.org](mailto:communities@ic.org).

ADVERTISING: *Communities*, 1025 Camp Elliott Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711, 828-669-9702; [communities@ic.org](mailto:communities@ic.org).

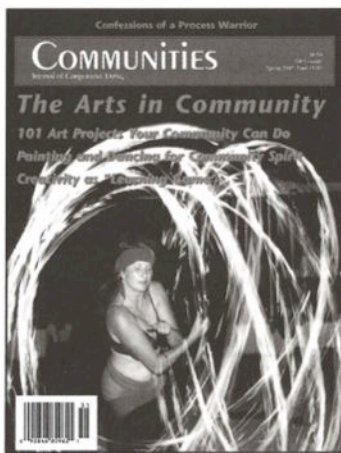
WEB SITE: [www.ic.org](http://www.ic.org).

This magazine printed on recycled paper, using soy-based inks, at Allen Press in Lawrence, Kansas, USA.

# LETTERS



Send letters to *Communities* magazine, 1025 Camp Elliott Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711, or [communities@ic.org](mailto:communities@ic.org). Your letter may be edited or shortened. Thank you!



Dear *Communities*:

I really liked the recent Art in Community issue, especially the article, "101 Art Ideas Your Community Can Do." I actually went through and marked off which of the art projects we've done here at EcoVillage at Ithaca. Thanks very much.

Michelle Nolan  
EcoVillage at Ithaca  
Ithaca, NY

## Back Issues

Dear *Communities*:

I wanted to purchase a back issue from Spring 2001. What's the easiest way to do this? Thanks.

Claudine

You can order back issues online from the FIC's online store, [store.ic.org](http://store.ic.org), or you can get them by contacting the FIC office in Missouri at [fic@ic.org](mailto:fic@ic.org) or 800-462-8240. —Ed

## No Debt, Common Values

Dear Editor,

Thank you for running my article, "Bream Lake Cooperative," in the Winter '04 issue. It's quite a thrill to see your own words in print! I'd like to give an update on our situation. My husband and I first conceived of the idea of starting a housing co-op in order to get together with other people to work on creating an intentional community. As long as it moves us closer to satisfying our main goal, we are still open to a housing co-op. However, we are no longer putting energy into this short term objective, but instead are focusing on our long-term aspiration, community creation. We feel that there are a couple of important aspects to successfully establish a new community. First, there should be no debt. This allows members considerable free time to pursue their own activities, something we see missing in many communities. Second, community members should strongly share a few core values, for community cohesiveness. We respectfully ask those who are interested in learning more about the specifics of our proposal to read though our website, [www.everything-is-related.info](http://www.everything-is-related.info)—we'd love to have some feedback. We are very much looking forward to joining forces with other people that share

## A rewarding opportunity at Camphill Special School-Beaver Run

The new and exciting Transition Program at Camphill School Beaver Run is currently looking for experienced long-term staff for the fall of 2005. This 3-year program is aimed at guiding youngsters who graduate from Beaver Run toward their next step in life.



The Transition Program is situated near the main campus in the beautiful Northern Chester County countryside, and will expand to become a strong part of the school and the vocational life of Beaver Run. Those interested in working in this rewarding environment please call: Anne Sproll at 610.469.9236 or email: [brvolunteer@aol.com](mailto:brvolunteer@aol.com)

our values, and to creating this new community somewhere in the U.S. or Canada.

Jo Dempsey  
Hawthorne, Florida  
jo\_dempsey@highstream.net

## Toward a New American Dream

Dear *Communities*:

I'd like to express my appreciation for all the hard work and dedication that goes into *Communities* magazine. I have been an avid reader since the early 1970s when the editor was Paul Freundlich. Over the years I've met many wonderful people in the Fellowship for Intentional Communities (FIC), your nonprofit publisher. And now there's the new online *Communities Directory* ([directory.ic.org](http://directory.ic.org)). A lot of truly dedicated people created this and are now hard at work on the new print edition of the *Directory*.

I've enjoyed FIC board meetings and Art of Community gatherings at communities around the country over the years: at Ganas, Twin Oaks, and Church of the Golden Rule. When I attempted to start a community in Tucson a few years ago, the FIC was very supportive and helpful. We were not able to find enough people to do it, however we did accomplish permaculture and land-restoration projects.

Since then I've been integrating what I've learned and continue to have big dreams for creating community. I invite *Communities* readers to email me and I'll send a copy of my 20-page vision called, "Toward a New American Dream."

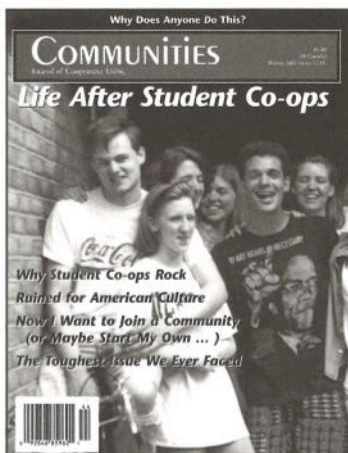
William Cerf  
Southern Oregon  
cerf541@msn.com

## New Online Magazine about Artists' Communities

Dear Editor:

The online magazine Wildflower Stew [www.wildflowerstew.org/mag](http://www.wildflowerstew.org/mag) is looking for writers and photographers who are living in community and would like to share journals, articles or photographs about their experiences. Our focus is living on the earth consciously and creatively! We are especially interested in communities of artists, writers, and musicians and would like to found one of our own soon. Thank you for your good work all these years with the magazine.

R Swan  
swan@wildflowerstew.org



## Email in Communities

Dear *Communities*:

Thank you for Laird Sandhill's "Publisher's Note" on using email for community in the Winter '05 issue. It cleared up a lot of confusion about emailing for me, particularly the statement that email is not a conversation but a fragment. Also, appreciated the comments about "firing off an email"—I now see that fast and convenient is not necessarily the best. Laird's note that

voice tone, body language, and eye contact are not available in email is insightful.

I also liked Bill Metcalf's "Community Living Worldwide" column about Torri Superiore Ecovillage in Italy, especially where the Torri Superiore member said, "In the beginning I concentrated more on the spiritual path but I have lost that little by little. I am now trying to find a way to again work on my inner path through the land and the gardens." I really can relate to that process.

Barbara Hawley

## Hypocrisy in the Communities Movement?

*Communities*:


This is an open letter to the communities movement. I'd like to say that, as someone new to the intentional community subculture, I have found a great deal of closed-mindedness, judgment, arrogance, generalization, and even bigotry—despite the great talk of acceptance, tolerance, and diversity. It seems like there is a "we/they" mindset and an underlying tone of "acceptance and tolerance—on our terms."

*a workshop in making the*

# Post-Petroleum transition

Global production of petroleum per capita reached a peak two decades ago, and yet world consumption patterns are still expanding, still straining the web of nature. From here on, we need to learn to live with less. This workshop combines the Permaculture Design Course with an introduction to strawbale, bamboo, fieldstone, cob, and other natural building materials. Participants will learn ecology, energy and resource conservation, social and community skills, and the practical aspects of ecovillage sustainability. Field trips will include visits to local permaculture sites. Presenters include Howard Switzer, Katey Culver, Diana Leafe Christian, Albert Bates, Valerie Seitz, Gwynelle Dismukes, Matthew English, Scott Horton, Greg Ramsey, Murad Al Khufash, and special guests.

Details:  
[thefarm.org/etc](http://thefarm.org/etc)  
 ecovillage@thefarm.org  
 POB 90 Summertown  
 TN 38483-0090 USA

 The Farm ecovillage training center

March 19-April 2, 2005  
and July 22-30, 2005

The Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm in Tennessee offers

- Natural buildings
- Organic gardening
- Wilderness mushroom hikes
- Biological wastewater
- Alternative power systems
- Conservation land planning
- Music, yoga and dance
- Gourmet vegan food

Student groups and visitors always welcome.  
931-964-4324

## AERO

ALTERNATIVE  
EDUCATION  
RESOURCE  
ORGANIZATION

[www.EducationRevolution.org](http://www.EducationRevolution.org)

- Looking for a better educational environment?
- Familiar with alternative schools, homeschooling, and other options?
- Frustrated with the school system?

### YOU DO HAVE A CHOICE!

AERO is the hub of communications for educational alternatives. AERO is a nonprofit organization founded in 1989 by education expert Jerry Mintz to provide parents, students, teachers and organizations with the information to make informed decisions about their education needs and choices. We also assist those starting new alternatives and changing present schools.

(800) 769-4171

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

417 Roslyn Rd.

Roslyn Heights, NY 11577

[www.EducationRevolution.org](http://www.EducationRevolution.org)

I have role-played online a bit, pretending to take on different identities and beliefs, for example, as someone seeking a Christian community. (Yes, yes, it's dishonest, but I never lie for long, and it's a valuable experiment.) I have found that some types of people are warmly accepted, and others are treated subtly as outsiders. Christians are definitely one of the outsider types. Although no one in the IC subculture has been blatantly mean or hateful, the subtle messages add up.

It's perfectly normal to have a "we/they" mindset (I have one right now, for example, although I'm trying not to), but I'd like to hold you guys accountable because you talk so much about acceptance. It's one of your greatest values. Therefore, I write this to challenge you all to do a bit of introspection.

Thanks for reading, and sorry if I seem bitter; I have been hurt by this, so no doubt my interpretations are tainted/exaggerated by the hurt ... but I still thought you'd like to know what it looks like from one of the other angles. One great thing about you guys is that you're usually very interested in growth opportunities.

Symmetry

*Seems like you started with the mistaken assumption that all communities put it out that they're seeking new members regardless of whether*

*they have anything in common with the community, because of a belief in "acceptance." Most, though not all communities, while welcoming visitors of all kinds, only want those people to join them who share their particular vision, mission, and values, if for no other reason, to avoid conflict when it comes to community decisions. But vision, mission, and values vary widely from community to community, so the various personas you tried on could most likely find a community home somewhere. For example, there are many fine Christian communities out there, so the Christian persona you assumed for research purposes perhaps could have found aligned communities by contacting some of the 125 Christian communities in the U.S. profiled in the book Fire, Salt, and Peace by David Janzen.* —Ed

### What Does It Take?

Dear Communities:

My partner Carolyn and I live in the New Hampshire lakes region on almost 50 acres designated as a permaculture land trust. Even though we have invited people to join us here in poly-loving community for many years, we are still alone. Why? I guess it's a complex answer. In my estimation people are too full of fear to practice the spiritual discipline it takes to make this kind of community work. Some

# BARTIMAEUS

## COHOUSING AT MEADOW WOOD

**Creative, innovative, consensus-governed neighborhood community**

**Based on a foundation of Christian faith and practice**

**Individual home ownership (condominiums)**

**Shared common house for voluntary meals, community service and fun (barn/workshop also on premises)**

**Project includes wetlands & salmon creek habitat restoration**

**New, environment-friendly units now under construction**

**Located on Washington's Olympic Peninsula  
(a ferry ride from Seattle)**

**"IT TAKES A VILLAGE, SO WE'RE BUILDING ONE."**

**call (360) 692 8064, or visit [www.bartcommunity.org](http://www.bartcommunity.org)**



folks can have one or more sexual partners harmoniously, but loving energies in sacred circle takes deeply committed spiritual people. I guess they are a rare commodity. I'd like to prove myself wrong. What do your readers say?

**Bruce Shearer**  
Namaste Greenfire  
New Hampshir



## The Joyful Struggle

Dear *Communities*:

As a communitarian with a pessimistic disposition, I was struck by Geoph Kozeny's article, "Pollyannas, Pessimists and the Optimal Optimist," in the Fall/Winter '02 issue. I recognize that pessimism is not the optimal position for problem solving, yet it is where I start from. How do I deal with this? This is where the pleasure and meaning of community come together for me. I've done enough work on myself to know that I am inclined to pessimism and negativity, and also to know this is not how I want to conduct my life, nor is it healthy for my community. As Geoph points out, denial doesn't work very well. I can tell you how positive I am till I'm blue in the face, but when those troublemakers who broke the rules are in front of me, how do I hear them and not just want to kick them out? (In the name of the good of the community, of course!) The first thing, that sounds so simple yet can be difficult in the moment, is to recognize my negativity. Then I have to ask myself if I really want this. If I can honestly answer no, great! But sometimes I realize I am holding on to that negativity. This in itself can be difficult to admit. Either way, the next thing to do is to find help. If I'm clear I don't want my negativity, I can find someone (or a few people) to help me remember what it is I like about the person or situation, and imagine an outcome I would want. This needs to be a positive. "Throw the SOB's out!" is not acceptable!

Remembering my intention of living my life as a loving person (and the pleasure I derive from that) usually helps. From there, I try to see how I don't understand the situation from some point of view that would contradict my position. Perhaps my friend(s) can guide me to that, or point out how I am barricading that information from my awareness. I need to want the other perspective enough to seek it out. Only then can I be ready to help create a resolution for the individuals and the community in a collective problem-solving effort.

Negativity can be directed at myself or others. Sometimes I think "I'm such a self-pitying loser, I'll never get out of this" instead of "It's all because of those jerks." Either way is not problem solving.

Depression saps one's energy, self-righteous anger creates walls to understanding. Neither are impenetrable. If I recognize that I'm not up to letting go of my negativity and pessimism, then my friend(s) has to help me find out what is in the way. This can be a complex issue whose roots may not be directly related to the issue at hand. Often realizing this, even if I'm not clear on what my deeper issues are, can remind me of wanting to solve the immediate problem. I might want to talk to people a number of times

to uproot the underlying issue. I can't expect that in one conversation!

This is one of the most precious meanings of community to me. To live my life surrounded by people who want to join with me to create as positive and loving an environment as possible, and put the hard work into that vision, is incredible. We all have our stuck places and moments. I rely on my cocommunards to help me through those and I in turn help them. This is the joyful struggle I embrace.

**Elke Lerman**  
Ganas Community  
New York City



## The Canadian Cohousing Network

*"Bringing Canadians into Community since 1996"*

[www.cohousing.ca](http://www.cohousing.ca)

Telephone: 604 888-3831



### Communities Editorial Policy

*Communities* is a forum for exploring intentional communities, cooperative living, and ways our readers can bring a sense of community into their daily lives. Contributors include people who live or have lived in community, and anyone with insights relevant to cooperative living.

Through fact, fiction, and opinion, we offer fresh ideas about how to live cooperatively, how to solve problems peacefully, and how individual lives can be enhanced by living purposefully with others. We seek contributions that profile community living and why people choose it, descriptions of what's difficult and what works well, news about existing and forming communities, or articles that illuminate community experiences—past and present—offering insights into mainstream cultural issues.

We do not intend to promote one kind of community over another, and take no official position on a community's economic structure, political agenda, spiritual beliefs, environmental issues, or decision-making style. As long as submitted articles are related to the theme of community living, we will consider them for publication. However, we do not publish articles that 1) advocate violent practices, or 2) advocate that a community interfere with its members' right to leave.

Our aim is to be as balanced in our reporting as possible, and whenever we print an article critical of a particular community, we invite that community to respond with its own perspective.

### Submissions Policy

To submit an article, please first request the Writer's Guidelines: *Communities*, 1025 Camp Elliott Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711, 828-669-9702; [communities@ic.org](mailto:communities@ic.org).

### Advertising Policy

We accept paid advertising in *Communities* because our mission is to provide our readers with helpful and inspiring information—and because advertising revenues help pay the bills.

We hand pick our advertisers, selecting only those whose products and services we believe will be helpful to people interested in community living, cooperation, and sustainability. We hope you find this service useful, and we encourage your feedback.

*Communities Advertising*, 1025 Camp Elliott Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711, 828-669-9702; [communities@ic.org](mailto:communities@ic.org).

### What is an "Intentional Community"?

An "intentional community" is a group of people who have chosen to live or work together in pursuit of a common ideal or vision. Most, though not all, share land or housing. Intentional communities come in all shapes and sizes, and display amazing diversity in their common values, which may be social, economic, spiritual, political, and/or ecological. Some are rural; some urban. Some live all in a single residence; some in separate households. Some raise children; some don't. Some are secular, some are spiritually based, and others are both. For all their variety though, the communities featured in our magazine hold a common commitment to living cooperatively, to solving problems nonviolently, and to sharing their experiences with others.

## PUBLISHER'S NOTE



# Not Quite Ready for Prime Time

## Parting the Sea of Red Ink

**T**wo years ago, the FIC ventured out to play with the big boys of alternative magazine distribution, and last year we paid the piper for that misadventure—to the tune of nearly \$14,000 in net operating loss. Ouch!

Ever the optimists, we worked with distributors to place *Communities* on the magazine racks of several major alternative market franchises—Borders, Barnes & Nobles, Whole Foods, and Wild Oats among them. We were looking for a big jump in circulation. What we got was a big jump in costs. We printed more, shipped more, and paid more... but we didn't sell many more.

Sorting through the 2004 year-end numbers, almost every category of magazine income and expense looked good or acceptable, excepting the freefall in wholesale income—the revenue we derive from distributor accounts. There we experienced a precipitous 80 percent drop in one year, from \$19,697 in 2003 to just \$3,867 last year. And if we hadn't pared overall expenses by 10 percent, it would have been even worse. Yikes!

In part, last year looks bad because of a time lag inherent to the arcane world of accrual accounting for magazines. While we saw the failure of our expansionist strategy about a year ago and acted then to rein in our print runs, the full picture of the financial impact wasn't revealed until 2004. Our expenses went down right away (because we were printing and shipping fewer copies), but there's a delay in closing the books on the wholesale income for a given issue because distributors don't pay for issue number X until they've received issue number Y and can calculate all the returns (for which, of course, they don't pay). For a quarterly like us, that delay is 6-9 months. In consequence, our books showed some inflated numbers for distributor income in 2003, and the air hadn't completely escaped that leaky trial balloon until last year.

The good news is that that particular bottom has now been hit.

### Coming Up Off the Canvas

What next? We may have been knocked down, but we haven't been knocked out. We're going to try again.

### COMING IN FUTURE ISSUES

#### "Communication, Process, and Resolving Conflict" Fall 2005

What it takes to keep community connection healthy and thriving. Some of the worst conflicts groups have had, and how they resolved them. The best advice we know from some of the most experienced community mediators and process facilitators.

*Communities*: [communities@ic.org](mailto:communities@ic.org); 828-669-9702.

We still believe (though a bit more cautiously) that we have a decent market in the stores where we took a bath. We think that Communities' audience is solidly among those whom futurist Paul Ray has styled the "Cultural Creatives," which comprise about 25 percent of the population. As near as we can tell, these folks definitely frequent these health food supermarkets and bookstores. The key question is why we failed so spectacularly to get their attention.

Not giving up on the idea of finding more readers—we don't believe that interest in community is going out of fashion any time soon—we're going to approach the challenge of reaching a wider audience from another direction. Research has shown that magazines have about three seconds in which to motivate a potential reader to pick up a copy and take closer look. While we're proud of the quality of our articles, they have no impact at all on people who don't open the cover. So we're going to concentrate on making better use of those brief seconds of initial attention.

Our plan—for boosting both circulation and revenues—is to start with an upgrade of our image(s), then go back to the newsstands and see whom we attract. We've found some supporters with deep pockets who believe in what we're doing, and they're helping to bankroll the following two-year experiment:

- 1) Overhaul our graphics (which includes a redesigned full-color front cover—as you can see in this issue—establishing a budget for cover photos and electronic photo archiving, and buying better quality paper—to show those fine new photos to advantage).
- 2) Pitch the magazine to where we think our readers are (which includes a continuous two-year "Off the Newsstand" ad in Utne Reader, and mailing promotional copies to student co-ops and cohousing groups across the continent).
- 3) Increase ad rates for the first time in a decade. We'll bump them up 10 percent now and then raise them again if we're able to demonstrate a significant gain in circulation. In the end, it will probably be the relative success of ad revenues that will determine the magazine's long-term viability. It's time to find out what we can do.

Check back with us in the summer of 2007, and we'll be happy to report on how the experiment has played out—on how primed we are for parting with our sea of red ink.

*Laird Schaub*

*Laird Schaub is Executive Secretary of the Fellowship for Intentional Community (publisher of this magazine), and a cofounder of Sandhill Farm community in Missouri.*

### Communities Magazine 2004 Financial Statement

<b>Expenses</b>	
Printing	\$18,009
Office overhead	6,036
Production labor	23,469
Fulfillment	11,040
Office expenses*	1,947
Marketing	0
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>60,501</b>

<b>Income</b>	
Subscriptions	\$26,254
Single issues	1,050
Back issues	2,476
Distributor sales	3,867
Advertising	12,566
Royalties	438
Donations	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>46,651</b>
<b>Net Profit (Loss)</b>	<b>(\$13,850)</b>

\*postage, phone, copying

## Sunrise Credit Union

# Expanding your Community?

Sunrise Credit Union has provided funding for a variety of community projects

Our board and staff have over 75 years of combined intentional community living experience. We understand your needs and will provide you with the personal attention you deserve.

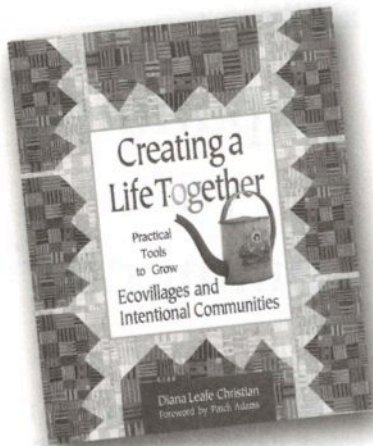
Sunrise Credit Union is a full service financial center for FIC members.

### We offer:

- Online Banking
- Free Checking
- Low Fees
- Visa Card & Debit Card
- Savings, CDs, IRAs, and Money Market
- Loans—Personal and Project
- Excellent Rates
- Federally Insured

Find out more!  
scu@ic.org  
www.sunrisecreditunion.org  
888-871-3482 or 970-679-4311





## Creating a Life Together:

Practical Tools to Grow Ecovillages and Intentional Communities

By Diana Leafe Christian  
Editor, *Communities Magazine*  
Foreword by Patch Adams

**"Every potential ecovillager should read it."**

—Bill Mollison

**"Wow! The newest, most comprehensive bible for builders of intentional communities."**

—Hazel Henderson

**"A really valuable resource . . . I wish I had it years ago."**

—Starhawk

**"On my top three 'must-read' list for cohousers."**

—Ann Zabaldo,  
*Takoma Village Cohousing*

**"I stayed up till 2:00 am with this book! . . . I recommend it for all cohousing groups and cohousing professionals."**

—Sally Wright,  
*Pleasant Hill Cohousing*

**"The right book at the right time. Will help community founders avoid fatal mistakes."**

—Hildur Jackson, Co-founder,  
*Global Ecovillage Network*

New Society Publishers, 2003  
22.95 • [store.ic.org](http://store.ic.org) • Bookstores

# When Meetings Aren't Just One Big Circle ...

When you think of a meeting, I'll bet you envision a group of people sitting together talking, probably all in one big circle. While most meetings do default to whole group discussion (also called "plenary"), many other formats are also available. Reasons for choosing other formats include, but are not limited to:

1. Increased air time by allowing multiple people to speak at the same time;
2. Providing safer space for people who are not comfortable speaking in front of the whole group;
3. Providing an opportunity for people to contribute in diverse ways (e.g., drawing or moving instead of speaking);
4. Shifting the energy;
5. Using time efficiently;
6. Gathering information;
7. Exploring an issue in depth.

Following are some sample formats and suggestions on when they are appropriate. Remember that whatever format you choose, it's important to think through beforehand how each step of the process will work in practice, and have any necessary materials ready. And of course you can modify any format listed here to suit your needs.

## Go-Round

In a go-round, every person gets a turn to speak in order, without interruption or direct response ("cross-talk") by others. Before starting, you should get clear on whether it's OK to pass (not speak) during a turn and whether the group checks in at the end with anyone who has done so; whether there will be a time limit per person; whether people are welcome to speak a second time later in the session; and whether the facilitator or others are allowed to ask clarifying questions.

It's nice if there is time for the group to talk afterward about what came up, and/or the facilitator may offer closing remarks.

Go-rounds are useful when you want to hear from every person present, when some members are reluctant to jump into a fast-paced discussion, or when you feel that a slower, more deliberate method is appropriate to the subject under consideration, perhaps because it is a particularly weighty decision.

This format is rarely appropriate in a group of more than 15 people. When planning a go-round, think ahead about how much time it will realistically take, and consider whether there needs to be a time limit per person. (If there is a time limit, either sending a wrist-



*Tree Bressen is a group process consultant who works with intentional communities and other nonprofits on how to have meetings that are lively, productive, and connecting. She lives at Walnut St. Co-op in Eugene, Oregon. Her website, [www.treegroup.info](http://www.treegroup.info), offers free tools and resources. [tree@ic.org](mailto:tree@ic.org).*

watch around the circle so that whoever just spoke keeps time for the next speaker, or having a gentle chime ready for the facilitator to ring as a signal, are graceful ways to keep to the limit.)

### **Brainstorming**

Brainstorming is a well-known technique for eliciting as many ideas as possible in the shortest amount of time. It usually consists of having people call out ideas which are then written onto a flipchart at the front of the room where everyone can see it. If people are really popping, you may even need two separate charts with scribes who alternate writing the ideas people call out. The basic rule of brainstorming is that no evaluative comments are allowed; that is, no one can say of another idea that it's good or bad. The point is to open up to the fullest possible creativity.

At least that's the theory. Brainstorming has been studied extensively by researchers, and the results show that people do in fact tend to inhibit their sharing. Saying that ideas will not be judged doesn't in itself keep it from happening (even if it's in people's heads rather than out loud), and participants know this. Also not everyone can think creatively in an environment with others shouting out their ideas. So, an alternate technique is to have people write ideas down anonymously onto half-sheets of paper, which are collected by the facilitator and posted at the front. An added advantage of that approach is that the ideas can then be moved around and grouped into categories.

### **Small Groups**

Concurrent small groups is an obvious method that should probably be used far more frequently than it is. By simple math, breaking into small groups during part of an agenda item allows a lot more people to have air time. And people who will never speak in front of a large group due to shyness may have wonderful ideas to share.

The breakout groups may be anywhere from two to five people. I tend toward smaller groups (two to three people) for

increased safety when the topic has a lot of emotion associated with it, whereas groups of four to five may be good for more energy when you want people to share opinions or generate ideas. In small groups of six or more, participants have to wait longer to get a speaking turn and you start losing the benefits of small groups.

At the end of the small group time, bring the full group back together by inviting people to share insights and highlights in the full group. Sharing new learning is more useful than full "report-backs," which tend to be boring and decrease the energy. Spending even 10 minutes in small groups enables people to express their first responses to an issue very efficiently, thus deepening the level of consideration when the group starts plenary discussion.

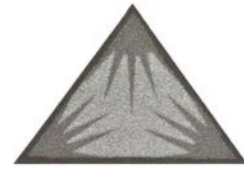
***The basic rule of brainstorming is that no one can say that an idea is good or bad.***

### **Fishbowl**

A fishbowl consists of some members of the whole group gathering together in one place (usually sitting in a circle in the middle of the room) to discuss a topic while the rest of the group witnesses silently from the outer circle.

Fishbowls are most often used to bring together representatives of the main divergent points of view on a topic in order to engage in deeper exploration (a heterogeneous fishbowl). This process is also sometimes used to explore categorical differences in the group, for example having all the people of one gender sitting in the middle talking about their experience, followed by all the people of the other gender, as a consciousness-raising exercise (homogeneous fishbowl). When doing a homogeneous fishbowl, including at least two rounds by each group will help deepen the conversation.

For a heterogeneous fishbowl, the key is to get all the main viewpoints represented in the middle. As facilitator Laird Schaub explains, if a small number of people carry the strongest views or have thought most deeply about a topic, then any agreement among that subgroup will likely be amenable to the whole. This prevents diffusion and keeps the conversation very focused. However, bringing together pro-



**ADMINSERVICE.ORG**

**Do You Need Short-Term Help with Your Project?**



**Temporary Administrative Help?**



**Review of Your Policy & Procedural Manual?**



**Staff Training?**



**Conflict Resolution?**

**Adminservice** does work nobody wants to do, saves you time and money, and brings a spiritual orientation to the process. We will help you finish projects, implement recommendations, administer your business, clarify organizational structure, and develop your board.

**[www.adminservice.org](http://www.adminservice.org)**

**[info@adminservice.org](mailto:info@adminservice.org)**

# Learn Sustainable Living Skills at Earthaven Ecovillage

Permaculture Design

Natural Building

Starting an Ecovillage

Herbs & Health

Sacred Sexuality

Women's Mysteries

**Building with Earth & Straw**  
w/Mollie Curry

**Jul 22-30**

**Six-Week Internship**  
**Ecovillage Living & Permaculture**

**Aug 12-Oct 2**

**Permaculture Fundamentals**  
w/Chuck Marsh, Peter Bane

**Aug 12-20**

**Earthaven Experience Weekend**

**Aug 27-28**

**Starting a Successful Ecovillage**  
w/Diana Leafe Christian

**Sep 9-11**

**Ecovillage Planning & Design**  
w/Greg Ramsey

**Oct 1-2**

Visit our website for the full 2005 course schedule



[www.earthavenlearningcenter.org](http://www.earthavenlearningcenter.org)

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

866.666.9935 toll free

Black Mountain, NC (near Asheville)

tagonists on a topic can heighten tensions and you may need a facilitator who can handle the strong feelings and expressions that may result. You should also keep an eye on the observers to see if they are having trouble (either by losing interest or by getting riled up)—occasionally a fishbowl may need to be interrupted to check in with the outer circle.

***In a fishbowl, it's important to honor the role of the outer ring in witnessing and holding space for the conversation to happen in the middle.***

Another variation on the heterogeneous fishbowl is to include an empty chair in the subgroup that anyone from the outer circle who wishes to participate can occupy. When that person is done they can return to their outer ring seat, or if a second person from the outer circle wishes to join the discussion, they can come stand behind that chair and that's a signal to the first occupant to vacate the spot.

I normally invite comments by the outer circle at the end of the session, if not before. It's important to honor the role of the outer ring in witnessing and holding space for the conversation to happen in the middle.

## Kinetic Mapping

Kinetic mapping is a physical expression of where people "stand" on a topic. It is useful in gathering a large survey of information quickly, and raising energy by getting people out of their chairs. It is particularly appropriate on issues where opinion naturally falls into a spectrum.

To set this up, designate one spot in the room as one end of the opinion spectrum, and an opposite spot as the other pole, and ask the group to envision a line running

between them. (You might even illustrate this by putting a line of masking tape along the floor.) For example, you might designate one corner as, "I think our work guideline should be 40 hours per person per month," and the opposite corner as, "I think it should be 3 hours a month or less." Then the intervening space is arranged for 5 hours, 10 hours, 20 hours, etc. Next you ask people to line up according to their opinions. This provides an immediate visual snapshot of how people feel about the issue.

At this point you might have one person from each area of the line talk about how they feel and why. Another creative variation is to find the halfway point in the line of people, and fold the line around in two to create a series of pairs, so that the 40-hour person and the 3-hour person are paired up, the 38-hour person is with the 4-hour person, and so on, and then give the pairs 5-10 minutes to converse, before reporting back to the full group what they learned and what new insights emerged.

**Kinetic mapping provides an immediate visual snapshot of how people feel about the issue.**

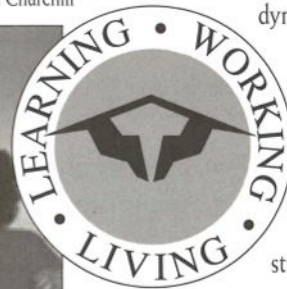
**Guided Visualization**

Guided visualizations rely on intuitive insight to raise new possibilities. For most groups it's not a format to use often, but when you have tried other avenues and need to change your approach, this method can go beyond rationality into the collective unconscious.

Ask everyone to be seated in a comfortable position, preferably with their eyes closed if they are willing. Next the facilitator leads the group through an initial sequence to help them get present and ready, perhaps a relaxation exercise where people concentrate on each area of their bodies in order. Then as Laird Schaub describes it, "The facilitator leads the group into mind-

*"We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give."*

Winston Churchill



Camphill Soltane is a lively Anthroposophically-based community for and with young adults with developmental disabilities. Through a dynamic combination of community life, education and training, work with the arts and on the land, a job placement program, and active strategic alliances with organizations in the surrounding area, Camphill Soltane accompanies these young adults through their age-appropriate quest for meaning and purpose in their lives.

For more information or to arrange a personal visit:

**Camphill Soltane**

224 Nantmeal Road, Glenmoore, PA 19343

610.469.0933 • Fax: 610.469.1054

Email: [info@camphillsoltane.org](mailto:info@camphillsoltane.org)

[www.camphillsoltane.org](http://www.camphillsoltane.org)



Camphill Soltane offers numerous benefits to coworkers, including AmeriCorps education awards! We are interested in talking with families and individuals (including college interns) over the age of 19 about opportunities for becoming involved with us.

and services & Have fun! At Dancing Rabbit we: Grow our own organic food & Use solar and wind power & Run our vehicles on biodiesel & Share a car co-op & Host internships and workshops & Barter goods

**dancing rabbit ecovillage**

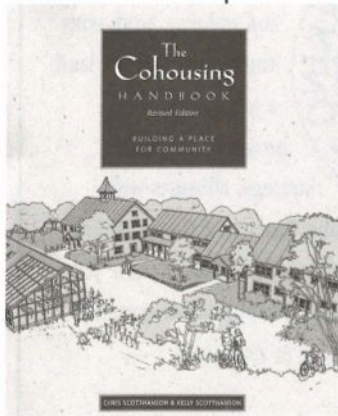
At Dancing Rabbit we're building a rural ecovillage, learning about sustainable living while we educate others. We're open to all kinds of individuals, families, and groups, who, like us, are committed to sustainability, consensus, feminism, and building for the future.

1 Dancing Rabbit Ln. Rutledge, MO 63563

[dancingrabbit@ic.org](mailto:dancingrabbit@ic.org)  
[www.dancingrabbit.org](http://www.dancingrabbit.org)

# Cohousing Resources LLC

## Cohousing, Eco-Village & Sustainable Communities



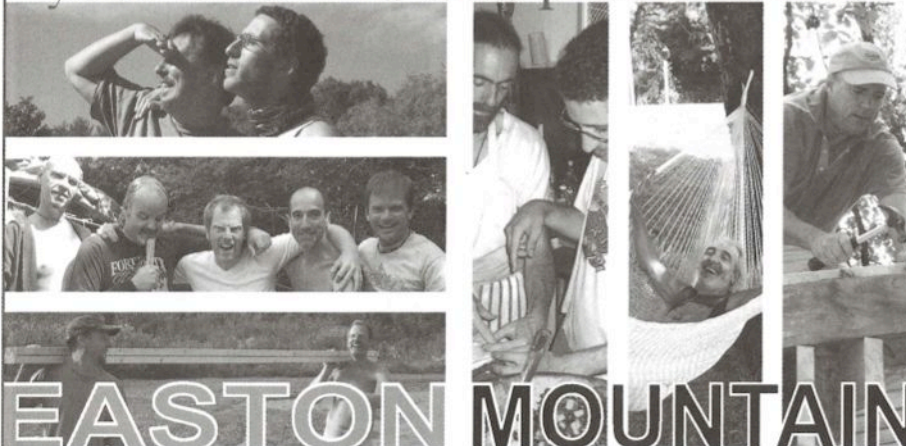
The Cohousing Handbook, revised edition  
\$26.95

- Site Search & Acquisition
- Feasibility Evaluation
- Budgeting & Cash Flow Planning
- Legal Arrangements
- Establishing Professional Team
- Finance
- Streamlined Development Model
- Development Partnerships
- Workshops and Consulting
- All necessary sample documents

Chris & Kelly ScottHanson  
8721 Rosario Place  
Bainbridge Is. WA 98110

(206) 842-9160  
info@CohousingResources.com  
www.CohousingResources.com

## What are you planning to do with your one wild and precious life?



**EASTON MOUNTAIN**  
A SPIRITUALLY ORIENTED COMMUNITY OF GAY MEN DEDICATED TO:

- ♦ promoting social justice
- ♦ living lightly on the earth
- ♦ celebrating our lives together
- ♦ transforming and healing the human soul
- ♦ encouraging creativity
- ♦ respecting the wisdom of the body
- ♦ practicing a radical hospitality
- ♦ resolving conflict non-violently



518-692-8023  
800-553-8235  
www.eastonmountain.com

For info on our community, retreat center and work-study options

EASTON MOUNTAIN RETREAT 391 HERRINGTON HILL RD GREENWICH, NEW YORK 12834

fulness of the issue to be addressed, and allows everyone to sit with it in a wakeful dream state.... After a suitable period of time (5-15 minutes), everyone is brought back to the present and given space to share the images that arose for them during the silence. Once everyone has shared, the group is asked to reflect on what they think the stories mean and how that might offer insight into moving past the stuck place on the issue."

The facilitator needs to make sure to use a neutral description when leading people into the issue, one that does not suggest any particular outcome. As Laird says, "The key is to be authentic and to let go of trying to control what happens." Allowing everyone to share what came up for them before diving into interpretation and analysis helps create safety and depth.

***In a "frame of silence" around each speaker, the group waits a few minutes after one person speaks before the next person speaks.***

### Silence

For the Quakers, who have been holding consensus-based meetings for over 300 years, their whole practice of the process relies heavily on the use of silence. While most secular organizations are not so inclined, silence is a tool that is always available to us at any time. Particularly if the situation is a conflicted one, sitting together in reflection for 10-30 minutes can deepen the conversation.

Quakers also create a "frame of silence" around each speaker, waiting a few minutes after one person speaks before the next person talks. Even a pause of 10-60 seconds makes more space for the less assertive members to contribute. This helps equalize power in the group, and can create a more deliberative process.

Ω



## Lessons from the “Hive Mind”

The Internet tells me that the saying “Many hands make light work” originates from English playwright John Heywood. (I had thought it was Confucius). This expression certainly describes the recent experience of those of us working at recently-reformed Acorn Community in central Virginia.

Acorn is both blessed and cursed with lots of scrap materials with which to build and fix things. “Blessed” because these materials are money-saving and handy resources; “cursed” because they are occasionally in the way and hard to move. Recently about a dozen members came out to shift a large pile of steel beams and siding panels from one place to another. But a funny thing happened while “mindlessly” moving the beams; we developed a bit of hive mind.

When a dozen people lift something heavy, it makes no sense for each one to strain her- or himself picking up her/his share. The extra effort doesn’t change the group’s course and it is fatiguing. Instead, group lifting is an exercise in going with the flow—carrying what feels comfortable and keeping your senses

open to what is happening around you. The path we were moving the beams over was strewn with all types of obstacles and people would occasionally fall down. The group traveled slowly enough so that people could get back up and no one would get hurt. At first we warned each other that a worker had fallen, but eventually we remained silent when a

worker stumbled—we simply paused in silence until she got back up and rejoined the group.

The beams, like the comunards, ultimately moved mostly silently. We somehow sent subtle signals to each other—some combination of recent experience, shared motion, and trust—and successfully landed these heavy loads in the right place over the tricky terrain. I imagined what it might be like

to be an ant or a bee, working as a small part of some greater consciousness in which the group’s wisdom and capacity far exceed the individual worker.

Work on the farm is never done and shortly after the beam moving, we needed to bring a large field back into production by spreading manure and planting rye. We invited a bunch of friends from neighboring com-

### FEDERATION UPDATE



BY BEN AND  
ELSA SPENSER

*Ben and Elsa have lived at Acorn Community with their one-year-old son, Luuk-kob (Thai for “rad-pole”), for six months. Ben is a 25-year-old Englishman and Elsa is a 30-year-old Canadian-American.*



The best address  
in cohousing is  
[www.cohousing.org](http://www.cohousing.org)

#### YOU’LL FIND:

- Resources for building and successful living in community
- Cohousing news and events
- Community listings throughout the United States
- Cohousing products

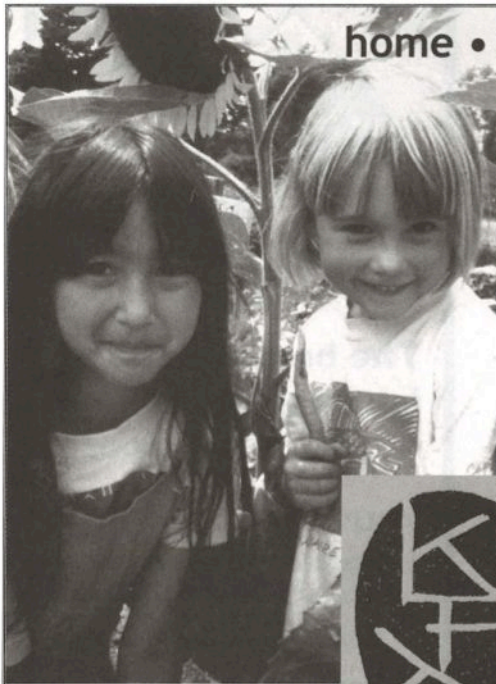
#### WE SERVE:

- Seekers of cohousing communities
- Groups in the development stages
- Completed communities
- Cohousing professionals

#### JOIN US!

Join the Cohousing Association of the United States (Coho/US) and connect with the people, resources and knowledge that are making cohousing happen! Formerly The Cohousing Network, Coho/US provides you with the best available resources and information about cohousing. For membership rates and information, call (510) 844-0790 or find us at [www.cohousing.org](http://www.cohousing.org).

**cohousing**  
THE COHOUSING ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES



home • community • planet

*Specializing*  
in cohousing and  
community design,  
offering a full range of  
architectural services.

*We live there!*



**Kraus-Fitch  
Architects**

110 Pulpit Hill Rd.  
Amherst, MA 01002  
413-549-5799

[www.krausfitch.com](http://www.krausfitch.com)

20 communities ...  
and counting!

munities and about 20 of us spent an afternoon with wheelbarrows and shovels doing by hand what is often done by heavy equipment. We watched as our hive mind continued to develop.

***Sometimes a  
synergistic  
collective purpose  
seems to emerge.***

At first little teams of two or three carried a wheelbarrow and shovels from the manure pile into the field to help spread the manure, repeating this process through the afternoon. Yet as the afternoon wore on, silently we shifted our work patterns. Workers became more specialized—some stayed with the manure pile and just shoveled, others went back and forth with the wheelbarrow, and a third group of field workers just spread manure around. What started as an orderly pattern of everyone working at the far end of the field spreading manure in relatively straight lines evolved into several hubs of people expanding over all parts of the field. This was another work plan shift that happened without explicit communication.

If you place a number of like-minded individuals together, occasionally something special, something unexpected, happens. A flock of half a million Pacific Swifts gracefully and organically swoop—twisting and turning as if one organism, with one mind—into the mouth of a cave in northern Thailand. Or a colony of ants follows a path to find food, tends their underground mushroom garden, brings out their dead, and most surprisingly of all learns over a period of 15 years to be less aggressive toward rival neighboring nests despite each individual living only 18 months. There is no evidence of leadership, no telepathic communication; these are examples of emergent behavior. The individuals are unaware of any master plan because one does not exist—we see patterns of behavior that arise only as a result of simple rules followed by all members of the group. Computers can produce believable simulations of flocking birds with rules that state

## Full of Bright Ideas!



**The Magazine Dedicated to Home-Scale  
Renewable Energy Since 1987**

Solar Electricity • Wind Turbines • Microhydro Power • Water Heating •  
Batteries and Chargers • Inverters and Controls • Home Heating and Cooling  
• Appliances • Home Efficiency • Water Pumping • Solar Home Design •  
Transportation • Biofuels • Green Building • And much more!

Six issues per year for \$22.50! (inside U.S.)

800-707-6585 • 541-512-0201 • [www.homepower.com](http://www.homepower.com) • [subscription@homepower.com](mailto:subscription@homepower.com)

nothing more than that each bird should maintain a minimum distance from each other, match the velocity of its closest flock mates, and steer towards the center of the group. Interestingly a similar algorithm can be used to model the movements of people navigating through crowded streets. We like to think that we are autonomous, but in a group our behavior appears to become synchronized; the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts. Sometimes a synergistic collective purpose seems to emerge.

So what happens when a group of conscious human beings intentionally builds a community together, sharing their meals, their income, their labor, their lives? Sit back and enjoy the pleasure of watching harmony naturally and spontaneously grow from complexity. It is beautiful.

These small journeys into collective consciousness have piqued my curiosity as to what the limits are to this type of group thinking. How much can we know about the future actions of the person beside us without asking? What type of accomplishments are accessible to us if we work together, that we might be underestimating because we can only see things from our single-worker perspective?

***In a group the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts.***

Perhaps more important than these questions is the feeling that we increasingly have, as groups of us take on the big job of bringing a long-struggling rural community back to life. There is a special feeling of accomplishment when a group of people takes on a large task working side by side, and then see their efforts unfold before their eyes. John Heywood also said, "Rome was not built in a day." Neither will our community be built in a day, but through the lens of the multihanded beast we are creating, we can already see our collective accomplishments rising up around us, and it feels grand. Ω



# Mosaic Commons

*A Cohousing Village in Massachusetts*

Do you want to live in a community that values children, and elders?

That welcomes, respects, and supports diversity?

That makes decisions by consensus?

We do too!

We share a beautiful 55 acre site in Berlin, MA with our friends from Camelot Cohousing

Introductory meetings held monthly - contact us for more details!

[www.mosaic-commons.org](http://www.mosaic-commons.org)

Mosaic Commons, LLC  
info@mosaic-commons.org  
508-453-0466

## OCCIDENTAL ARTS & ECOLOGY CENTER

Offering Classes in  
Intentional Communities  
Permaculture  
Watershed Restoration  
Forestry  
Medicinal Plants  
Food Preservation  
School Gardens  
Carpentry

**STARTING OR BUILDING AN INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY?**

WE HAVE CLASSES THAT CAN HELP

**Intentional Communities**

May 20-22  
Oct. 21-23

**Permaculture Design**

Feb. 5-18  
Sept. 24-Oct 7

CONTACT US FOR A CATALOG OF OAEC COURSES AND PROGRAMS  
15290 COLEMAN VALLEY ROAD, OCCIDENTAL, CALIFORNIA 95465  
707.874.1557X201 • OAEC@OAEC.ORG • WWW.OAEC.ORG



# Discover Co-Creation THE *Hummingbird* way



Summer 2005  
Programs

•  
Hummingbird  
Community Experience  
June 18-23

•  
Global Family Advance  
September 3-8

•  
The Human Dream:  
Humaculture and our Shared  
Human Destiny  
September 9-11

## Facility Available

We invite you to contact us to co-create solutions to meet your group's needs at our facility.

*Beautiful lush Hummingbird Ranch, a co-creative community, is nestled at the foot of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in northern New Mexico.*

Visit our website:  
[www.HummingbirdLivingSchool.org](http://www.HummingbirdLivingSchool.org)  
or call us at 505-387-5100.



*Hummingbird Ranch  
and  
Global Family*

## Living at the Ecovillage Crossroads

I can't say I wasn't warned. "The world will arrive at your doorstep," I was told when I told friends I'd taken a five-month job as Innkeeper at the Ecovillage Training Center (ETC) at The Farm in Tennessee. Two months have passed since my arrival. I feel at times as if I've landed at the apex of a universal shift in consciousness. I get to open the door, fix breakfast, and make the beds for change-agents from all corners of the world who teach and learn about natural building, ecovillage design, permaculture, and solar energy systems. When the dust clears after a workshop, I'm focused once more on the basics: feeding the ducks and chickens, watering the greenhouse, turning the 17 duck eggs in the incubator.

The Ecovillage Training Center was founded by Albert Bates in 1994. Its purpose was to promote technologies and light-living strategies people at The Farm and pioneering "green" communities across the globe have been developing for the past 30 years. The ETC promotes small-scale, low-tech, community-based solutions to large-scale global problems in an age where "magic bullet," one-size-fits-all remedies have proven their limitations. Thumb through an assortment

of recent magazines or listen to NPR and you'll see that environmental concerns—peak oil and global climate change in particular—are now hitting the mainstream with a fervor last seen in the early 1970s. People are waking up. Again.

I'd never visited a "real" ecovillage before my arrival at The Farm. Somewhere in the back of my mind I hoped that when I entered the gate I'd be transported into a cartoon version of a utopian society complete with wind generators, bountiful orchards, and happy, naked children dancing

in fields of organic strawberries. What greeted me instead were horses, open fields, and old standard "stick-built" houses—hardly a change from the scene outside. When I pulled into the driveway of my new home at "Youre Inn at The Farm," I first noticed all the clutter. The broken-down truck and two dilapidated buses along the drive into the ETC parking lot; rain-soaked laminated signs littering the lawn; piles

of cardboard boxes in various states of decomposition. I grew up in working class, rural Missouri and to me this all looked suspiciously familiar.

Those of us who want to be bridge-builders between alternative systems and the

ECOVILLAGE  
NETWORK OF  
THE AMERICAS



BY TAMI BRUNK

*Tami Brunk is a freelance writer and editor who grew up in the foothills of the Northeastern Missouri Ozark Mountains. She recently received her Masters of Science Degree in Environmental Writing from the University of Montana—Missoula and is currently employed as an innkeeper and instructor at the Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm in Summertown, Tennessee.*

mainstream often scan visionary projects with a critical eye, hoping the image projected will be one “outsiders” will understand. We’re intimately familiar with all the stereotypes the mainstream projects onto the counter-culture and want to be able to surprise the people we’re reporting back to with the sharp strategy and purposefulness of the projects and individuals we’re trying to translate for. The ETC though, and The Farm itself, demands that visitors dig a little deeper, beyond first appearances. Once we do we find layer upon layer of deep, loamy experience and wisdom, built upon years of experimentation, action, and reflection.

That first night, my wariness melted as soon as I walked down the hill toward the creek and discovered a sinuous cob-and-straw-bale castle-building with enormous round doors and a dragon design along the side. On the way I’d also passed a fanciful cob chicken house decorated with colored glass bottles and tiles. Both of these buildings had rounded walls and living roofs covered with moss and grasses. A cacophony of frog song erupted from the creek below and the graywater ponds. As a biologist, troubled by reports of dwindling amphibian populations worldwide, the racket was proof that this forest was healthy, and full of life.

The Inn was built in the late 1970s from all recycled materials. At one time nearly 50 people lived here at once and the interior still retains its 70s decor with kitschy paintings, homemade artwork, and collages. The Inn was expanded and retrofitted over the past few years with 16 solar panels on the roof. These provide much of our energy needs including our two large refrigerators, most of our lighting, and electricity for computer use, the TV and VCR. We’re hooked up to the grid, too, mostly as a backup. Our water is heated by the solar tanks on the roof, heating time reduced by a “flash” propane heater. Our graywater

is filtered into small ponds and a black water system is in the works. An enormous cistern at the top of the hill collects water for watering the gardens. A compost toilet sits out back. Two solar showers are in the front yard, right next to the garden. A passive solar, south-facing greenhouse helps heat the house in the winter. We recycle our plastics, aluminum, paper, and cardboard as well as fully composting all organic waste.

The Farm is about as seasoned an ecovillage as one might find, though few Farm folk classify it as such. Since its inception in 1971, Farm members have tried to live off their land base of 1750 acres. By the late 1970s, enormous

gardens provided two-thirds of the food for a community that reached, at its peak, 1400 members. Farm enterprises like the soy dairy and Geiger counter factory, as well as groundbreaking inventions like the solar car and portable concentrating photovoltaic systems sprouted up out of the fertile ground of collective dreaming and doing.

In 1983, accumulated community debt forced a changeover from the original communal economic structure, and over the next five years at least 900 Farm members left, unable or unwilling to pay the newly required, though modest, yearly membership dues. Those who stayed behind tightened their belts and strengthened existing businesses like the Soy Dairy, Farm Midwives, and Book Publishing Company. By 1988 The Farm’s debt was paid.

Working here at the Inn, I’ve discovered that, Yes, the world does arrive at our doorstep. If you called the ETC within the past two months, the voice on the other line might be attached to someone from Austria, Manitoba, Great Britain, Israel, Palestine, Cameroon, New York City, or Kentucky. In the two months since I’ve been here, we’ve hosted a two-week permaculture and natural building course, a shiitake mushroom course, and a solar design course. A

***I hoped for a utopian society with wind generators, bountiful orchards, and happy, naked children dancing in fields of organic strawberries.***

## Lost Valley Educational Center



### Hands-On Training for Cultural Evolutionaries

#### Ecovillage and Permaculture Certificate Program

June 20–August 13, 2005

#### Heart of Now (formerly Naka-Ima)

3/11-14, 4/15-18, 5/6-9, 6/10-13, 7/15-18, 8/12-15, 9/2-5, 9/23-26, 10/21-24, 11/18-21, 12/9-12, 2005

#### Workshops, Courses, Retreats: Non-Violent Communication, Relationship, Permaculture, Yoga, Green Building, and more

check website for details and dates

#### Internship, Volunteer, Staff, and Membership Opportunities

Areas of focus include organic gardening, sustainable building and maintenance, permaculture/land stewardship, child care, vegetarian cooking, service and sacred space, grant writing, organizational development, and more. Please contact us for details.

#### Tours, Visitor Days, and Community Experience Weeks

check website for details and dates

#### Talking Leaves magazine

3 x/year; free with supporting membership; see [www.talkingleaves.org](http://www.talkingleaves.org)

Lost Valley Educational Center  
81868 Lost Valley Lane, Dexter, OR 97431

(541) 937-3351  
[events@lostvalley.org](mailto:events@lostvalley.org)  
[www.lostvalley.org](http://www.lostvalley.org)

Unique Heart-centered Job Opportunity

## The Lukas Community

based on the Steiner Philosophy, located in beautiful southern New Hampshire, is seeking warm-hearted people who are interested in doing meaningful work with developmentally disabled adults.

**Responsibilities** include living with and providing leadership and instruction with a focus on the arts, including music, singing, weaving, woodworking, painting, ceramics, candle-making, hiking, organic gardening, outings and more.

Care-giving experience preferred.



**Benefits include:**

- 5-day work week
- private living quarters
- salary & benefits
- 8 weeks of paid vacation

Apprentice positions also available; great opportunities for young people who want to gain valuable work experience.

**If interested, please call:**

**David Spears,**  
Executive Director, at: 603-878-4796  
e-mail: [lukas@monad.net](mailto:lukas@monad.net)  
[www.lukascommunity.org](http://www.lukascommunity.org)

steady stream of apprentices, friends, and guests have also stayed with us. Many evenings, Albert presents a mind-blowing video or slide show about peak-oil, the Global Ecovillage Network, history of The Farm, or everyone's favorite: David Blume's Alcohol DVD, in which Blume waxes eloquent on the potential for alcohol to replace petroleum as our global energy source.

The Inn acts as the heart of the ETC and has a way of humanizing everyone so that education, work experience, age, and professional accomplishments seem inconsequential. Albert models this. Here at the ETC, he mows the lawn, organizes an "extreme croquet" session on Sunday afternoons, develops elaborate schemes to protect the water hyacinths in our gray-water ponds from hungry ducks, and disappears for a week to New York City. An Inn guest breaks the news to us midweek: Albert is speaking on ecovillages at the U.N.

Valerie Seitz, my fellow Innkeeper and an instructor here at the ETC, is a 30-year old green architect from Austria who recently designed an ecovillage in Holland. She could be teaching at a prestigious Dutch or Austrian University, and soon, perhaps, will be. At the Inn though, she makes beds, sets the table with dogwood-tree blossoms and candles, and feeds the ducks and chickens.

The cast of characters who come to the Inn is eclectic: a stay-at-home mom from Dallas; a filmmaker from L.A.; a Country Kitchen waitress from Bemidji, Minnesota; a broadcast journalist from Israel; a Palestinian permaculturist; a social worker and drama teacher from New York City; a Harley builder named "Turbo"; and a 40-year-old retired IT employee, to name a few. We've hosted engineers, architects, poets, shoemakers, backpackers, and investment bankers. I've been learning to let go of stereotypes for the "kind of people" interested in communal living, building a home from straw and clay, installing a PV system, or weeding an organic garden.

Lives are changed here. With only three days notice, Valerie left for China yesterday to speak at a Sustainable Cities Confer-

ence before an assembly of city planners and statesmen who plan to design a model "eco-city" within the next 15 years. She was asked to attend by a couple from the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) who used the ETC as a base to prepare their next Sustainable Cities presentation; part of a multiyear project initiated in 2004.

Time moves in a strange, viscous heave here. Everyone comments on it. It passes slowly and quickly all at the same time. Each day I make note of indoor and outdoor temperature, battery load on the solar system, rainfall. Each day when I mark the date I'm stunned to see how the days tick by like quick breaths: May 5, 6, 7. I'm not keeping up with my

**I've  
discovered  
that, Yes, the  
world does  
arrive at our  
doorstep.**

(substantial) family and friends outside of this place. Everything outside seems to fade into the background: precisely the fear I had in coming to an intentional community. The gate at the entrance and the fact that I don't have my own phone line make me feel isolated from my support system outside of the Farm.

It's true that in community our weaknesses and strengths come through magnified. My lifelong struggle between intimacy and boundaries surfaced within the first couple of days of our "immersion" permaculture and natural building workshop, with 35 of us all living, working, and eating together. I was falling in love with everyone. The children, the mothers with their concern about the future, the apprentices, who want so much to bring something harmonious and real into the world.

Exhaustion set in on the fourth day. I was rising every morning at 5:45 to put on coffee and tea, cooking and cleaning, and trying to absorb the intricate, holistic weave of permaculture philosophy and practice. At the Inn we create a family vibe: we cook and clean together, and hang up laundry. I found I needed some armor. I put on this armor and "disappeared" after people had become used to my softness. I was learning about energy, and what I create in groups.

I've been learning that I often promise more than I can give, and that I invite others to believe I can be close to everyone

all of the time. In a place like this when we host large groups, my buttons are pushed constantly, until I feel myself sinking away into the background, wishing I were an extrovert instead of this odd hybrid of introvert-extrovert with extremes in closeness and distance.

And the difficulty is that I have relationships and projects lying about in many other places too. Abandoned projects like the abandoned buses lying in the lawn. The interview with Helena Norberg-Hodge still sitting on my laptop, half edited, the one I imagine will someday be published in The Sun. The CV I keep promising myself I'll put together so I can apply for a "real job" that pays at least \$30,000 a year to pay off my loans.

My attention and time is largely spent at the Inn, but I've begun to connect more and more with people and organizations

**What matters most is  
our ability to work  
together with humor  
and patience.**

within the Farm community. The hidden layers rise to the surface; I visit the Soy Dairy, Mushroom People and Plenty, an international aid organization. I've discovered the veggie deli and their delicious tofu and butternut squash spring rolls, "soysage," tofu pie, barbecued gluten, and "Tempuna" spread. Yoga sessions are offered at a neighbor's house, just a minute's walk through the woods.

Each Sunday dozens meet at a clearing in the woods for "church"—a meditation and round of Om. The Farm Store is a 10-minute walk through the woods from the Inn, and sells the best dark chocolate money can buy, as well as providing a center for co-op orders and deliveries.

I'm developing a relationship with the more-than-human community, too. Yesterday, I found a family of wrens who've nested in the shop. Hannah, our apprentice from Great Britain discovered a baby Painted Box Turtle the size of my palm. This morning I see deer moving in the forest outside my bus and find a speckled

**Join us in  
Blacksburg,  
Virginia –  
a friendly  
cohousing  
community  
nearing  
completion.**



**A university  
town in the  
heart of the  
Blue Ridge  
Mountains.  
33 units  
clustered on  
33 acres.**

Common House built. 31 households currently in residence.

One single-family home still available.

[www.shadowlakevillage.org](http://www.shadowlakevillage.org)

Contact us: 540-552-2888 // [slv\\_coho@yahoo.com](mailto:slv_coho@yahoo.com)



# Sunward Cohousing

Ann Arbor, Michigan

Caring for each other and our environment  
Engaging in dialogue to seek clarity & build connections  
Creating a beautiful legacy for future generations

[www.sunward.org](http://www.sunward.org)

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

# Earth Steward Training



*Develop a Sense of Place in a powerful wilderness landscape.*

**Earn 17 Antioch University credits during our 8-week  
D.E.E.P. Ecostery Residential Intensive**  
*at Trillium, an intentional community now in its 30th year,  
nestled in a remote river canyon in the Siskiyou Mountains.*

**Dakubetede Environmental Education Programs**  
P.O. Box 1330 Jacksonville, OR 97530 [www.deepwild.org](http://www.deepwild.org)

## COHOUSING AT EARTHAVEN ECOVILLAGE



**Cooperative, Wholistic, Family-Centered**



We're looking for new members to join us as we move into the second phase of our development. Please send us your mailing address for a brochure.

828.669.4328

[villageterraces@earthaven.org](mailto:villageterraces@earthaven.org)  
[www.earthaven.org/village-terraces](http://www.earthaven.org/village-terraces)

**Village Terraces**  
**Cohousing Neighborhood**  
at Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, NC

kingsnake in the greenhouse. I know that wildlife here is abundant because the community values wild plants and animals. Farm values dictate that even the copperheads and ticks are "senior species" who were here before us, and have as much right to live here as we do.

Ed is our solar installation workshop instructor. A 50-something hippie from a small town near Aspen, Colorado, we share a love of the Rocky Mountain West. He joins Hannah and me on a walk up the road to the Farm school, to the "wholeo" dome that sits in front, a dome made of colored, stained glass in fantastic designs. It's past noon and the sun makes the colored glass molten, glowing. We lie on the gravel under the dome and stare up at the patterns. A bumblebee buzzes frantically along the edges of the dome, mad to get out. We can see the gap at the bottom where green grass and sunlight meet but the bee is too busy crashing against molded lead and glass to notice.

We talk about how life unfolds differently than we think it will. Ed says he's never had a plan; he just sets achievable goals. I like that. Hannah says she wants to write novels but knows there's no making a living at it so she'll be a journalist for now. We're just quiet for a while. I feel like I could lie here forever, staring up into the DNA spirals and bubbles of clear glass and the other groovy patterns. I feel like a real hippie now, but I'm really not. I love Ed and Hannah just like I loved Murad, a Palestinian Permaculturist, a week ago. It's real and it's temporary. I'm tired of saying goodbye.

But I'm also glad to be an Innkeeper at the Ecovillage Training Center, to be learning about global energy supplies, strategies for sustainable living, and my own hidden gifts and shortcomings. I've come to appreciate the elegance of the teaching pedagogy at the ETC—partly planned and partly providential. Learning to mix cob or design a PV system is important, but not the main point. What matters most is our ability to work together with humor and patience, share our stories, and encourage each others' sometimes graceful, usually fumbling efforts to live artfully within the limits of Earth's bounty, and with each other.  $\Omega$





# COMMUNITIES

## RECENT BACK ISSUES

All issues are \$4 each.

**#115 The Heart of Sustainability**  
Portland's Natural Building Convergence; Many Hands Make Sustainability Work; Sustainability in the City of the Angels; "More Sustainable Than Thou," An Eco-Communitarian's Recovery; The Haybox Cooker; Everybody Loves Strawbale. (Sum. '02)

**#116 Can We Afford to Live in Community?**

Inventing a Rural Community Economy, Business by Business; The Making of a Community Entrepreneur; Developing a Hybrid Economy; "Family Style" Income-Sharing; No Funds? How One Community Did It. (Fall/Win. '02)

**#117 Ecovillages: What Have We Learned?**

What is an Ecovillage; Creating "Ecovillage Zoning" with Local Officials; Why Urban Ecovillages are Crucial; A 73-Year-Old Ecovillage in the Land of Ice and Fire; Accountability and Consequences. (Spr. '03)

**#118 Lovers in Community**

Make It or Break It; Breaking Up (While Staying in Community); Living Outside the Box; Relationships in the Crucible; Lovers, Friends, and Parents; I Can't Live Without Women; Relationship by Consensus. (Sum. '03)

**#119 Right Livelihood in Community**

Recipe for a Thriving Community; Findhorn's Village Economy; An Honest Day's (Village) Work; Healthy & Unhealthy Communal Economies; Right Livelihood in a Camphill Village; Redwoods, Rugged Cliffs, & Mineral Baths; Developing Trust in Communities. (Fall '03)

**#121 Thriving in Community**  
Still Thriving After All These Years; Where There Are Cooks, There's Good Morale; Finding My Heart at Camphill Soltane; Ecology in Community: Commitment to Place; Living the Spiritual Quest of Elder Years. (Win. '03)

**#122 Community Seeker's Guide**

My Marathon Tour of Communities; From a Community Seeker's Journal; Planning a Community Visit; Tips for Guests & Hosts; When and Why to Block Consensus; Seeking Community in New York City. (Spr. '04)

**#123 A Day in the Life**

By the Plume of Popocatepetl; A Spring Day in Portugal; La Caravana Arcoiris por la Paz; Pilgrimage in a Desert Monastery; How to Really Support Ecovillages (Not Just Hugs and Theories). (Sum. '04)

**#124 Spiritual Community**

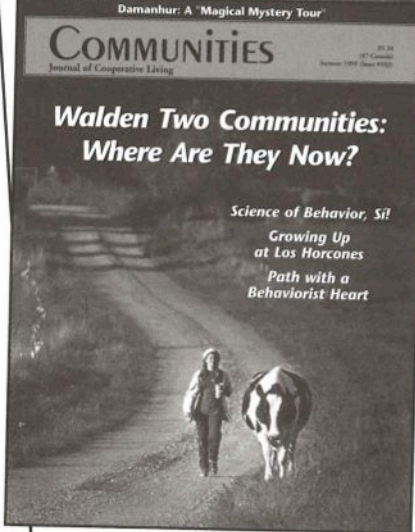
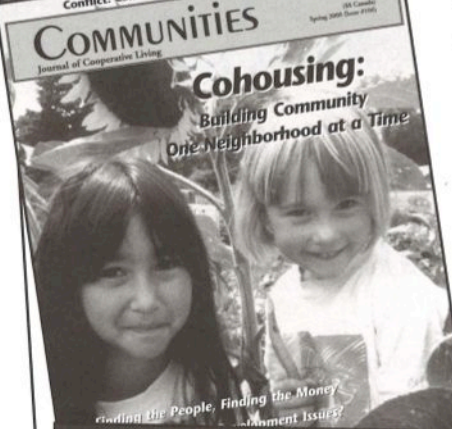
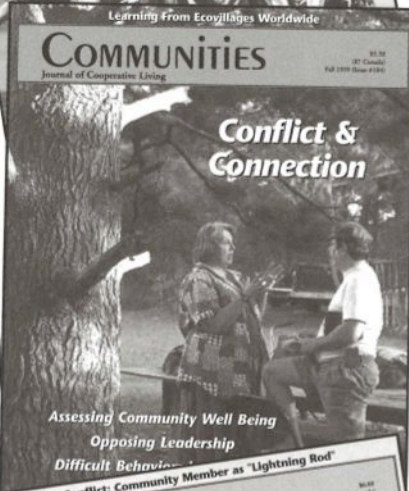
Avoiding Spiritual Community; Rocky Mountain High; Why I'm Moving to Findhorn; On the Edge of the Abyss; Spiritual Beings, Material World; Do we Really Value "Diversity"? (Fall '04)

**#125 Life After Student Co-ops**

What I Learned Last Summer; Ruined for American Culture; Now I Want to Join a Community (or Maybe Start My Own ...); The Toughest Issue We Ever Faced (Win. '04)

**#126 The Arts in Community**

101 Art Projects Your Community Can Do; Painting and Dancing for Community Spirit; Creativity as "Learning Game"; Confessions of a Process Warrior. (Spr '05)



## purchase online at [store.ic.org](http://store.ic.org)

### COMMUNITIES BACK ISSUES ORDER FORM

- Please send me a free index of all back issues and special discounts.
- Please send me issue #s \_\_\_\_\_ for a total of \_\_\_\_\_ magazines. \$4 each, shipping \$3 for first 3, \$1 for each additional 3 by book rate US, call or visit [store.ic.org](http://store.ic.org) for other shipping destinations and options.
- Charge Visa/MC/Dscvr# \_\_\_\_\_ Exp Date \_\_\_\_\_
- Check enclosed (US funds to *Communities*)
- Total Amount - \$ \_\_\_\_\_  Check Enclosed  Charged

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

STREET \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/TOWN \_\_\_\_\_ STATE/PROVINCE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP/POSTAL CODE \_\_\_\_\_

Photocopy and mail to: FIC, RR 1, Box 156-CM, Rutledge MO 63563 • Ph 800-995-8342

#127

## FROM THE GUEST EDITORS



BY RAINES COHEN AND BETSY MORRIS

MICHAEL MCINTYRE, SUNWARD COHOUSING

# The Face of Cohousing in 2005: Growing, Green, and Silver

**W**here we are. As of June, 2005, nearly 5000 people in the U.S. live in 78 cohousing neighborhoods in 21 different U.S. states, many in regions with multiple communities nearby. (See map, pg. 26.) Canada has six cohousing communities in two provinces, British Columbia and Ontario. Nineteen communities are under construction in 12 different U.S. states. Dozens more have optioned property or are in more formative stages. The average community has 26 homes and 60 members. The two oldest in the United States, both begun in 1989 in Davis, California, are N Street Cohousing, a retrofit project, and Muir Commons, the first built from scratch. The newest to be completed is Rocky Hill in western Massachusetts, where residents started moving in May 2005.

**What has the wider communities movement brought to cohousing?** Certainly, the cohousing movement benefits from the sense of history and cultural continuity in what might otherwise be perceived as another housing choice in the real-estate market. Community process consultants and consensus facilitators from both the Fellowship for Intentional Community and other networks now regularly share tools with cohousing groups.

Although cohousing catalysts Chuck Durrett and Katie McCamant specifically identified the lack of a common political or spiritual framework as a defining characteristic of cohousing, the truth is many cohousing communities are nevertheless informed by the experiences of members in other democratic or consensus-based groups. (See *“Religious Groups Discover Cohousing,”* pg. 31.) There is even a sometimes-spoken fear that acknowledging the “soft side” of cohousing will associate it too strongly with “communes,” scaring away potential buyers.

Where the intentional communities movement and cohousing have most obviously converged is in ecovillages. We hear a very strong sense of environmental and social-change values in Hildur Jackson’s article (pg. 42) on her experiences pioneering both the cohousing and ecovillage movements.

Every day, we find more connections. Our own community, Berkeley Cohousing, has recently been undertaking a lengthy decision-making process around building a new tool shed/workshop. An exercise we tried, “Four Corners,” which we learned from the wider communities movement, invited us to ponder four different problem-solving styles: Meaning (what is it all about); Structure; Caring (everyone should feel OK about it); and Action. This exer-

cise seemed to give community members a way to observe what was most important to each of us, and to see what might be important to others, in working through a difficult situation.

The other day one of our community's founding members observed that early residents focused on providing a community and a support structure to each other, emphasizing socializing together and building a life together. Some of this intensity and vision bore out well; in other cases it led to some hard times as we processed major differences in parenting styles, pet management, gardening arrangements, and food preferences. However newer members, he noted, show less of a "community" and more of a "neighbors" orientation, offering a more-detached and less-involved relationship. We've noticed this, too; we hear expressions of individual self-interest as often as we hear concerns about the well-being of others or the community as a whole. Yet, we came together around a political fundraiser last summer in a wonderful way.

**What has cohousing contributed to the wider communities movement?** Cohousers have brought a practical model to link potential community members to the financial, land acquisition, and construction aspects of creating community. Such cohousing professionals as developer-partners and architects offer step-by-step methods

which reduce the time it takes to build new communities. In cohousing, the voice of professionals is as strong as those of community founders. According to cohousing developer Steve Hannah, "A group that does not focus on getting a site, or working with a developer who is focused on finding a site, becomes a philosophical discussion group, which is fine, but I don't think it will lead to a new structure for living. For a group to really come alive it has to be connected to a physical reality." (*Cohousing, Fall 1991.*)

The intent of architects and *Cohousing* authors Katie McCamant and Chuck Durrett included demystifying the development process for people who, in many cases, had not even purchased a home before. Joining a cohousing community looks in many respects like buying a condominium or a home in a homeowners association (which is often how they're structured legally). Acknowledging these realities of the market has several implications. Old hands in the Fellowship for Intentional Community (publishers of this magazine) note that the early "back to nature" impulse worked when rural land was cheap and health care and gasoline relatively inexpensive. Now cohousers, as well as any community founders seeking property, encounter laws on population density, building standards, environmental protections, open space, and parking—a host of well-intended regulations that confound the desire to build cooperatively and inexpensively.



MICHAEL MCINTYRE, SUNWARD COHOUSING

## What is Cohousing?

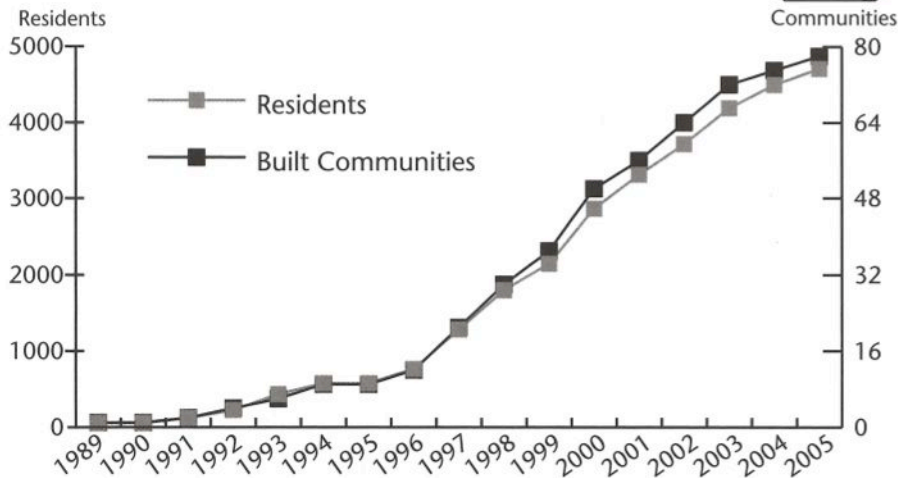
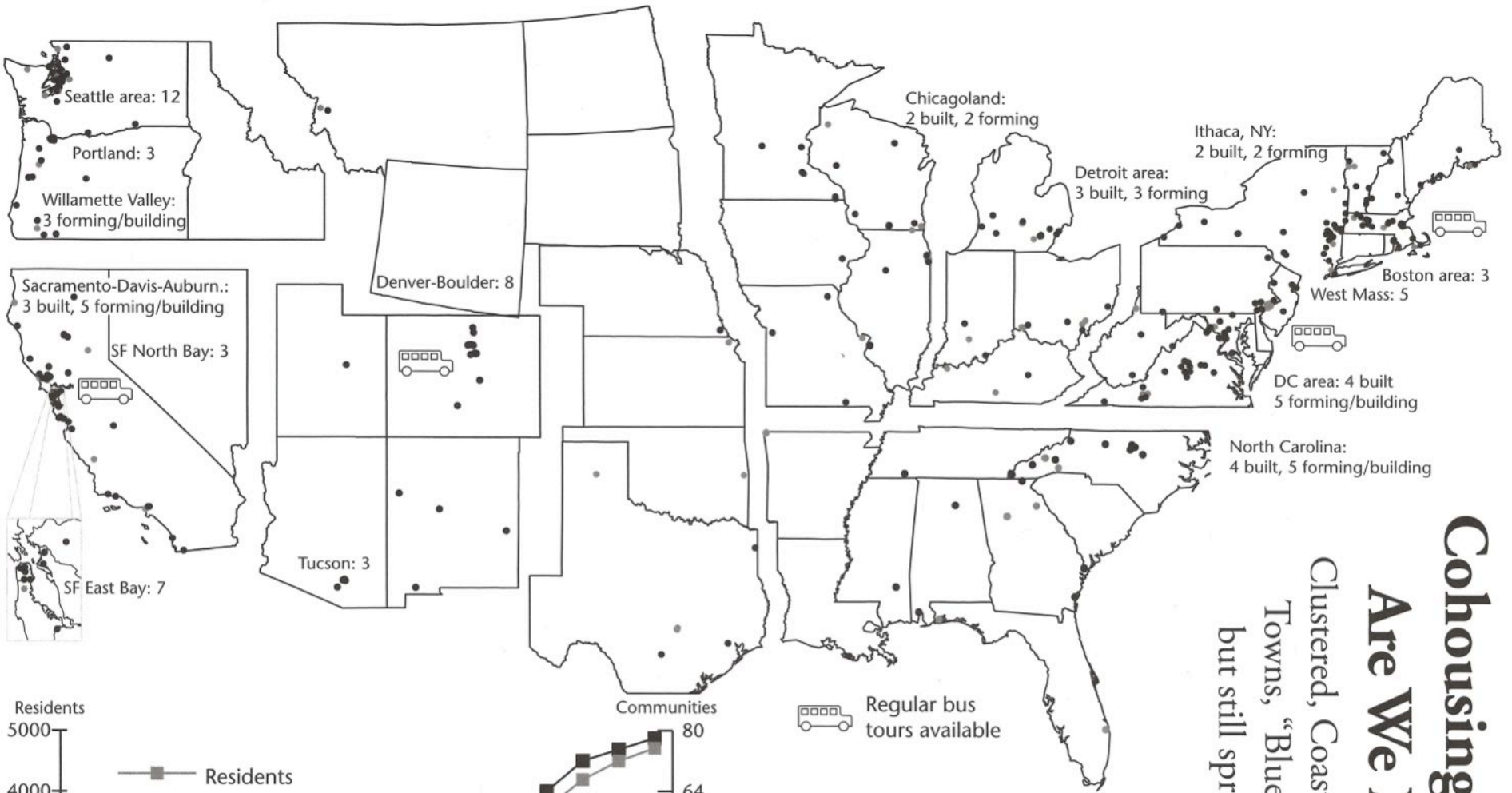
In Kathryn McCamant and Charles Durrett's original 1988 book, *Cohousing: A Contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves*, they set out a series of criteria defining cohousing. Here are our modern riffs on their core principles:

1. **Participatory Process:** Residents organize and participate in the planning and design process for the housing development and are responsible as a group for all the final decisions, although most often these days successful communities work in partnership with an experienced developer and process, design, and marketing professionals throughout the process.
2. **Design Facilitates Community:** The physical design encourages a strong sense of community ... [and] increases the possibilities for social contact. This shows most strongly in common design elements such as parking pushed to the periphery, multiple gathering spaces, and inward-facing kitchen windows on units.
3. **Private Homes Supplemented by Extensive Common Facilities:** Each household has a private residence—complete with kitchen—but has access to all of the common facilities. As far as government agencies and bankers are concerned, a cohousing community is just another condominium project, so it can easily obtain approvals and financing.
4. **Complete Resident Management:** Residents manage the development, making decisions of common concern at community meetings.

5. **Nonhierarchical Structures:** While there are leadership roles, the responsibility for the decisions is shared by the community's adults. No one person dominates the decisions or the community process, traditionally using consensus.
6. **Separate Income Sources:** There is no shared community economy in most cohousing communities. Because the units are typically sold at market rate and designed to conform to market standards, and a resale market is assured, buyers can obtain low-down payment mortgages from most banks, credit unions, and mortgage brokers. Communities benefit from the screening performed by lenders, but many have taken steps to ease the barriers to entry through affordability initiatives.

A growing number of communities and developers, in creating everything from student housing to women's shelters to affordable rental projects, are using elements of this model. Not all cohousing communities use all six of these elements, so when counting and choosing whether to list community projects on its website as "cohousing," the Cohousing Association looks not just at whether a community uses the term, but also at its underlying intent. If key elements such as regular common meals and a common house are not part of the project, Coho/US applies greater scrutiny to the other aspects.

—R.C. & B.M.



Between 1989 and mid-2005:  
 78 cohousing communities built  
 4709 residents in 21 states  
 79 communities in process:  
 14 under construction in 12 states  
 14 more own sites

New states with projects in the pipeline: MO, KS, PA, TX, IN  
 New states with groups forming: FL, OH, NJ

# Cohousing: Where Are We Now? Clustered, Coastal, College Towns, "Blue States," but still spreading

Communities data from ICDC collaboration of Coho/US and FIC, June, 2005. For latest info visit [directory.ic.org](http://directory.ic.org) and [directory.cohousing.org](http://directory.cohousing.org). Base map: 2005 Communities Directory, Fellowship for Intentional Community. Data analysis by Elizabeth W. Morris, Ph.D.; text by Raines Cohen. Numbers after named regions are counts of completed communities unless otherwise specified.

Because cohousing financing and construction methods are controlled by mainstream institutions (pioneering efforts in green building notwithstanding), and because cohousers tend to build in urban and suburban areas, cohousing has experienced dramatic growth rates and garnered more media attention in the last decade than other types of intentional community.

#### New market: Senior Cohousers.

Within this “market” consciousness, the growth of senior cohousing makes sense. The aging of American society is all around us. The practice of seniors living independently of their children is widespread in northern European cultures, and the large and growing number of seniors in the US has the income and longevity that will allow them to continue in this vein. Not coincidentally, the “market” for senior housing is booming among for-profit housing developers. According to the *AARP Bulletin*, “22 percent of 500 respondents aged 50 to 65 said they’d be interested in building a new home to share with friends that included private space and communal living areas.” (“Communes for Grownups,” November 2004.)

Chuck Durrett, architect and cohousing cofounder in North America, spent several years on and off studying seniors-only communities in Denmark, and his new book, *Senior Cohousing: A Community Approach to Independent Living*, is due out this Fall. (See “Books About Cohousing,” pg. 29, and Raines’ interview, pg. 33.)

**Critiques and questions:** The cohousing movement has its critics, both within and without. In her article in this issue, cohousing and ecovillage pioneer Hildur Jackson writes, “Wonderful as it was, our little [cohousing] group [one of the first in the world] was not revolutionary. We simply made the system work a little better.” Hildur and her husband, Ross Jackson, and others created an environmental education/conference center on a working farm in rural Denmark and cofounded the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN). They worked for years to create a residential community, to be a

true ecovillage at their educational center, but were unable to get the necessary zoning permission. In the U.S., cohousing communities also face the irony that environmental conservation policies have also worked against their efforts to create higher density housing in rural areas. (See “Cohousing to Ecovillages,” pg. 42.)

Hildur argues that a community founded around strong environmental consciousness and day-to-day practices of food production

can challenge more of the inequities and damaging effects of a global economy. While she is referring to ecovillages, we can ask the same of cohousing itself. How are we doing?

“The more I looked into cohousing,” writes Kirsten Anderberg, who considered this form of community and then rejected it, “the more I realized it was for an economic elite. ... cohousing is about white middle-class people wanting to keep separate and being able to constructively do it through home ownership, while pretending they are in some hip new age sharing cooperative. But they are still only sharing with those like them. ... I even suspect that some of this promoting cohousing as ‘progressive’ is an attempt by those with financial equity to relieve their guilt at the class chasm and separation they want to maintain.” (Excerpted from Kirsten Anderberg’s website: [www.kirstenanderberg.com](http://www.kirstenanderberg.com).)

**Green values.** While Chuck and Katie in *Cohousing* sought to identify the secular, nonphilosophical elements to cohousing, clearly a strain of passionate environmentalism has been a motivating ideology among early cohousing founders. In “Cohousing to Ecovillages” (pg. 42), Hildur Jackson shows us this link, as do authors of two new books on cohousing, Liz Walker, in *Eco Village at Ithaca*, and Graham Meltzer, an Australian sustainable communities

researcher, in *Sustainable Communities: Lessons from Cohousing*. (See reviews, pg. 64, 62.)

Quite a few case studies report use of “green” building materials, recycling, and super-energy-efficient heating, power, and water systems in cohousing communities. For example, Nyland Cohousing



MICHAEL MCINTYRE, SUNNWARD COHOUSING



MICHAEL MCINTYRE, SUNNWARD COHOUSING

in Colorado, Westwood Cohousing in Asheville, and Ecovillage at Ithaca have each documented hundreds of dollars in monthly savings on energy bills for their member households. In the late 1990s Graham Meltzer obtained basic socioeconomic data on 1,090 cohousing residents, then surveyed 278 households in 12 cohousing communities in Canada, the U.S., Japan, New Zealand, and Australia. The results are illuminating:

*Reduced Car Use:*

- In every community, members reported reduced driving as well as increased biking and walking.
- On average across all communities, driving was reduced nine percent.
- Two main factors accounting for reduced car use were coordinating casual trips with others (to the local store, the post office, etc.), and having vocational, social, and recreational opportunities *at home*.
- Residents surveyed own somewhat fewer (four percent) vehicles and more bicycles than they did before moving into cohousing. The number of two-car households dropped, while one-car households increased slightly.

*Population Density and Home Types:*

- Cohousing communities vary widely in density. However, overall they are more compact in their use of land. Typical suburban developments in the U.S. and Australia have 12 people per acre. Suburban cohousing communities are more than twice

as dense as conventional suburban developments, and cohousing dwellings are about half the size of typical new-built houses in the U.S.

- Most cohousing units are one- to three-bedroom units. These smaller homes work because of the readily available larger living rooms, workshops, guest room, kids room, and laundry room in common houses.
- Seventy percent of cohousing households in the survey previously lived in detached single-family homes. Eighty-four percent now live in an attached dwelling (duplex, townhouses, or apartments), and only sixteen percent live in detached homes in cohousing.

*Energy Use:*

Meltzer found a consistent five to six percent improvement in energy conservation practices across all of the communities surveyed and a nine percent average improvement in water conservation habits. He suggests that while founders of cohousing have strong environmental practices before move-in, the real effects of cohousing are on those who move in and modify their practices as a result of moving into cohousing. His results suggest that the longer residents live in cohousing, the greater the likelihood of improvement in their pro-environmental practices, although that is likely to slow after a few years. The trend may also indicate that it takes time for communities to hone their systems to everyone's satisfaction, or that members' pro-environmental behavioral change and their commitment correlates with their

community's sense of social cohesion, which itself takes time to develop.

**Diversity.** Meltzer found that of U.S. cohousing residents, 95 percent were white, and largely in the top half of the income spectrum. Eighty percent had college degrees and the majority work in professional, technical, or managerial fields, particularly in health and education. However, 16 percent worked at home and 22 percent worked part-time—figures showing more flexibility and discretionary time than many other working Americans. He found that 2.5 percent identified as gay or lesbian and 1.6 percent as disabled persons. These data, he reports, “place cohousing residents squarely within the American white middle class.”

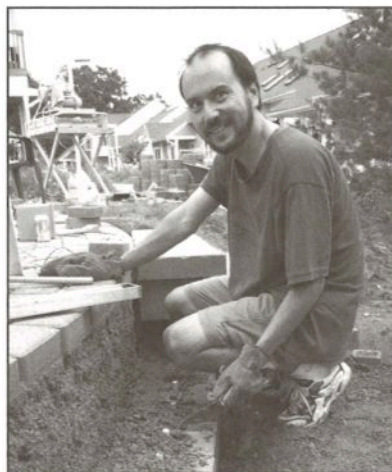
Even in metropolitan areas with large Black or Hispanic populations, cohousing communities do not reflect the diversity of their surroundings. Economics is one key factor, but social net-

works may also be a factor, as well as family structures that vary by ethnic group. In 1994 cohousing activist Zev Paiss observed in

*Communities* magazine that his non-White acquaintances seemed to already have the extended family and other support networks in their life that cohousing members were seeking to create. What is not yet clear is whether cohousing is more or less diverse than other intentional communities.

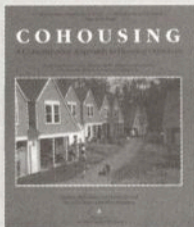
Meltzer found that residents in almost every community talk openly of the considerable group effort invested in seeking diversity and lament their lack of success. “Perhaps there is a lesson here for cohousing groups that aspire to the greatest possible diversity as a matter of principle,” he concludes. “While it is usually true that traditional villages and urban communi-

ties are socially (though not ethnically) diverse, many thrive on commonality as much as diversity. In part, rural communities and close-knit urban neighborhoods work because people enjoy rub-



MICHAEL MCINTYRE, SUNWARD COHOUSING

## Books on Cohousing



*Cohousing: A Contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves.* Second Edition.

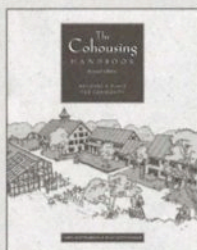
Kathryn McCamant and Charles Durrett with Ellen Hertzman. Ten Speed Press (1994) Pb. 288 pp.

The “bible” of the cohousing movement. First published in 1988, *Cohousing* launched the cohousing movement in North America.

*The Cohousing Handbook: Building a Place for Community.* Revised Edition.

Chris ScottHanson and Kelly ScottHanson. New Society Publishers (2005). Pb. 289 pp.

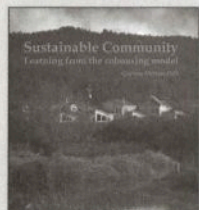
Optimized for the more detail-oriented, left-brain person who appreciates a systematic approach to starting a cohousing community. (See review, pg. 61.)



*Sustainable Community: Learning from the Cohousing Model*

Graham Meltzer, PhD. Trafford Publishing (2005) Pb. 179 pp.

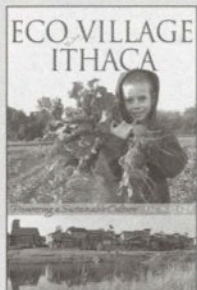
The first attempt to systematically survey the environmental practices and impact of cohousing. (See review, pg. 62.)



*EcoVillage at Ithaca: Pioneering a Sustainable Culture*

Liz Walker. New Society Publishers (2005) Pb. 256 pp.

The first 15 years of the first “green” cohousing project in the U.S. (See review, pg. 64.)



*Head, Heart & Hands. Lessons in Community Building*

Shari Leach. Wonderland Hill Development Company (2004) Pb. 171 pp.

Facilitation, leadership, and process for cohousing communities.



*Senior Cohousing: A Community Approach to Independent Living*

Chuck Durrett, Ten Speed Press (2005) Danish communities by and for elders and how U.S. elder cohousing groups can do the same. (To be reviewed in our Fall '05 issue. See interview, pg. 33.)

*Reinventing Community: Stories from the Walkways of Cohousing*

David Wann, Editor. Fulcrum (2005) Fourteen stories by cohousers across the U.S. about the joys and challenges of cohousing life, from creating affordable units, to hosting foster children, to the role of art in community. (To be reviewed in our Fall '05 issue.)

*Creating a Life Together: Practical Tools to Grow Ecovillages or Intentional Communities*

Diana Leaf Christian, New Society Publishers (2003) How-to guide to starting successful new intentional communities. (Reviewed in our Spring '03 issue.)

*Architects of the Sunset Years: Creating Tomorrow's Sunrise*

Dr. Anne Kopp Hyman. Self-published. [www.cohousingforactiveolderadults.info](http://www.cohousingforactiveolderadults.info) Personal experiences living in and advocating senior and multi-generational cohousing.

For more information, see [www.ic.org/cmag](http://www.ic.org/cmag).

—R.C. & B.M.

## Other Cohousing Resources

### Regional Alliances in the US

Cohousing communities now exist in sufficient densities in several regions and metropolitan areas around the U.S. that they no longer have to "go it alone." They can meet regionally to support each other, cross-train, cross-facilitate, co-educate, comarket, do common-meal exchanges, hold conferences, and more. Groups can spend less time reinventing the wheel and invest the savings in supporting and learning from one another, sharing best practices. Some groups, like NICA, serve the full spectrum of local intentional communities, not just cohousing. The Cohousing Association of the United States (Coho/US) is working to foster the development of regional groups and alliances to help build the movement in a grassroots fashion. For links and the latest groups: [www.cohousing.org/regions/](http://www.cohousing.org/regions/)

### Mid-Atlantic Cohousing

Washington, D.C. area: [www.cohomac.org](http://www.cohomac.org)

### East Bay Cohousing

Oakland-Berkeley (California): [www.ebcoho.org](http://www.ebcoho.org)

### San Francisco Bay Area:

(as yet unnamed): [www.cohousing.org/regions/sfbay/](http://www.cohousing.org/regions/sfbay/)

### Cohousing for San Diego

San Diego, California: [www.cohousingforsandiego.org](http://www.cohousingforsandiego.org)

### Chicago Cohousing Network

[www.chicagocohousing.net](http://www.chicagocohousing.net)

### Northwest Intentional Communities Association (NICA)

Washington & Oregon: [www.ic.org/nical](http://www.ic.org/nical)

### Colorado Cohousing Council

Denver-Boulder area: [www.cohousing.org/regions/colorado/](http://www.cohousing.org/regions/colorado/)

### Twin Cities Cohousing Network

Minneapolis-St. Paul: [mn.cohousing.org/tccntop.htm](http://mn.cohousing.org/tccntop.htm)

### National Cohousing Organizations

#### Canadian Cohousing Network

[www.cohousing.ca](http://www.cohousing.ca)

#### Cohousing Association of the United States (Coho/US)

[www.cohousing.org](http://www.cohousing.org)

#### UK Cohousing Network

[www.cohousing.co.uk](http://www.cohousing.co.uk)

#### Eco-Village and Cohousing Association of New Zealand

[www.converge.org.nz/evcnz/](http://www.converge.org.nz/evcnz/)

#### Cohousing Australia

[www.cohousing.org.au](http://www.cohousing.org.au)

#### Fellowship for Intentional Community

[www.ic.org](http://www.ic.org)

### Global Ecovillage Network

[gen.ecovillages.org](http://gen.ecovillages.org)

### Tours

Coho/US and regional groups organize regularly scheduled bus tours of cohousing communities in the Denver-Boulder, Washington, D.C., Massachusetts, and the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento/North Bay regions. [www.cohousing.org/news/tours.html](http://www.cohousing.org/news/tours.html)

### Finding Cohousing Openings

#### Cohousing Communities Directory

Online: [directory.cohousing.org](http://directory.cohousing.org)

#### Communities Directory

Print & online versions; incl. cohousing: [directory.ic.org](http://directory.ic.org)

#### Cohousing E-Newsletter Classified ads

Online: [www.cohousing.org/magazine/classified.html](http://www.cohousing.org/magazine/classified.html)

#### Communities Magazine

Print: [fic.ic.org/cmag](http://fic.ic.org/cmag)

#### Intentional Community REACHbook

Online: [reach.ic.org](http://reach.ic.org)

For more information, see [www.ic.org/cmag](http://www.ic.org/cmag).

—R.C. & B.M.



MICHAEL MCINTYRE, SUNWARD COHOUSING



## Religious Groups Discover Cohousing

Although cohousing communities are typically characterized as not having a common religious or political ideology, lately this is less true. For example, many church groups are looking to the cohousing model.

In our experience, as we inquired into the early history of a many communities, we often heard that members of a local Quaker Meeting or Unitarian Church were its developers or among its early leaders. Berkeley Cohousing, for example, began with a study group started by a group of War Tax Resisters who were experienced in Quaker consensus process. Swan's Market Cohousing in Oakland, California, drew a core group of founders and several subsequent recruits from a nearby Unitarian church.

Ecumenical recruiting by most cohousing communities creates a religiously diverse membership, however, so the communities are generally not dominated by the founding group's religion or interests.

Member-driven cohousing communities are likely to represent the social networks of the original founders across several porous institutional boundaries. In other words, while the ini-

tial core group may have certain ideological, religious, or lifestyle preferences, by move-in the mix of residents is more diverse. Economic factors (whether people can afford the units) become stronger influences on who joins the community.

This is less the case in communities that adopt core principles and values statements tied to a particular faith, institution, or belief system. Temescal Commons in Oakland, California, for example, founded by a Methodist church group, incorporates prayer into its community activities and recruits largely through the church, so it tends to attract more members sharing similar beliefs. Bartimaeus Cohousing in the Seattle area, is recruiting based on its religious orientation. Other churches, synagogues, and mosques are looking to use the cohousing model to create community and housing, even among traditionally conservative populations perceived as not interested in the "co" aspect of cohousing. We look forward to seeing the influence of cohousing on these institutions, as well as their influence on cohousing.

—R.C. & B.M.

bing shoulders with others like themselves, who confirm their values. Perhaps cohousing communities should be seeking a balance of diversity and commonality rather than attempting to maximize diversity for the sake of it."

**Affordability.** Many people assume cohousing costs less than market-rate housing, but that isn't the case. Diana Leafe Christian, Communities editor and author of *Creating a Life Together*, wrote that many communities formed in the '60s and '70s could not be duplicated today because of huge increases in land prices and construction costs relative to income, and more rigorous and widespread building code and zoning regulations. Gas prices and health care costs also take a bigger toll on people's disposable incomes than ever before, constraining where people can live and work comfortably.

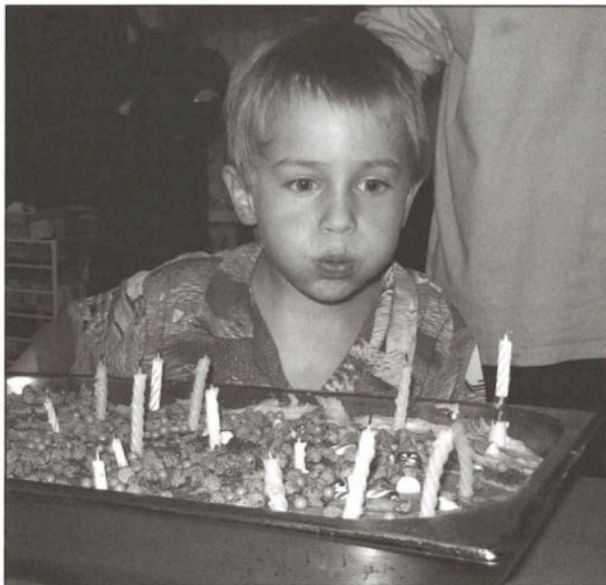
Although, by and large, cohousing residents are solidly middle or upper class, different cohousing communities have tried a wide variety of methods to reduce barriers to affordability. Chuck Durrett has noted that in nearly every community he works with there is a high number or even a majority of first-time homebuyers.

Both are true where we live in Berkeley Cohousing, which is 100 percent limited equity, keeping our home prices down to around half the price of similar units in the same neighborhood

for 30 years. Nomad Cohousing and Wild Sage Cohousing, both in Boulder, Colorado, were built with government subsidies so that 60 percent and 40 percent of their units respectively sold for below-market rates, including some built by Habitat for Humanity with sweat equity. Several homes in Cambridge Cohousing in Massachusetts are owned by the city's public housing authority to house very-low-income residents. Some cohousing members (informally) and groups (with full consent) have provided "silent" second mortgages at very low interest, or helped other members in their group be part of the community.

At the microlevel, however, some income differences raise tensions that attentive communities and members work with. "Our community faces a special challenge when it comes to decisions about money, due to our success in achieving considerable diversity of income level among members," Meltzer quoted one community member. "The more well-off among us need to temper some desires while learning to *contribute*, at times, more than their proportional amount to meet a community need."

In the chapter "Money, Homes, and Trust: Economic Diversity at Wild Sage" in *Reinventing Community* (see pg. 29), Ellen Orleans notes that Wild Sage Cohousing grew as a mix of affordable housing buyers and market-rate buyers who worked with Habitat for Humanity to find families that were a good fit for cohousing. Increasingly at meetings, tensions arose around market-rate buyers



MICHAEL MCINTYRE, SUNWARD COHOUSING

“subsidizing” affordable buyers. Lower-income members eventually shared the perspective that their lower wages and lack of health care in fact equally “subsidized” upper-income workers. Wild Sage members then began exploring assumptions and realities of their members’ incomes. Among other things, they discovered nearly all members had financial concerns, and that people also varied widely in how they used the discretionary income they did have.

As Chuck Durrett points out this issue (pg. 36), cohousing represents only one percent of housing in Denmark, but its influence is much wider, particularly among public and nonprofit housing developers. Participant-driven design, environmentally sound building, socially conducive arrangement, a desire for greater self-management, these practices have grown more widespread, even among U.S. nonprofit affordable housing developers, which are turning to cohousing designers and community facilitation professionals to help make the vision more concrete.

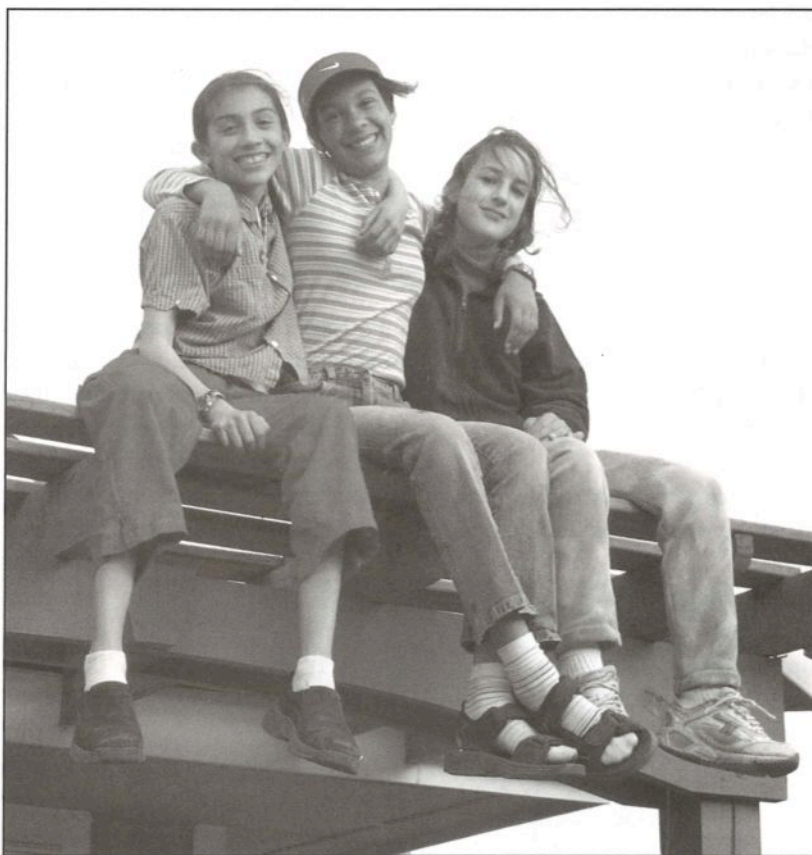
Although a number of cohousing communities state that they value respect for others, tolerance of many viewpoints, and the desire to encourage diversity, most projects to date are more homogeneous. Utopian responses to industrialization and the quest for religious freedom have motivated the intentional communities movement over the last 200 years of European history. But in the multicultural society of North America today, and certainly in regions like California, cohousing communities in no way reflect the cultural and racial make-up of their wider metropolitan areas. Articles and books on the wider intentional communities movement also acknowledge these same patterns of homogeneity.

**Putting it all together.** In our view, cohousing expands the intentional communities movement by teaching people the basics of dealing with the realities of real estate and housing markets—essentially offering a strong set of lessons on the get-it-built aspects of creating community. The movement builds on widespread social practices, such as private financing of homes, and offers a process for others to follow within that system. It also offers a context where people feel they can become more of who they’d like to be, environmentally and socially.

Living in cohousing offers people opportunities to express and develop a way of life that satisfies important values—in the real world,

every day. A respect for natural resources in everyday life, a desire to relate to each other in respect and courtesy, and the use of consensus-based decision-making are probably the most widely held values and visions among cohousing communities. Yet, we cohousers still live in a society with a wider set of inequities. Not all cohousing residents are political or environmental activists or even looking for a major life change, but as links in a chain, both geographically and historically—a growing social network with many allies—we can continue to question and expand the limits of the current models of cohousing as a source of wider social change.

*Raines Cohen and Betsy Morris are undomesticated life partners who share a home, a life, and a cat in Berkeley (California) Cohousing.*



MICHAEL MCINTYRE, SUNWARD COHOUSING

For the past five years, Raines ([www.raines.com](http://www.raines.com)) has served on the Board of the Cohousing Association of the United States (Coho/US), the national U.S. network for the cohousing movement, which publishes Cohousing magazine online and operates the [www.cohousing.org](http://www.cohousing.org) website. Recently Raines also joined the Board of the Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC), which publishes this magazine and operates the [www.ic.org](http://www.ic.org) website. A long-time communitarian, while attending UC Berkeley Raines lived in the UCB student co-ops: he later helped found and lived at Swan’s Market Cohousing in Oakland, and now lives at Berkeley Cohousing. He has organized computer user groups for the past quarter-century, was founding editor

of *NetProfessional* magazine; and now, through *beezwax datatools*, a small consulting collective, helps nonprofits and small businesses build online communities through database-driven website work.

With a masters and doctorate in city and regional planning, Betsy ([www.betsymorris.com](http://www.betsymorris.com)) consults for community development corporations in low-income communities of color, and has taught at UC Berkeley, San Francisco State, and the University of Southern California. In 1997, she joined a limited-equity housing cooperative and in 2003, copurchased a limited-equity home in Berkeley Cohousing with Raines. She serves as President of the West Berkeley Neighborhood Development Corporation, is Clerk of Development & Outreach for the Friends Committee on Legislation of California, and is an active member of Strawberry Creek Meeting of Friends. She’s also a drummer and vocalist in *Odori Simcha*, a world rhythm and soul band. Not to mention her day job doing economic development for the City of El Cerrito, California. For more information, see [www.ic.org/cmaga](http://www.ic.org/cmaga).



Seniors at dinnertime at Heartwood Cohousing, Colorado.

CHUCK DURRETT

# The Next Phase: *Senior Cohousing*

BY RAINES COHEN

**C**harles Durrett and Kathryn McCamant cofounded the cohousing movement in North America with the publication of their 1986 book *Cohousing: A Contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves* (Ten Speed Press), describing their study of Danish cohousing communities, and through their design firm, The Cohousing Company, have designed dozens of cohousing communities in the two decades since.

With cohousing becoming perhaps the fastest-growing form of intentional community in North America, Chuck Durrett is focusing on a new subspecialty: cohousing designed specifically for an older population. He has studied senior cohousing in Denmark since 1985 and is writing the first book on the subject, *Senior Cohousing: A Community Approach to Independent Living* (Habitat/Ten Speed Press), due out in fall, 2005. The following interview took place in May, 2005.

**Raines Cohen:** *What is senior cohousing? What makes it other than traditional multigenerational cohousing, either in Denmark or the U.S.?*

**Chuck Durrett:** In the first two days I spent interviewing people about senior cohousing, three people broke down in tears. That never happened in 13 months of interviewing people for our first cohousing book.

There are two seemingly obvious reasons for this difference: First, these folks in senior cohousing were not in denial. They are grappling with growing older. You can't avoid the issue of mortality. It was very emotional for them.

Second, they were considering their alternatives to cohousing: regular assisted living, living in some kind of institution, becoming increasingly isolated by staying in a single-family house, moving in with one of their children, or maybe shared housing. In any case, they would have lost their independence, and would have been much more subjected to the whims of others.

Then they talked about with how much fun and how much support they are getting living in senior cohousing. "It's like college," they say, "like a fraternity!" In one senior cohousing

community, there were less than 10 cars for 20 households. Not everybody has a car and some don't drive anymore as their vision decreases and reaction times slow, making it more challenging to drive safely. But when someone says, "Hey, let's go to the beach today!" everyone jumps in one car and goes.

Denmark, like the U.S., is trying to figure out a way to get older people off the road. It turns out some seniors are forced to drive more because their friends and family and errands are all somewhere else now that the neighbors and kids have grown up and moved away. Some of these seniors are a danger for everybody.

Regular cohousing is extremely conducive to families raising a young child, when the parents' world revolves around them, and for young adults, with their careers. Seniors have done all that; they're off the career treadmill, and now they want a world that revolves around them. You can't blame them. The reason cohousing works at all is that everybody looks out for their own interests, but people also learn to look out for other people's interests as part of that equation.

**RC:** *How did senior cohousing spin off from traditional inter-generational cohousing in Denmark?*

**CD:** Back in 1982, a group of Danish seniors took a class on aging at a local community college. They talked about finances, and their specific issues around getting older. For

example, how to get their faucets fixed; how to visit friends when driving was becoming more difficult; how to deal with slower reaction times; how to maintain emotional well-being in the face of increasing isolation. The health-care system doesn't deal with a person's emotional aspirations, which don't change when you get older but are severely compromised by lack of proximity. And many seniors, like younger people, dream of living more lightly on the land.

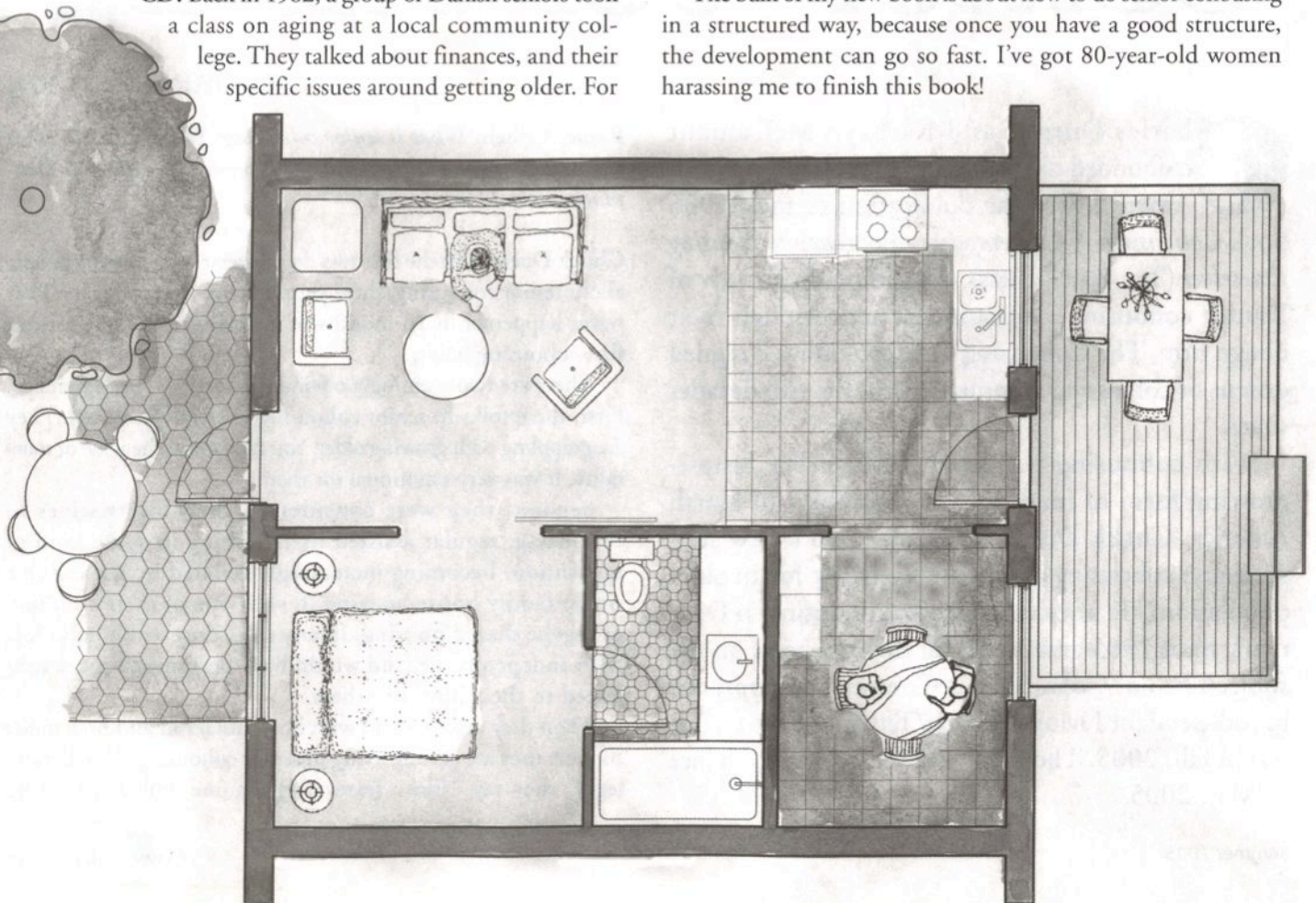
In the first seniors' group, they realized they were all in the same boat—and maybe it would sail better if they really were all in the same boat—and they employed the cohousing model to create a senior-oriented community. The first senior cohousing in Denmark opened in 1987.

**RC:** *What are the organizational structures they use to create senior cohousing?*

**CD:** The Danes have gotten extremely organized about building senior cohousing. The first communities took four to six years to evolve organically. Now, it's typically only two years from conception to move-in, almost factory-like. Last year, 20 out of 25 new cohousing communities in Denmark were senior cohousing! And the standard, multigenerational cohousing is not declining.

The bulk of my new book is about how to do senior cohousing in a structured way, because once you have a good structure, the development can go so fast. I've got 80-year-old women harassing me to finish this book!

***The reason cohousing works at all is that everybody looks out for their own interests, but people also learn to look out for other people's interests as part of that equation.***



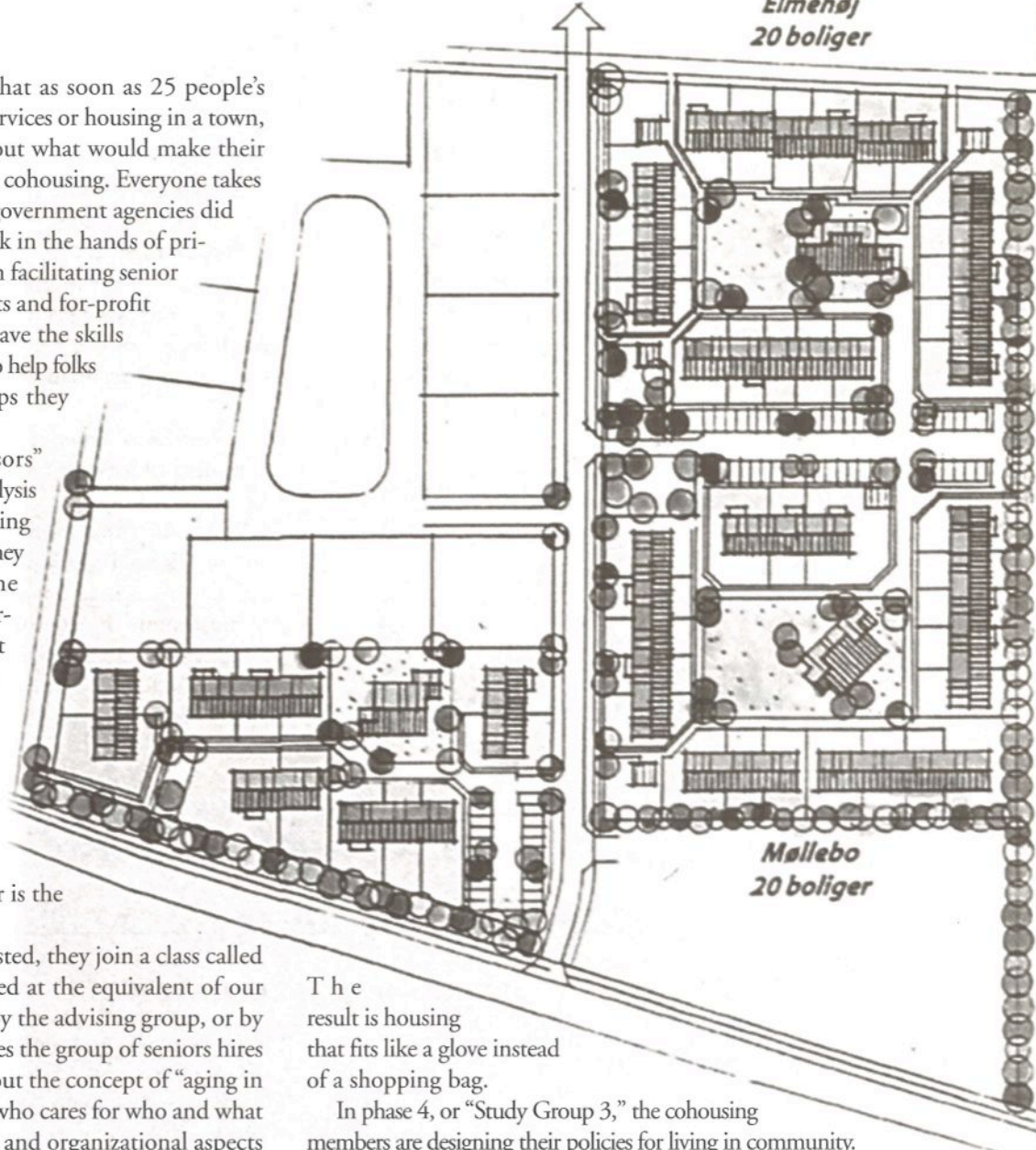
What happens in Denmark is that as soon as 25 people's names come up on a list for senior services or housing in a town, someone meets with them to find out what would make their life better, and if they're interested in cohousing. Everyone takes this process very seriously. At first, government agencies did most of the organizing. Now it's back in the hands of private organizations which specialize in facilitating senior cohousing. These are both nonprofits and for-profit groups that really specialize. They have the skills to gain people's trust, and know how to help folks understand the process and the steps they have to take.

In this first phase, these "advisors" follow a pretty rigorous feasibility analysis process to find out if a senior cohousing community can work in that town. They spend an amazing amount of time talking with local officials, senior service agencies, and the like, to see what services are available and if senior cohousing can work there with their support. Many agencies specialize in helping seniors living at home: Meals on Wheels, District (Visiting) Nurses—stuff like that. Making contacts with these groups helps the fledgling senior group get started, or is the catalyst for the next stage.

If there are enough seniors interested, they join a class called "Study Group 1." It might be offered at the equivalent of our local junior college or adult school by the advising group, or by a local geriatrics counselor. Sometimes the group of seniors hires their own teacher directly. It's all about the concept of "aging in place" and facilitating dialogs about who cares for who and what people need. It introduces the social and organizational aspects of cohousing.

The biggest challenge in American cohousing is for folks to really go through the social philosophy of cohousing before getting down to the nuts and bolts of "how big is my house going to be? What color are my countertops?" In Denmark the advisors say, "We will deal with that in Study Group 2."

By the end of phase 1 (feasibility), and phase 2 (Study Group 1), people will be very clear on who will pay for the next phases, because that's when the professionals get involved. Study Group 2 (phase 3) is facilitated by an architect. Only a few architects do most cohousing projects in Denmark because they also have to be good facilitators of group process. People walk through what they need in the physical design of their homes and common facilities, based on work they do together to set meal policies, for example.



The result is housing that fits like a glove instead of a shopping bag.

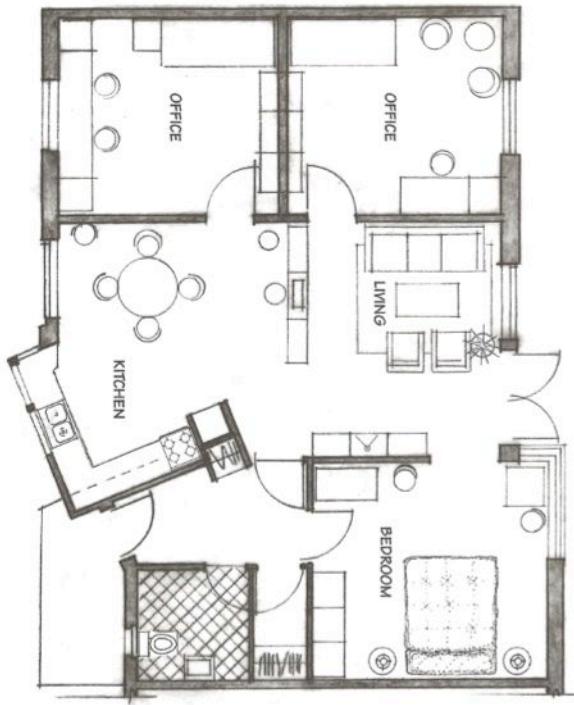
In phase 4, or "Study Group 3," the cohousing members are designing their policies for living in community.

This phase is more about managing various kinds of workshops, amenities, and the like. Workshops are a big feature in these communities because people have a lot more time to spend on crafts, and a lot more interest than people on the career treadmill.

**RC:** How many senior cohousing communities are there in Denmark now?

**CD:** I thought there were 200, but I read recently there were only 80 based on a stricter definition of what cohousing is. They take this distinction very seriously in Denmark, and if you don't have common dinner regularly it's not considered cohousing, even if the neighborhood has other cohousing-like features, for example. I think this kind of clarity and honesty will always help the cohousing movement.

**Study after study found that it was the heightened sense of community feeling in this town that facilitated seniors' good health.**



Cohousing makes up about one percent of all the housing stock in Denmark. Senior cohousing, in the strict definition, could easily reach that.

Denmark has both professional real estate developers and banks that specialize in cohousing. They're always on the lookout for new project possibilities. The advisors bring them in early on, sometimes in phase 1 or 2. Sometimes they will cover predevelopment costs like site planning and architectural design, if the members don't want to take the risk of preconstruction financing.

**RC:** *How does senior cohousing differ from intergenerational cohousing in terms of the physical plan of the community?*

**CD:** The common house really is their common living room, and it gets used to a much greater extent than in multigenerational cohousing. You see people sewing, crafting, spending so much more time in the common house. In my design work for Silver Sage Cohousing in Boulder, Colorado, members emphasized making the common house comfortable not just for common dinners, but for smaller groups, a couple playing

## Current Cohousers Consider New Options for the Years Ahead

BY NESHAMA ABRAHAM PAISS

"I am looking for a change in my life," says Gene Junk, 65, a resident of Nyland Cohousing in Lafayette, Colorado. A sculptor and artist, Gene joined Silver Sage Village, a cohousing project by and for seniors in nearby Boulder. A participant in a three-day "Elder Cohousing: Getting Started" workshop which my husband, Zev Paiss, and I hosted in Boulder last March, Gene explained that he didn't want to give up the experience of having young children around so he chose an age-targeted cohousing neighborhood directly across the street from Wild Sage, a multigenerational cohousing community.

Pick up any senior-oriented magazine and you'll see that housing options for older people are growing. Elders once lived out their lives with their extended families. A further option, driven by medical necessity, was to live out one's elder years in nursing homes; later assisted living and retirement homes offered more options and greater independence. Managed retirement villages, such as Sun City, Rossmoor, and Leisure World, scaled the concept up to hundreds or thou-

sands of homes at a time. In "elder cohousing," older generations are asking for and helping to create places that support connection, independence, dignity, a good time with others of like mind, a continuing contribution to society, and a spiritual perspective to the elder years.

The workshop drew 40 developers, landowners, senior health care industry administrators, and people interested in forming elder cohousing communities. A preworkshop bus tour of five completed multigenerational cohousing communities in the area led to meetings with seniors living there, which in turn led some participants to consider joining existing or new traditional cohousing communities rather than waiting for new senior communities to be designed and built.



*Inauguration Day at ElderSpirit Cohousing, Abingdon, Virginia.*

Developer Jack Johnston left the event pursuing both options. "I see exciting opportunities to create elder cohousing and multigenerational cohousing in Pittsburgh. This showed me a way to add a deeper level of human interaction to the

cards, or six people having tea together. That's true anywhere you have a critical mass, in any kind of cohousing community; the seniors at Bellingham Cohousing in Washington State are always ready to go for some kind of spontaneous get-together.

Typically, the cohousing homes are smaller than usual. Common-house guestrooms are a big deal.

**RC:** *Will it be easier to get sites and planning approvals for senior cohousing in the U.S. than for traditional cohousing?*

**CD:** There are a lot of incentives built into the land-use planning codes for creating senior housing, generally speaking. There are potential subsidies, density bonuses, reduced parking requirements, and so on. Many cities and counties put up a lot of barriers to the point of outright prohibiting multifamily clustered development (or all development), or making it virtually impossible or prohibitively expensive to get new projects approved. People look at seniors as being relatively benign ... the assumption is they don't have kids crowding the public school systems, leading to more public spending.

development I do. Cohousing is a way to do community better."

Many retired cohousing residents choose growing older in cohousing communities with neighbors of diverse ages, interests, opportunities to mentor, and the laughter of children. Others said they feel more drawn to the dream of living in a quieter, age-targeted community where they will find comfort in shared values and interests, and a physical design focused on senior needs.

"How is elder cohousing different from a nice retirement community offering total life care?" asked several workshop participants. The group developed the catch-phrase "aging in community" in response.

"My hope is to plan for my elder years in a setting where I can be with a supportive community," said Maureen Cassulo, a member of Silver Sage, and elder advocate for Boulder County Aging Services. "This is in contrast to having to abruptly move from your home and live out your years in an institutional environment with people you don't know."

Can "aging in community" really care for the very frailest, oldest people? "If we are talking about the end of life in cohousing, these most vulnerable years must be considered," said Norm Hannay, administrator of a long-term care company in California. Organizations such as P.A.C.E. (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly) offer total in-home care to the aging, even those on Medicare.

Seniors involved in creating ElderSpirit Cohousing in Abingdon, Virginia (see *Communities* #121), as well as Silver Sage, say they are determined to create their own meaningful, supportive communities. Their priorities included the ability to actively participate in designing how they will live the rest of their years, owning their own homes, retaining their equity

## SENIOR COHOUSING

A Community Approach to Independent Living  
- The Handbook -



by Charles Durrett

and assets, managing their own neighborhoods, and arranging for the kind of care they want.

ElderSpirit, originally conceived by former nuns, will focus on ecumenical and diverse spiritual practices, community service, and fun. Silver Sage members share academic backgrounds and political and civic pursuits, yet are also interested in Rabbi Zalman's "Spiritual Eldering" teachings. Seven out of the eight members of Glacier Circle, in Davis, California, belong to a Unitarian Universalist Church, and say they seek a loving, supportive and tolerant lifestyle that supports "aging in place" and "conscious aging."

The innovators of these first three elder cohousing communities in the U.S. are visionaries in their 60s, 70s, and 80s. They are lighting the way for the aging baby boomers—the largest generation in American history—a group searching for a very different way to grow older. According to cohousing architect Chuck Durrett, though, these pioneers took a risk by moving forward without first learning from the evolution of "senior cohousing" in Denmark over the past two decades, in particular the social- and community-development aspects.

Chuck added that he would rather that North American elder cohousing creators learned from the early Danish projects that failed or took far longer than expected. "We will waste a lot of money and a lot of time; it will not 'fit like a glove,'" Chuck notes. "It takes more time if cohousing founders aren't sharing what they learn with each other."

*Cohousing consultants Neshama Abraham Paiss and Zev Paiss, seven-year residents of Nomad Cohousing in Boulder, Colorado, will be offering another Elder Housing Workshop September 22–25, through the Elder Cohousing Network of Abraham-Paiss Associates. [www.ElderCohousing.org](http://www.ElderCohousing.org); [info@eldercohousing.org](mailto:info@eldercohousing.org); 303-413-8066.*



MICHAEL MCINTYRE, SUNWARD COHOUSING

It also helps that we've gotten traditional cohousing established in so many areas here already over the past two decades, laying the groundwork that we won't have to repeat for senior cohousing—banks and governments are more familiar with it and the 38 cohousing communities we have designed haven't self-destructed or anything like that. Just recently, a police chief came up to me and insisted that "multifamily equals crime." My experience with cohousing is quite the opposite, but it takes time to educate people.

I'm a licensed architect, but 60 percent of the time I'm a pedagogue. I'm explaining the real ramifications of our physical design, how it influences our lives.

**RC:** *Are senior cohousing projects more affordable than traditional cohousing, which is largely market-rate?*

**CD:** The widespread presumption is that seniors are retired and on a fixed income, and so need something more affordable.

However, it's worth noting that in all of the traditional cohousing projects we've worked on, most residents are first-time home buyers, as much as 80 percent in some communities.

However, a lot of seniors have the appreciated equity in the asset of a home or other savings they've built up over the decades, and as they simplify their lives they can choose to invest in higher-quality furnishings and design of common facilities.

What happens in traditional cohousing that opens up some affordability options is this: one or more members are able to invest in the project and help make the project work for everybody. I hope that some seniors who are selling a single-family house will quietly buy not just their own unit in senior cohousing but

another housing unit that will be a rental, to open up the option of renting for other seniors. The cool thing is, it doesn't matter once you live there whether somebody was a first-time homebuyer or not. It helps break down class issues.

If we get new cohousing right in the U.S. at a market-rate level, it becomes aspired to at other levels. The Cohousing Company has been employed by quite a number of nonprofit affordable housing developers to create projects based on cohousing principles. The most important thing we can do is create a good model for cooperation.

**RC:** *Does Denmark's very different system of healthcare for seniors make a difference in what's been possible there and what we can accomplish here?*

**CD:** Health care is a question a lot of Americans ask about. Denmark has national healthcare system that provides in-home care. It's a government priority to keep people in their own homes as long as possible, to keep costs down, if nothing else. While the state-run institutions are better in Denmark than here, they are still institutions. They regulate everything you do.

Most American Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO's) offer in-home care. My mother got it for years from Kaiser.

They have an amazing amount of technology to make it work, such as remote monitoring ("telemedicine") that can take your blood pressure daily. But neither system, in either country, provides the kind of emotional and physical support you get living in a community. In senior cohousing, there are people around to play cards with, have tea with, go to the beach—all the things a government or health care worker is just not going to do with

## **Living in cohousing is all about having a good time.**



you. You may not know it, but Denmark has the most right-wing government since World War II, and they are very concerned about costs.

It's very much an issue of maintaining personal autonomy while getting the support you need. When I moved my mother out of her single-family house, I couldn't believe how many things she didn't need that were rattling around with her in this big dumb box. She had a dozen rooms full of 15 years of stuff. Then she moved into an assisted living center with 188 rooms, and 55 staff. It's very hands-on, with so many rules. They regulate what medications you can have in your room. One day my sister left a bottle of Tylenol for her, and the staff were ready to throw my mother out. Here's somebody who raised kids, ran a business, and is a mature human being, and she's treated like a juvenile delinquent!

In Denmark's senior cohousing, "in-home care" happens in several ways. In Study Group 1, people talk about what they are or are not willing to do for other people. They usually don't want to change diapers or provide medications, but they're willing to knock on your door if they haven't seen you in a few days, or bring you meals if you're laid up with a broken hip. That's all part of the policies and is discussed up front.

The third kind of care is most profound, and it's what you give because you come to appreciate each other. At Doyle Street Cohousing in Emeryville, California, which we cofounded and lived in for 13 years, I found myself reading to my elderly neighbor, Margaret, and feeding her. I felt privileged to do that for her; it was an honor that I never planned for but I would do it again.

But, in Denmark, most of the day-to-day care is provided by people paid for by the national health care system. District nurses paid for by the government stop by six to twelve hours a week for different reasons.

Sometimes Danish senior cohousing communities find it more convenient to have someone live "on-campus" in exchange for room and board. Sometimes the caregiver quits their "day job," and goes to work in the community full-time, helping three or four community members. That's been very effective. Sometimes people pay extra to bring on someone, above what the government provides, because, as I said, the Danish government doesn't do as much for people as it used to. Some communities have built extra units, to rent out to caregivers for a very low amount. Everyone benefits.

In my interviews, among the top 10 reasons people told me they moved into senior cohousing, one reason was to not be a burden on their kids, who are likely to have busy lives further away, and have careers that give them very little time. The kids are schlepping their own kids around, and it becomes a real burden to accommodate your parents, week after week, plus birthdays, holidays, and on and on and on. In cohousing, seniors are nowhere near as dependent on their kids.

The statistics are phenomenal for how much healthier seniors are who live in community. Look at the studies of Rosetta, Pennsylvania, where all these 90-year-olds live. They smoked, ate as much meat and wine as they wanted, and study after study

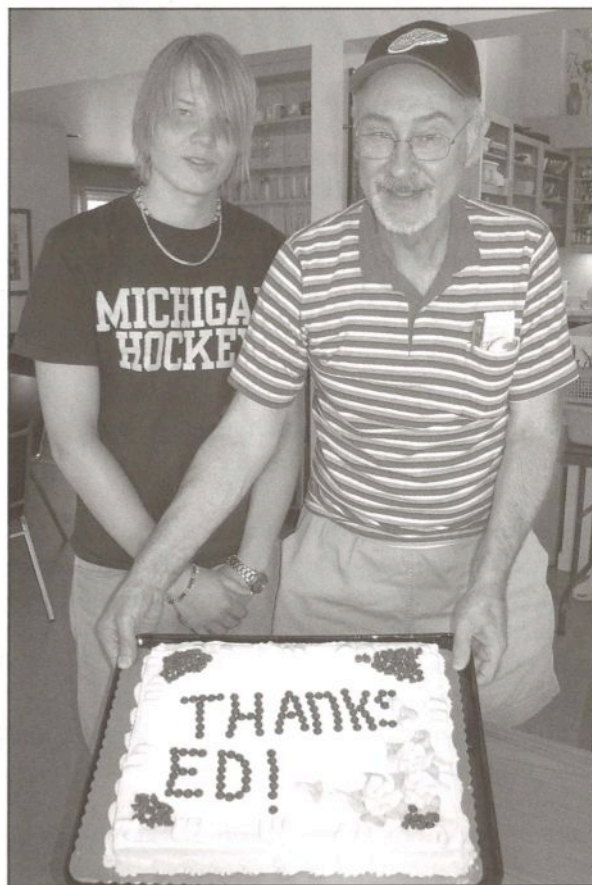
found that it was the heightened sense of community feeling in this town that facilitated seniors' good health, as compared to everywhere else. As someone living there put it, "You have to get up in the morning, because if you don't, someone might be coming to visit to check up on you." Having a social life with peers keeps folks healthier, and they don't look for as much attention from their kids or their doctors.

Living in cohousing is all about having a good time. Because your neighbor is into bird watching or bocce ball, you get involved, and you get a lot of growth from that. It's like being back in college again, which seems quite appropriate for seniors focusing on self-development.

Senior cohousing is actually part of national policy in Denmark, and was a factor in last year's elections there. The conservative government made it part of their platform, as a strategy for getting medical costs down. I'm hoping some group in the U.S. will make this case to the big insurance companies. We need some help to tap the self-interest of monied organizations like insurance companies to facilitate and support cohousing here.

*Raines Cohen, co-Guest Editor of this issue with Elizabeth Morris, serves on the boards of the Fellowship for Intentional Community and the Cohousing Association of the United States, and lives in Berkeley Cohousing, in Berkeley, California.*

*To order a copy of Chuck Durrett's book, Senior Cohousing: A Community Approach to Independent Living (Habitat Press/Ten Speed Press, 2005), visit your local independent community bookseller after September '05 or see The Cohousing Company's website: [www.cohousingco.com](http://www.cohousingco.com).*



MICHAEL MCINTYRE, SUNNWARD COHOUSING



Maypole Dance at Songaia's annual Festival of the Earth.

FRED LANPHEAR

# What Have We learned in Five Years?

BY FRED LANPHEAR

“What have we learned?” was the focus question in a recent sharing circle at Songaia Cohousing in Bothell, Washington. Thirteen members brainstormed insights and learnings from approximately five years of living together. We then clustered these into similar ideas and assigned each to small groups of two members each, who wrote the following paragraphs.

Editing was also cooperative. The paragraphs were compiled and e-mailed to all Songaians for editing input. What follows is the product of this cooperative process.

## Boundaries and relationships:

- Life in community is a balancing act! Your priorities are always in play with those of other community members. Living closely requires one to continually evolve a personal matrix of relationships, remembering other's needs, preferences, strengths, and foibles.
- A successful communitarian learns to care for his/herself by developing good boundaries of commitment, time, and empathy.
- Deep connections come through patient daily interactions as well as in response to special or emergency situations.

## Flexibility helps:

- One of the challenges and joys of community life is learning about flexibility. When people have strongly held beliefs, they may be in conflict as they process a proposal and reach an authentic consensus. There is sometimes a need to postpone personal agendas/schemes to support the group's needs.
- A “dark side” of flexibility may be apathy. Being “flexible” about decisions in order to avoid engagement with others may be appropriate on occasion, but if done often can risk fostering alienation.

## Relationship to children:

- We have individual family styles and values around child rearing and it is important to us to maintain family autonomy. This takes deliberate and focused effort. At the same time we enjoy building relationships with all the community adults and children through mentoring, sharing childcare, enjoying community activities, and shared work. The children interact with each other independently, developing something like extended-family relationships with each other as well as with adults outside their own family. Even so, there are few community agreements around parenting.

## Assumptions and perspectives:

- Don't assume people have the same basic assumptions as you. Community provides the opportunity to experience these differences. By staying in relationships, you learn to value and appreciate other points of view. Provide time to explicitly share what your assumptions are, like in sharing circles.
- We are a conglomerate of individuals who share both similarities and differences. We have learned to recognize and honor defining elements that preserve our uniqueness, while acknowledging and nurturing the cohesive elements that bring us together.

## Lessons in decision making:

- Sifting and presorting proposals has been helpful in our community. In general we don't decide items in a full group meeting unless necessary. One tool we use to help decide when it is necessary is the decision board, in which we post proposals publicly. The decision board allows us to identify "passionates" on a topic, discern when consensus is possible without a meeting. This provides feedback on a proposal in a clear, time-sensitive way.
- We have diverse styles of processing proposals. Some need to see the large picture before deciding. Some folks need to predigest proposals more than others. Some people trust a subgroup to decide things. We also think it is important to recognize that email discussion of proposals is limited.

## The "passion principle" works:

- Several years ago we encouraged each person to work in the garden for only two hours per week. It didn't work! We know we cannot mandate participation, only invite. As the years went by, we noticed that those who contributed time and energy in a particular arena were often those who had a passion for the task or outcome. We now talk about our mode of participation as utilizing the "passion principle."

## Benefits of shared resources and "synergy" in community:

- The economic aspects include shared access to high-speed Internet, meaning community members pay only 10 percent of what it would cost individually. Bulk food buying provides a greatly reduced food cost. Sharing tools and skills allows for projects and repairs to be done at much lower cost.
- People of diverse backgrounds and skills working together make projects possible that otherwise would not be tackled. We experienced this in re-positioning concrete slabs to create a new walkway to the common house. It took a team of about six men with six- to ten-foot pry bars plus a tractor with a front-end loader to move 4'x4' and 4'x6' slabs, the larger of which the tractor could not even lift off the ground.
- Doing things together, like watching movies, helps people feel related to one another.

## How to integrate a group to become a community:

- This occurs in many ways, including singing together, which builds community feelings. Extended family members become a part of our community life, and when we experience a sense of pride in where we live.
- This also involves welcoming new members into the community, which is no easy task. How do you inculcate the "feel" of Songaia that we all admire?



While children are important at Songaia, the community has few agreements about parenting.

## This experiment of living together is messy:

- How do we decide what to do when the harmony of the community is disturbed? None of us likes conflict; we tend to defer and delay and only intervene when the level of discomfort becomes high. We usually resolve conflicts only when a small group decides to intervene on behalf of the community's well-being. The successful communitarian chooses to engage, in spite of not being certain of the outcome.

## How to do a food program, or learning that enough is more important than equity:

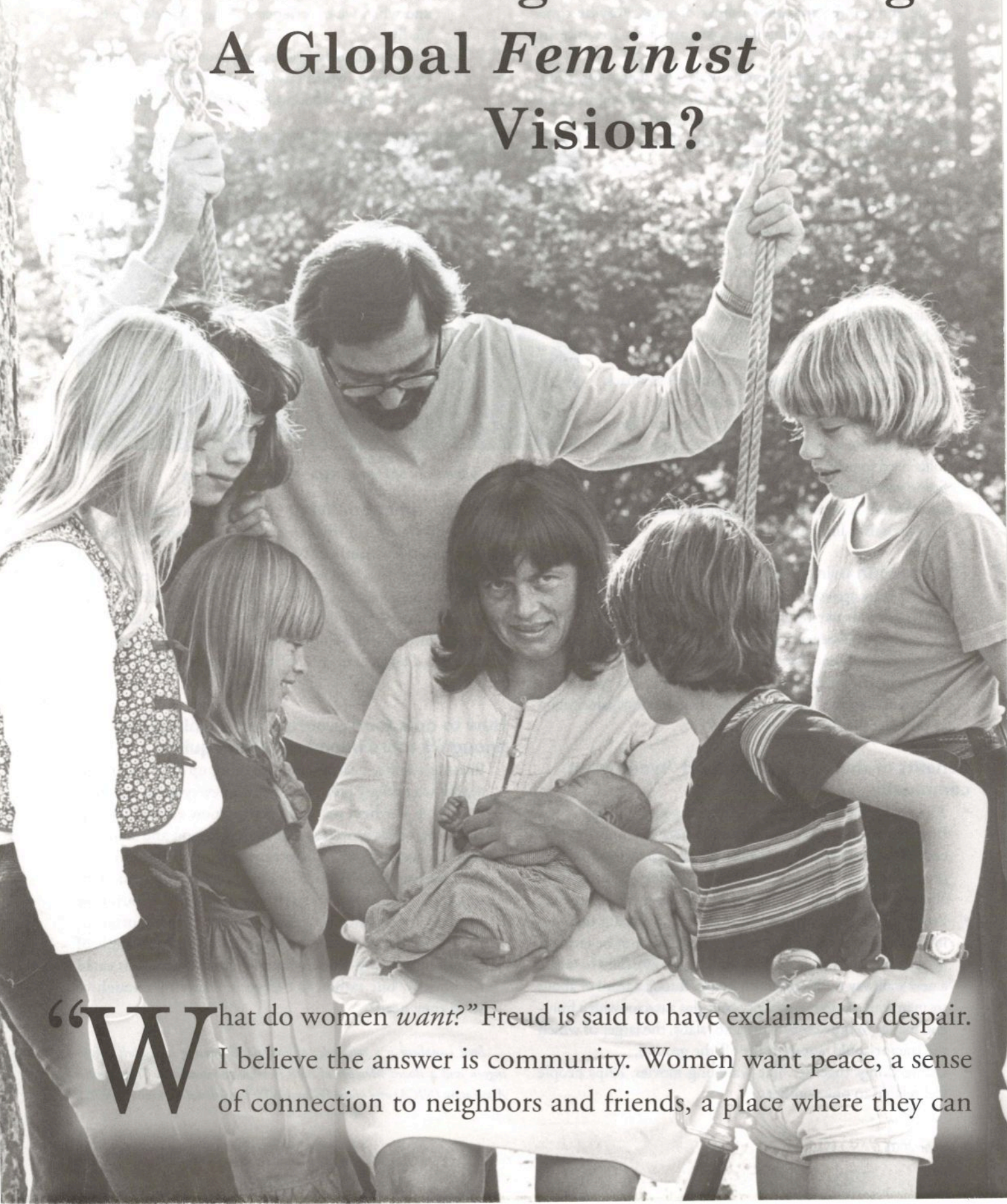
- Sharing cooking, eating, and cleaning up after five meals a week is a primary point of contact for everyone in our community. It is where we really get to know each other: our changing needs as well as our current mood and status. It is where we discover that some people don't like kale and then we learn to adapt a flexible approach to menu planning and food preparation. It is also where we learn how to meet a range of needs. But maybe most importantly, the food program is where we learn that basic principle of community living—not asking whether everyone is cared for equally, but rather, is everyone receiving enough of what they need?

*Fred Lanphear is a cofounder of Songaia Cohousing in Bothell, Washington and a Board Member of both Northwest Intentional Communities Association (NICA) and of the Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC).*

BY HILDUR JACKSON

Hildur Jackson and her son, Frej, at Hoejtofte Cohousing, the day they brought the newborn home from the hospital.

# From Cohousing to Ecovillages: A Global *Feminist* Vision?



“**W**hat do women *want*?” Freud is said to have exclaimed in despair. I believe the answer is community. Women want peace, a sense of connection to neighbors and friends, a place where they can



*Hoejtofte Cohousing from the air. The traditional Danish four-wing farm building was retrofitted as a common house and two of the six residential units.*

have and raise children in a safe and wholesome environment, a place where their children may have a childhood full of love and bliss and rich experiences, a place where women can live with men and feel their love grow and develop because of equal opportunities. They often find much of this in cohousing communities and ecovillages.

In 1969, I was sitting in my new house in Copenhagen with my two bouncing baby boys of six months and 18 months. I had just finished my law degree and was speculating over what my life would be like. Should I seek a career as a lawyer or civil servant, and leave the children in daycare with strangers for many hours every day? Or should I give up my career and stay at home caring for the children? There was no apparent third option. When I was 14 I had vowed to remain single and be independent from a man, as all the women I saw around me were unhappy and dissatisfied. I was now with a man in whom I had confidence, but I wanted to avoid falling into the same trap as my mother and other women in her generation. Were there really no other choices than a full-time career—thus penalizing the children—or staying home and making myself totally dependent in a sleepy suburb where nothing was going on?

In 1968, I began studying cultural sociology to find out more about human nature, and in particular to learn if there

were societies in other parts of the world, or throughout history, which had found better solutions to this dilemma. I joined the Feminist movement, which was just starting at that time. With one baby on my lap and my husband looking after the other, I attended meetings in which women shared their concerns. One day I read a newspaper article, “*Children Need 100 Parents.*” The lightning struck. Of course! Many women had the same problem. We should create something new. So I

started an initiative to establish a living situation in which several families combined private homes with common open space, had no fences, and shared some facilities—a concept which later came to be known in English as cohousing. Our group learned there were two other similar initiatives as result of that same newspaper article.

We considered joining one of the other groups but as they adopted a legal solidarity rule, (meaning that any creditor could go after my husband’s business if somebody failed to pay their

part, which made it impossible for him to accept due to his business commitments), we formed our own group with friends and started looking for property. Within three years we had created a small cohousing community of six families and converted an old farmhouse near Copenhagen into common space. Basically, the initiative was a social experiment,

***The first month was probably the most joyful in my life. I was so happy that having a child could be such an exhilarating experience.***

and a very successful one. It was called *Hoejtofte* after the farm we bought.

On a sunny morning 11 years later, I gave birth to my third son. I was testing out a new idea: home birthing in a hospital environment, meaning that I could decide how the birth should be designed, including having my husband Ross and my other children present. Two hours after the birth I came home from the hospital so our whole family could enjoy the first ecstatic days of the new baby. We were received by all our *Hoejtofte* neighbors, who toasted the newborn with white wine. When the community children returned from school they rushed over to see the new baby. As we sat in the late summer sunshine, my 11- and 12-year-old sons proudly showed off their little brother to the others. In the afternoon we all went for a walk around to all the houses. This was our first cohousing baby. He had many parents and many sisters and brothers, an ideal back-

ground for any child. For me it meant never having a lonely moment or a situation I could not handle. I always had company when I needed it, and privacy when I needed it. People were always ready to keep an eye on the baby carriage when I felt like a nap. Friends were always nearby and ready to love and admire the little one, and children were ready to protect him and play with him. The first month was probably the most joyful in my life. I was so happy that having a child could be such an exhilarating experience.

At that time, 1979, we had 12 children and 12 adults in our cohousing community. We had been inventing the idea as we went along. We raised chickens, tended a large common vegetable garden, and made two big lawns which we turned into football fields. Quite often all the men, and occasionally a woman or two, would play football with the kids—and all the other neighborhood kids too. We had three Icelandic ponies, including one owned by my dad, which were a lot of fun. Our neighbors' girls helped to look after the ponies (and often babysat our youngest son). Every Sunday we went horseback riding in the forest, often with both boys and their granddad. The children had many friends, as *Hoejtofte* was a natural center of activity for

the neighborhood. We had a common house where we could meet and have celebrations, and we became quite good at celebrating. On summer afternoons we would often run or bike to a nearby lake in the forest and go swimming. As the old farmhouse was in constant need of repair, we held monthly work weekends which also brought us all together. These are some of the dearest

childhood memories of our sons. Our life was fun and rich. When my husband Ross traveled on business, which was quite often, I never felt isolated. The local school often commented that children from our community were good at sharing and solving problems. They learned direct democracy at *Hoejtofte* as they were part of the decision making, and had many adult role models. Responsibilities were shared. The adults often supported each



The first GEN-Europe Council (left to right) Silke Hagmayer, Ecodörf Sieben Linden, Germany; Agnieschka Komoch, Lebensgarten, Germany; Declan Kennedy, Lebensgarten; Lucilla Borio, Torri Superiore, Italy; Demet, Turkey; Christina, Belgium.

HILDIR JACKSON

other in various ways; for example, when one man had a nervous breakdown, three other community members stayed with him for several nights and days (meaning they stayed home from their jobs) which helped him avoid hospitalization.

I believe women are naturally good communicators, and do well in community settings. In communities like ours, women weren't suppressed in any way. For me this was an important step forward in the process of achieving equal possibilities between men and women. And it was great for the kids. Ask them today and they all want to live in cohousing communities. Some already do, although it is more difficult today than it was then to build

one, for still in Denmark there is little local encouragement, no support from our politicians, and suitable land is scarce. In spite of this, there are more than 150 cohousing communities and many *olle-koller* (cohousing communities for seniors) in Denmark. The children of *Hoejtofte* have all moved away now. Many have their own children but they have kept in contact. We continue to meet once a year. At last count there were 45 of us, with 28 children under 6. We all learned a lot about conflict resolution, about love, and about solidarity. Cohousing communities offer

***I believe women are naturally good communicators, and do well in community settings.***



Hildur's husband, Ross Jackson, with their three sons and other Hoejtofte members in front of the old farmhouse at Hoejtofte Cohousing in the early 1980s.

HILDUR JACKSON

an alternative way to solve social problems without involving public institutions—and at much lower cost!

Wonderful as this was, our little group was not revolutionary. We simply made the system work a little better for ourselves. Almost everybody (except Ross, who moved his business home) commuted outside the community, drove cars, used lots of energy, and degraded the environment just like the rest of society. We were buying the same goods as everybody else. Our ecological footprint was not much less than the rest of society. Our cohousing community had social advantages, but it was not an alternative model that would benefit nature or those less fortunate in Europe or in the global South. I wanted to take the next step, and use my life to contribute in a more radical way that went beyond the social aspect. What could I do that would help the world change and give nature a better chance?

In the 1980s, I worked with the Nordic Alternative Campaign (100 grassroots Scandinavian peace, environmental and women's movements) to create a vision of how to solve the global political, social, and environmental problems in one vision, and find paths to realize this vision. After 10 years I realized we had all the necessary knowledge, and what was really needed was to start manifesting

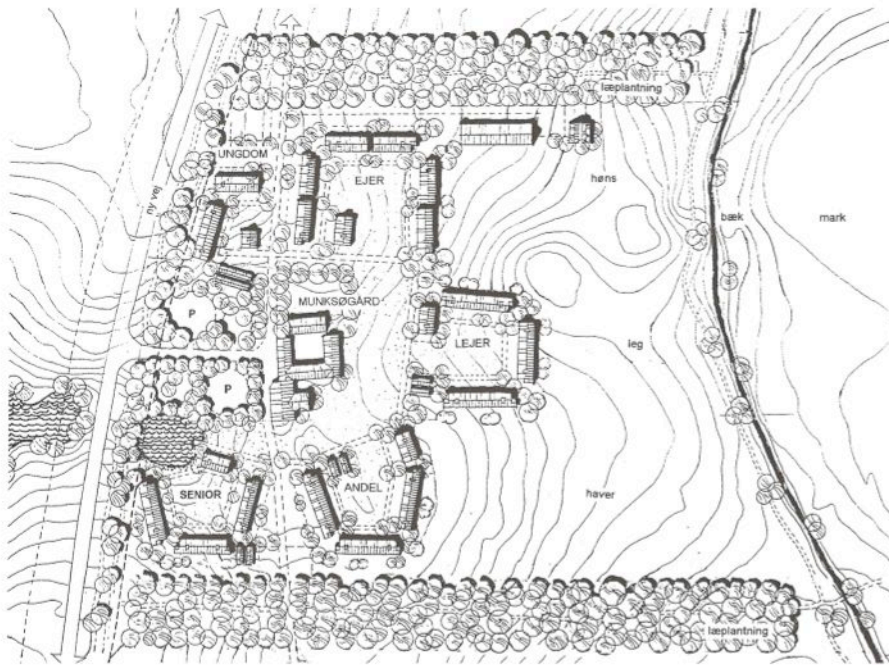
models of how to do this in practice. Changing ourselves and our own lifestyles had to be an important part of this model.

At about this time, Ross and I initiated Gaia Trust and began defining its goals with Bernard Lietaer, the Belgian-born expert in local economies and local currencies. Ross expected to earn a lot of money very quickly selling his computer models to the foreign exchange market, and we needed a strategy for how to spend the money in a wise way for Gaia Trust. This was when we developed what we called “the yin/yang strategy.” For 400 years, technology and economy (yang) had decided how society and settlements developed. Now it was time to let yin, the feminine principle, take the lead. The key question was how

we really want to live with nature and fellow human beings, and how we could make a difference. Then we could let the yang principle—economy and ecology—support this. Our answer was to support ecovillages all over the world. For me this was a natural extension of the Feminist movement and of the cohousing concept. I convinced the men of this strategy.

By this time meditation had become an important part of my life. I wanted to meditate with a group on a regular basis. I believe that without changing ourselves we cannot change our

## **We launched the Global Ecovillage Network formally at the UN Habitat Conference in Istanbul in 1996.**



culture. I asked myself: would it be possible for a group of spiritually motivated people to create a spiritual community without a guru? Ross and I and a group of like-minded people were ready to make a move and we found the right property. I wanted to further develop the idea of cohousing, including creating local work-places and growing food on-site. If women were to have real equality, jobs, and a local place to buy food, had to be close by. And for children to really understand nature and community, they needed to experience it as a natural part of everyday life. My vision could be summarized in the concept of the ecovillage as a local holographic microcosm of society. It was not really possible to create this in a suburb of Copenhagen, where we lived. And my friends here did not then share my interest in meditation. So Ross and I looked for a place to materialize this more ambitious new vision, which later came to

## When Ecovillagers Use the Cohousing Model ...

How some activists choose cohousing to manifest their eco-sustainable dreams ...

An ecovillage," according to Robert and Diane Gilman's oft-quoted definition, "is a human-scale, full-featured settlement in which human activities are harmlessly integrated into the natural world in a way that supports healthy human development, and which can be successfully continued into the indefinite future."

In 1992, when the founders of EcoVillage at Ithaca (EVI) set out to create an ecovillage, they chose cohousing as the way to make it happen.

EVI's founders envisioned three to five adjacent cohousing communities on property just outside Ithaca, New York, preserving 90 percent of their 176 acres as open space for organic agriculture, woods, meadows, and wetlands. They have built the first two cohousing neighborhoods: FRoG (First Residents' Group) with 30 households and a common house, and SoNG (Second Neighborhood Group) with 30 households. The SoNG neighbors use the FRoG neighbors' common house, and plan to build their own this summer.

EVI is the only U.S. cohousing community which is also a well-known ecovillage, and unlike most cohousing communities, their sustainable aspects were a priority. They live in energy-efficient, passive-solar homes and recycle extensively. Their roofs are pitched at the right angle for the photovoltaic panels they could add in the future. Every six to eight homes are linked to a central utility room with two natural-gas boilers that supply zoned radiant heat and hot water to each home in the group. Residents conserve water through 1.5-gallon toilets and low-flow

faucets, and by watering their heavily mulched gardens only during the coolest part of the day. To save on CO2 emissions and petroleum use from driving, half the wage earners work at least part-time on site in home offices or those in the community building. They carpool extensively, do both formal and informal car-sharing, and ride the bus, which stops by their entry road. As a result, EVI residents consume just 39 percent of the electric power, 41 percent of the natural gas, and 22 percent of the water use of the average household in the northeastern United States.

In the second neighborhood some of the homes are off-grid, and some have composting toilets and heat-recovery systems.

Through a grant from the National Science Foundation, EVI hosts courses through Ithaca College on sustainable communities, land use, and energy systems. EcoVillage at Ithaca has been featured in the *New York Times*, and the *Wall Street Journal*, and on National Public Radio and CNN.

Munksøgård, near Copenhagen, is another ecovillage with several clustered cohousing neighborhoods on the same property. There 250 people live in five different two-story cohousing clusters surrounding the old farmhouse on a 25-hectare farmstead. Each two-story cohousing building has 20 individual units and its own built-in common house. Again, ecological values are paramount. In order to keep CO2 emissions low, each building's central heating system burns wood pellets, with an oil-burning furnace only as back-up. Munksøgård's founders chose a site



be known as an “ecovillage.” We found a 70-acre farm and seminar center in northwestern Denmark, which for 25 years had been called The World University. We gave it back its original name: *Fjordvang*. It was located in a beautiful setting, sloping gently down to the Limfjord (a fjord in Denmark), with seven ancient burial mounds from the Stone Age, and close to the North Sea. We started turning the property into an organic farm, with a permaculture design, in a way that I would now call an ecovillage design. We built 1000 square meters (10,000 square feet) ecologically into a seminar center with 24 beds, a big meditation hall, an apartment for ourselves, and offices for Ross’s company and the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN), which was just getting off the ground. The heart of the center was a lovely big kitchen and dining area. We created a huge vegetable garden, shelterbelts, and a fruit orchard. The land was farmed organically with seven fields in crop rotation. Now we were ready to build an ecovillage with others.

**Ecovillages can provide a lifestyle which reduces our ecological footprint considerably.**

With the help of *In Context* magazine publishers Robert and Diane Gilman, who were then considering being part of the project and lived up there, we initiated the first international ecovillage meeting at *Fjordvang* in 1991 and the second in 1993.

In 1993 the Danish Network of Ecovillages was formed. After a major ecovillage conference at the Findhorn Community in Scotland in 1995, a number of us were ready to build a global network of ecovillages, and we launched the Global Ecovillage Network formally at the UN Habitat Conference in Istanbul in 1996.

The local authorities loved our project. The mayor brought guests from abroad to visit us. And none of the neighbors ever protested, as we were creating a local cultural center for their benefit as well. Our neighbors were quite aware of what was happening to farming in the region; for example, one local farmer was running 13 farms as an agribusiness company, local jobs were disappearing, and young people were forced to move away to get work. This is when our battle

close to public transportation and residents carpool. They use urine-separating toilets and a shared laundry with water from roof-water catchment. Because of these measures, Munksøgård residents use 38 percent less water, 25 percent less electricity, and 60 percent less carbon dioxide emissions than the average Danish household, and their carpoolers drive only five percent of the Danish average.

In 2000, when still in the planning stages, Munksøgård won first prize in a Danish competition for the best sustainable design for the 21st century.

Ecological activists chose the cohousing model again at Earthaven, an aspiring ecovillage in the mountains of western North Carolina. Most Earthaven residents build their own small homes and develop their sustainable homesites themselves, incrementally, with cash on hand, since they lease their homesites from the larger community and thus cannot get construction loans or mortgages from banks. But the five Earthaven members who began the Village Terraces Cohousing Neighborhood borrowed from the cohousing model—building their first of four multifamily residences all at once and with borrowed funds from friends and relatives. Instead of six small homes on six separate homesites, they combined funds and combined homesites, and built a handsome four-story building with

six individual units and space for two businesses, as well as a common kitchen/dining room, bathroom facilities, massage and yoga room, and children’s play area. The neighbors also share the common gardens and adjacent agricultural field, and all planned future infrastructure, from a meditation hut to goat barns.

Village Terraces’ second planned building will offer one- and two-bedroom units with kitchenettes and toilet facilities, and access to the neighborhood’s shared common infrastructure. Like EcoVillage at Ithaca and Munksøgård, ecological values are important. Village Terraces’ multifamily residence is passive-solar-heated with wood-fired radiant-floor backup and wood-fired preheated hot water. It was built with lumber from trees on the land, and has recycled cellulose insulation and earth-plastered exteriors. The neighborhood is off the grid, powered by a photovoltaic system. Water is pumped from a nearby spring, and soon will be supplemented by roof-water catchment. Residents use composting toilets and graywater will be processed in a constructed wetlands.

—Diana Leafé Christian

*Diana Leafé Christian is editor of Communities magazine and author of Creating a Life Together: Practical Tools to Grow Ecovillages and Intentional Communities.*

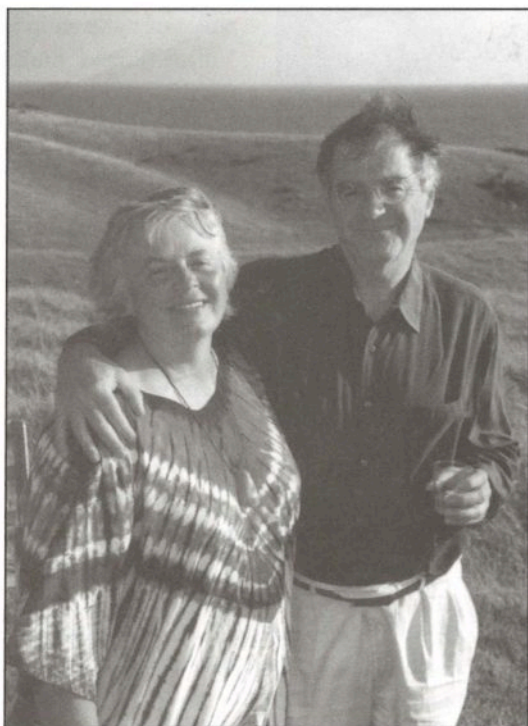


Ecovillage at Ithaca.

MICHAEL MCINTYRE

with the county started. For years we kept several people in the public sector occupied with our request to build residential homes on farmland, which wasn't yet allowed. After three years, like many other similar pioneering ecovillage projects around the world, we had to give up due to lack of political support at the highest level. After three years, when we finally got the permission to build, the same day a veto came from the Minister of Environment, an otherwise very progressive man. The Social Democrat government had just passed a bill, after we moved up there, intending to protect the Danish coasts from overdevelopment. They could not start this new law and make an exception with our ecovillage project, even though the minister had visited our project and liked it, and although this law was not meant for this area of Denmark, which was suffering from depopulation. So, because of this last-minute veto, Ross and I saw that we could not create an ecovillage there, and moved back to the Copenhagen area.

European political leaders have given up managing their own national economies. Instead they have joined the globalization bandwagon in a "race to the bottom," by outsourcing jobs to the far East, undermining the welfare state, and bowing to the commercial firms' mantra of being more competitive than other countries. This means a more polarized society, where only the commercial companies win and the people lose, as the gap between rich and poor widens daily. This state of affairs cannot continue for long before a reaction sets in. This presents a unique opportunity to the Social Democrats of Europe, who are desperate for a new vision. They must realize that selling out to commercialism was a major error. The "market society"



Ross and Hildur Jackson today.

***I believe the cohousing movement and the ecovillage movement are two variants of the same basic impulse.***

is the problem and can never lead to anything but a degraded environment and disastrous split in society between the haves and the have-nots.

Ecovillages are one answer, and will gain full support of the people if explained in the proper context. A global network of ecovillages now exists, and a new kind of education—Ecovillage Designer Education—is being born. The ecovillage movement is ready with the models and the knowledge that the world needs of how to design sustainable communities. Ecovillages can provide a lifestyle which reduces our ecological footprint considerably, are possible in all countries of the world, and can lead to global justice, solidarity, and cooperation. We are learning how to solve conflicts (which is a major issue), how to develop a global consciousness, how to create places where children can grow up naturally, how to develop renewable integrated energy systems and a sustainable lifestyle, and how to live lives full of love and compassion.

When author Ken Wilber recommends "integral practice" he is describing ecovillage living. The "voluntary simplicity" that author Duane Elgin calls for already exists in ecovillages. When local economy expert Bernard Lietaer describes "sustainable abundance," he is describing the lifestyle of ecovillagers. When values and lifestyles researchers Paul Ray and Ruth Sherry Anderson define the rise of the "cultural creatives" and their new set of values, they are describing the values already adopted by ecovillagers. When theologian Thomas Berry calls for a "new story of the universe," ecovillagers are already living it on the ground. When two years ago the city of Hiroshima adopted the vision of being a global "city of peace," they recognized that ecovillages epitomize the concrete manifestation of their strategic vision for the future.

The cohousing movement, and subsequently the ecovillage movement, which I believe are really just two variants of the same basic impulse, represent an idea whose time may have finally come. Cohousing communities and ecovillages have laid a firm foundation for the future that is ripe for broader recognition and support as the increasing disillusionment with the negative consequences of so-called "free markets" spreads. People are beginning to realize that we must move forward to a sustainable and just global society based, not on the needs of commercial entities and their allies, power-hungry politicians, but on the needs and desires of real people everywhere.

*Hildur Jackson is a lawyer, permaculture designer, and internationally known ecovillage activist. She and her husband Ross Jackson initiated the Danish National Network of Ecovillages (LOS) in 1993 and the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) in 1993–96, Hildur is editor, with Karen Svensso, of Ecovillage Living, Restoring the Earth and her People (2002,) and editor of Creating Harmony: Conflict Resolution in Community (1998). Hildur and Ross have been married 40 years and have three sons and five grandchildren.*



STEPHEN GOLD

# A “GREEN” ARCHITECT FALLS IN LOVE ... WITH FROGSONG COHOUSING

BY JOSEPH F. KENNEDY

**W**hen I first visited FrogSong Cohousing community in the town of Cotati in Sonoma County, California, I immediately felt at home; but it was a way of being “at home” that I had not experienced for a long time—if ever. I’m an architect who specializes in natural building techniques and village development, and FrogSong resident Elisa Graf had invited me to speak to community members about my work in natural building and ecological design. So I experienced FrogSong community with a village design perspective. My first impression was how comfortable Elisa’s and her husband Lars’ small but well designed townhouse seemed. As Elisa showed me through the house with her kids all around, I sensed the family intimacy, commitment to place, and a calm but lively atmosphere. This impression stayed with me in my further explorations of this village-like community.



*Frog Song parents created a children's play area in front of the common house.*

JOSEPH F. KENNEDY

I liked the site plan: 30 mostly two-story townhouses in two rows with pleasant patios facing into a common green between them, with several different well-defined outdoor areas. Designed by cohousing architects Chuck Durrett and Kathryn McCamant of The CoHousing Company, FrogSong's buildings have variegated facades with vibrant shades of yellow, red, and green. A convenient yet unobtrusive parking area with carports flanks the common house and a community workshop space.

During that first evening, I joined FrogSong members for a delicious, convivial meal in their spacious common house, which includes the community dining/living area, a children's playroom, two guest rooms, and an outdoor play area directly adjacent to it which is well used by the community kids.

As I wandered throughout the common house, I watched residents coming in and out to check their mail and do small errands, and kids running around on the common green. I

enjoyed meeting some of the pioneers of the community and hearing about everyday life and the joys and challenges of creating and living in a cohousing community.

During some moments alone walking around the property,

***Those who could engage in the long and often intense cohousing process are a special breed, skilled at compromise, persistence, and commitment to vision.***

I found myself studying various visible aspects of community culture, such as a small informal book library with current and interesting titles, the bulletin board posting work-share opportunities and events of interest to the community, and kids interacting in positive ways with their parents. Here was a civil, joyous community setting of utter normalcy. I found myself wishing that such community situations were typical.

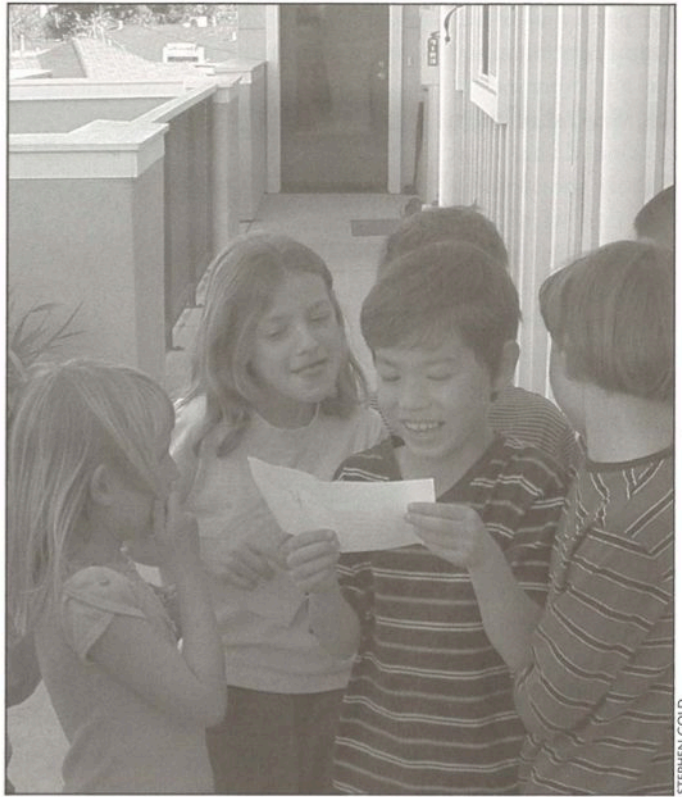
FrogSong is a stellar example of bottom-up planning, where sophisticated decision-making techniques, paired with commitment and hard work, result in a beautiful space that reflects the needs of all residents. The initial explorations for this project began in 1996 and, as is usual for many cohousing communities, is a story of meet-

ings, land searches, committees, members dropping out, and new ones coming in. As most residents told me, cohousing is a self-selecting process, and those who could engage in the long and often intense process are a special breed, skilled at compromise, persistence, and commitment to vision. The long search finally came to an end with the purchase of this property.

FrogSong is on the southern edge of the main village of Cotati, and, because it has retail shop space, provides a commercial anchor along Old Redwood Highway. The cohousing community was developed at the same time as several other noncohousing residential developments in the area, along with a senior residential complex.

The intelligent design of this community is due to the foresight and determination of the residents, ably assisted by the designer/developers at the CoHousing Company. FrogSong is home to activists, owners of small businesses, teachers, and staff at Sonoma State University, and others who commute to jobs throughout the Bay area. All decisions are made by consensus, which Elisa told me has really helped make the group cohesive and successful. FrogSong is very much a family oriented place, with kids ranging from newborns to 12-year-olds, and more on the way. Several single women at FrogSong have adopted children, which I was told they would never have done if not for the support of the larger community. The sense of community is palpable and I get the impression it's deeply appreciated by all who live here.

From my ecological design perspective, FrogSong residents made every effort to follow ecological principles, from efficient small houses



STEPHEN GOLD

***FrogSong has made its members' lives physically easier, more sustainable, and more socially rich.***

made of ecologically sound materials whenever possible, to shared walls between units for energy savings, and prewiring and preplumbing the houses for solar technologies in the future, when residents can afford solar hot water and off-grid power. The biggest barrier to using more ecological materials (such as sea grass for rugs) was the

litigation insurance required by building subcontractors to protect against the kinds of legal suits that have become common in residential housing projects, though not in cohousing specifically. (This subcontractor-initiated legal climate has made developing cohousing projects like FrogSong much more difficult and expensive than they might otherwise be.) FrogSong's grounds are landscaped according to permaculture principles, with rainwater funneled to swales that feed a local wetland. The landscape is still immature, and it will be a number of years before the growing trees provide enclosure and privacy in the common areas.

On my second visit to the community, I bumped into Elisa's son Sebastian, who proceeded to take me to his house through the rough-and-ready shortcut the kids had made across the property. It was great to get a kid's-eye view of the still somewhat undeveloped "village green." I later heard plans for a hot tub on the site and know that this area will be developed more as residents settle into a community that really has only been up and running for 18 months. I again was welcomed to dinner by Elisa, and joined by other FrogSong residents Heather and Patrick Picard and David Ergo, who answered my questions candidly and thoughtfully. Chatting



STEPHEN GOLD

over pasta and wine, I heard how FrogSong has made these community members' lives physically easier, more sustainable, and more socially rich. Several of them mentioned that most of their social needs were met within the community. Indeed some felt there was sometimes too much social contact, with lack of privacy a minor complaint. But what they emphasized was that at FrogSong no one is ever lonely and help is always at hand. Heather said it wasn't uncommon for her to go to the common laundry facility and find that some kind

anonymous soul had folded her laundry for her. Others gladly help to bring groceries upstairs. They all emphasized that this habitual helping quality was one of the special pleasures of living at FrogSong.

My hosts often spoke of how congenial the children have become as a group. I could sense their contentment as they described the secure and supportive environment they had been able to create for their children. FrogSong is indeed a paradise for kids, with safe places to run around and play, wild landscapes outside their back door, their own play spaces inside and out, and plenty of friends and trusted adults at all times. According to the parents, the only trouble is tracking them down from their various "homes" and having some family time together! They even mentioned how everyone's pets seem to be affected by the atmosphere at FrogSong. One resident observed that even with 20 cats on the property she hadn't seen any catfights. And the dogs didn't cause problems, they said, but instead formed an amiable pack that patrols the area, providing excellent security in this downtown location.

Our conversation turned to the challenges of integrating commercial retail shops into the cohousing project, which was

required by the City of Cotati, since the city plan called for business development there. After some resistance, FrogSong residents

decided to develop a block of commercial spaces to be controlled by the community itself. They didn't rent to franchises, however, but to owners of local businesses, and will apply all rental profits to further development of the community. Now the stores are a welcome addition: all the kids get their haircuts at the hairdresser's salon, and a small business copy shop is much appreciated by residents who work out of their homes. One of the office spaces is shared



Duane and Colleen preparing the evening meal at Frog Song.

**My hosts  
often spoke  
how congenial  
the children  
have become  
as a group.**

by several of the independently employed cohousing residents—quite a short commute! In my experience, the presence of a commercial aspect greatly enlivens the place, and provides a replicable model for similar cohousing developments.

From my perspective as an architect recently introduced to this successful and beautiful example of sane living through this project, the residents and developers of FrogSong have much to be proud of. While some local developer-driven cohousing projects are using a "build it and they will come" approach, this strategy will not, as Kathryn McCamant assured me, result in a project as stunning as FrogSong. I hope that other cohousing groups will be inspired by this community's success.



*Joseph F. Kennedy is a designer, builder, writer, artist, and educator who has been at the forefront of ecological design and construction internationally for the past 19 years. He teaches in the EcoDwelling concentration at New College of California, is cofounder of Builders without Borders, and founder of Village Renaissance. He is co-editor of The Art of Natural Building (New Society Publishers, 2002), editor of Building Without Borders: Sustainable Construction for the Global Village (New Society*

*Publishers, 2004), and author of The Village: The Renaissance of a Timeless Way of Living (New Society Publishers, 2006).*



MICHAEL MCINTYRE, SUNWARD COHOUSING

# Joining a Cohousing Community: Risks and Rewards

BY STEPHEN GOLD

**L**ike other forms of community living, cohousing offers many opportunities, such as friendship, a sense of purpose, security, emotional support, and a sense of belonging. However, as I and others have experienced, joining a cohousing community can be a long and difficult process.



MICHAEL MCINTYRE, SUNWARD COHOUSING

Your first challenge may be finding a cohousing community in an area where you want to live. While the number of cohousing projects in North America is growing steadily, most real estate agents have either never heard of cohousing or are unclear what it is. And desirable cohousing communities often have low turnover or fill vacancies without advertising them. Fortunately, the cohousing movement, and wider communities movement, can help here. Check out the website of the Cohousing Association of the U.S. ([www.cohousing.org/cmty/groups](http://www.cohousing.org/cmty/groups)), which lists existing and forming cohousing communities by geographic area. Not all cohousing groups are listed on the Coho/US website, so also ask friends and cohousers and put a request on the Cohousing-L listserv for leads: [lists.cohousing.org/mailman/listinfo/cohousing-l](mailto:lists.cohousing.org/mailman/listinfo/cohousing-l). Communities with units for sale or rent and forming cohousing projects often advertise in *Communities* magazine, or on the Fellowship for Intentional Community's Reachbook postboard ([www.ic.org](http://www.ic.org)), or in the e-newsletter of Coho/US (available on their website).

Before joining a community, you should know what you are getting into. Is the community already built? If not, how close is it to completion? What development model will the project follow? How will you fit in with the group? Can you afford it? What amenities does it offer and what is the social environment? How does the group make decisions?

To judge how close a project is to completion, you need to understand the usual stages in developing cohousing. The Coho/US website classifies communities as:

*Forming:* Households are developing common goals and learning to cooperate.

*Seeking Site:* The group is actively looking for property to build on or renovate.

*Site Optioned:* The group has the right to purchase a specific property in a specific amount of time.

*Own Site:* The group has bought property but hasn't started construction.

*Building:* The project is under construction and may be partially occupied.

*Completed:* All homes are built, but the group may still have unsold units or opportunities for shared housing.

Joining a cohousing group in its early stages is very different from joining a community that has been in residence for 10 years. If you think you would enjoy the thrill of creation, finding a bargain, or influencing some aspect of the physical design or community life, you might want to join a group in the early stages or start your own. The earlier you join a group, however, the more the risk and uncertainty you will face. Some groups go through the initial stages several times—finding property, losing property, finding new property, and gaining and losing many members before succeeding. On the bright side, rewards for committing early may include receiving discounts on your purchase price and priority in selecting your housing unit.

Cohousing projects can be classified in various ways. For instance, some are created by new construction on vacant land; others result from retrofitting existing buildings.

There are also many different site plans for cohousing communities. In the townhouse plan, two or more rows of townhouses face each other across a common green; however, many variations of this are possible. Retrofit projects can work with apartment buildings, townhouses, or single-family homes. There are also a lot of

development projects in which individual custom homes are built on separate lots.

If the cohousing project is not already built, the development model will affect your experience as well, since it determines your role as a group member prior to move-in. In the do-it-ourselves or Danish model, the group serves as its own developer and develops the property entirely by itself. In this model, the members provide the inspiration, design criteria, and marketing effort and take all the financial risk. (In plain language: you might lose lots of money.) Also, in this model, the housing units could all be built at once, or in stages as finances permit: 10 housing units now and 20 later.

## ***The easiest cohousing communities to find are the ones that are also looking for you.***



In the streamlined or developer-partner model, the group partners with an experienced developer who provides experience, credibility with lenders and planning officials, and working relationships with trusted architects and contractors. In this model, the group still provides the inspiration, design criteria, and marketing effort, but the developer assumes much of the financial risk. (Which means you could still lose money, but it's much less likely.)

In the developer-driven model, a developer conceives of and develops the property first and then seeks residents to buy in. This means there is little to no financial risk for people buying in, but some cohousing experts will say, there is less "community spirit" as well, at least at first. Then there is what one might call the hybrid developer-driven model, in which case a member of the group serves as the developer. Again, the financial risk for group members is low.

These different site plan and development models affect whether or not you can customize your home or housing unit. A developer will most likely curtail customization to keep the individual unit prices lower for everyone. If you want to build something unusual (such as a dome house, a straw bale house, or an off-grid home) you may need to join a group in which this is norm or else join a lot-development project.

The kind of site plan and development model also affects the project timeline. In general, the more group input, the longer the project will take. So, the do-it-ourselves Danish model takes the longest, and the developer-driven model is the quickest. These characteristics can also affect how soon you get a common house. While cohousing experts suggest building it at the same time as individual housing units, if a project will be completed in multiple phases, chances are the majority of the homes will be occupied before the common house is built. In a retrofit or lot development model, the lag between the time the first person moves in and the time the common house is built may stretch into many years. With a strong developer, however, this is less of a concern. If a common house is important to you, keep this in mind.

The easiest cohousing communities to find are the ones that are also looking for *you*. Active cohousing groups in the early stages and projects in which construction has started tend to be eager to recruit members. The former recruit to raise

capital for the site-search and site-purchase processes; the latter, to fill vacant units to pay construction costs. Such groups often advertise publicly for new residents. Joining a cohousing community which is already up and running can be more challenging because they just want to live their lives, and have less motivation to publicize themselves. There may be no one to volunteer to handle inquiries and give curious visitors a tour. However, whether you look to rent or own in a cohousing community, stay in close contact with those which interest you, even if

they have no units available right now. Vacancies in established communities may be advertised, but they often fill quickly through word of mouth. Also, many existing cohousing communities have many people on their waiting list. Getting onto a waiting list gives you the inside track when turnover occurs.

As in joining any intentional community, you are not just buying a place to live, but entering a whole community culture. These are people with whom you and your family are going to party, garden, sing, play, and share meals. Talk to the individual members. Do their views on diet, politics, religion, child-rearing, and environmental issues resonate with you? Do some

share your major interests? Do some rub you the wrong way? Not everyone will be your best friend, but you will interact and share decisions with these people, so you should know them well before committing yourself.

Learn as much as possible about how the group works. Attend social events where newcomers are welcome: potlucks, parties, retreats, site visits, and so on. Ask lots of questions. If possible, observe a business meeting and watch how the group makes decisions and resolves conflicts. Are meetings well-organized and pleasant? How long are their meetings? How frequent?

Look at the age-mix. Are there families, singles, and retirees? Will your children find compatible playmates? Cohousing projects targeting young families are likely to emphasize play areas and provide childcare during business meetings. Those targeting retirees

are more likely to stress accessibility in their design.

In an already existing cohousing community, pay special attention to the common facilities. How are they maintained? Is the dining room noisy during meals? Is the common house vacant on weekends and evenings? Is it quiet at night? Is it abandoned during the day when people are working? How often do spontaneous activities happen in the community?



MICHAEL MCINTYRE, SUNWARD COHOUSING

***You are not just buying a place to live, but entering a whole community culture.***

When my wife and I got seriously interested in cohousing, we visited a dozen groups and stayed overnight in several communities. If a community has guest rooms, you may be able to stay in them. You may even be able to rent a unit or a room for a few days, weeks, or months and see how you like it. The longer you stay, the more realistic your impressions of that community will be.

Some groups have multiple levels of membership: full members of the group, who commit time in meetings and monthly dues or periodic financial contributions, and associate members, who may be considering the group and who stay connected by email but have neither commitment. At one point, my wife and I were associate members of three different groups. However, if you decide to participate fully in design or decision making, expect to make a larger commitment in terms of time and money.

Look for a mentor, a member who takes an interest in you and can answer questions. Ideally this is someone who seems to know what is going on, speaks up at meetings, has been around a long time, and with whom you feel comfortable talking or exchanging emails.

Before joining, get clear on the financial commitment—how much will it cost to buy the sort of housing unit you're interested in? Is this just an estimate, and if so, when will the price be "fixed"—guaranteed? Do you prequalify for a mortgage? When do you need to pay the down payment? Are there monthly or annual dues, and if so, what is their purpose?

For most homeowners, their residence is the largest investment they ever make. If you know you want to buy rather than rent,

get prequalified for a home loan when you join the cohousing group, even if move-in is years away. Knowing what a bank will lend you can help you decide whether to stick with the group through a major price increase, or bail out.

Joining an incomplete construction project is riskier than buying a completed home, since you are unsure whether the project will succeed. Joining a project that has not yet optioned land is riskier still. Joining a cohousing project is like lending money to a family member—don't invest funds that you can't afford to lose! Later on, once the project is fully certified for occupancy, the financial risks of cohousing resemble those of conventional housing.

Financial commitments tend to increase as a group matures. "Cash calls," delays, and price increases are normal aspects of the new housing development process. Learn as much as you can about how your cohousing project will be financed. Ask about worst-case scenarios, but don't dwell overmuch on them.

If you are not ready to buy, try renting a unit in a completed community. Since many people interested in cohousing are in this situation, competition for long-term rentals can be even stiffer than for salable units. Networking through personal contacts is probably your best chance of finding a cohousing rental.

When comparing communities, consider the location and the amenities provided (or promised), just as you would when shopping for a conventional home. Check out the neighborhood. Is it noisy? Do you feel safe? Are there good schools in the area? How far is it to the grocery store? Make sure your criteria are realistic. For instance, many Americans dream of living in a

***Look for a mentor, a member  
who takes an interest in you  
and can answer questions.***



MICHAEL MCINTYRE, SUNNWARD COHOUSING

Live  
and  
Work  
in a  
*Co-Creative  
Community.*

We are growing . . .  
Exciting changes are  
underway!

Positions Available at  
Hummingbird Community

In the Community Office:

- Part Time Office Assistant
- Part Time Marketing Manager

In Private Businesses:

- Full Time Office Assistant
- Part Time Full Charge Bookkeeper
- Full Time Loan and Real Estate Documents Assistant

Contact Sara for  
more information.  
sara@globalfamily.net  
505-387-6440.

Beautiful lush Hummingbird Ranch, a  
co-creative community, is nestled at the  
foot of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains  
in northern New Mexico.

Visit our website:  
[www.HummingbirdLivingSchool.org](http://www.HummingbirdLivingSchool.org)



Hummingbird Ranch  
and  
Global Family

## Temporary Ceremonial P.E.A.C.E. Villages

*Another report from the nomadic ("no mad" living) Rainbow Caravan of Peace, a traveling ecovillage which uses art and theater to teach permaculture design and other sustainable living skills through Latin America.*

April 12, 2005: Los Andes, Chile. Back in the late seventies when I lived in California with a nomadic tribe, The Illuminated Elephants, we attended several Rainbow Gatherings. In a Rainbow Gathering held in Oregon, I met one of the most picturesque of its founding fathers, Barry E. Adams, or "Plunker." Plunker had long hair, wore sunglasses, and was always dressed in ragged leather pants, a colorful fringed waistcoat, and a cowboy hat and cowboy boots. A self-appointed "Rainbow lawyer," Plunker defended in courts the Rainbow Tribe's right to assemble free in Natural Parks, based in the rights granted to all American citizens by the U.S. Constitution. Author of the 1988 book *Where Have All the Flower Children Gone?*, he was one of the most eloquent "hipstory" storytellers around the campfires, and hoped to make the definitive film about the sixties. I loved hanging out with him and listening to his tales.

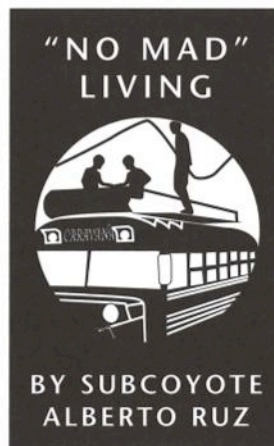
It was Plunker who first introduced me to the concept of P.E.A.C.E. Villages (Positive Energy Alternative Community Environment), model demonstration sites for living on The Mother. Plunker wanted a P.E.A.C.E. Village to arise from every site where a Rainbow Gathering took place or would take place in the future. His vision was

that each Gathering, a sort of Temporary P.E.A.C.E. Village, could evolve into permanent ongoing communities. He spoke about how "even one P.E.A.C.E. Village would act as a catalyst and an inspiration for people everywhere, and the opening of a door to the Communities of the Future."

In the late eighties, I started participating in the North American Bioregional Congresses, first in Canada, then in the States. Some of us brought the concept of bioregionalism to Mexico and began hosting Vision Council gatherings. One of the visions that appealed to me the most was the one that Gene W. Marshall offered, describing our bioregional gatherings as "Temporary Ceremonial Villages." As a former Catholic priest, editor of *Realistic Living* newsletter in

Texas, and pillar of the Bioregional Movement, Gene is about as far as you can get from an old hippy like Plunker, yet their visions are so similar. On many occasions we had long conversations about Ceremonial Villages, and a few years ago he wrote "An Organizing Manual for the Village Life," a detailed description of how to manage events based on his long experience participating and organizing such proceedings.

In 1982 our traveling tribe of rainbow gypsies decided to ground ourselves. We chose a piece of land to set a permanent settlement in the mountains of the state of Morelos, Mexico, and founded the intentional community of Huehucoyotl. A few years later, in the mid eighties, I began calling our community an "ecovillage," a term that came



*Mexican community activist Alberto Ruz Buenfil founded Hathi Babas and Illuminated Elephants, an international traveling theater community in the 1970s; cofounded Huehucoyotl Ecovillage in Mexico; and has coordinated La Caravana Arcoiris por la Paz since 1996.*



rural setting, but balk at driving long distances to shopping, school, and jobs.

Cohousing in cities and suburbs tends to be dense—many units in a small area. Check out how the land is (or will be) used. Are you comfortable with the amount of open space? Are you willing to share common walls with your neighbors, or do you prefer a detached residence? Do you need an enclosed yard for pets or children? Do you need a garage or carport, and if so must it be near your unit?

Be warned, planned amenities may fail to materialize! The swimming pool or common workshop you desire may be cut to keep prices affordable. Do you need a particularly large or inexpensive unit? In the early stages of design and construction, the size of the common house or the individual units, the number of units and therefore the ultimate size of the community may be uncertain because of the changing cost of home financing or construction costs. You may not know final home prices or homeowner dues until construction starts, and in some cases, not until the very end of construction.

For some questions, you may be told, “the group will decide.” If you care strongly about, say, having a garden, you can join the community and push for a garden, but you can’t be sure of success. Other members may see the issue differently, or your wish may prove impractical, due to financial constraints, local ordinances, safety/liability concerns, neighbor objections, or other reasons.

Your criteria may change once you are involved. Keep in mind why you want to live in community; it may be worth giving up some material conveniences to enjoy the intangible benefits of community life.

Intentional communities create their own policies and decision-making processes. Each community develops its own unique flavor, though decision making by consensus rather than voting is most common. If you don’t understand how decisions get made, ask an active member to explain. If the group uses consensus, ideally you will be able to take a group-sponsored workshop in how to use this decision-making process.

Find out what policies the group already has in place regarding participation, meals, use and modification of common areas, children, visitors, pets, and conflict resolution, so you won’t be surprised later. Policies can evolve dramatically between formation and move-in, and communities continue making adjustments afterward. Don’t assume policies and decision-making procedures will always remain fixed or work out as you or others originally envisioned. Get involved and do your part to help steer the community!

Before campaigning for a new feature or policy, note that groups put enormous effort into making decisions. As a result, changing already established decisions is difficult, especially if you are perceived as a latecomer. Wise groups avoid making major concessions to any one household.

My final advice is to learn as much as you can about cohousing, consensus, and the communities movement. Read books and magazines and visit websites. Contact community members by email and phone. Visit communities in your area and in your travels. Educating yourself about group living will clarify your desires and make you more valuable as a community member wherever you live.

*Stephen Gold is a property manager, writer, and father. He lives in Frog-Song Cohousing in Cotati, California. His website is [sonic.net/~sgold](http://sonic.net/~sgold).*

***Learn as much as you can  
about cohousing,  
consensus, and the  
communities movement.***

to me at the time, inspired by the eco-fiction books of Ernest Callenbach, *Ecotopia* and *Ecotopia Emerging*. Huehucoyotl, now 23 years old, is one of the few recognized Ceremonial P.E.A.C.E. Villages in Latin America. One of its founding members, Giovanni Ciarlo, is the main focalizer for the Mesoamerican bioregion of the Ecovillage Network of the Americas (ENA).

I spent the next 14 years devoted to creating, sustaining, and promoting both Huehucoyotl and the larger movement which emerged from it, called Earth Keepers, a loose network of alternative organizations and eco-communities that was later named the Consejo de Visiones (Vision Council) and that linked arms with the Bioregional Congress and the Global Ecovillage Network. From 1990

to 1996, we held six Vision Councils in Mexico, introducing this concept that had emerged in Rainbow Gatherings and the Bioregional Movement, as well as from indigenous people's powwows. We saw it as an idea that could appeal equally to young people, traditional elders, Greens, healers, new age folk, social activists, artists, punks, and families with children. Our events grew every year, and began attracting people from different networks and other continents.

Then, at a Rainbow Tribal Council held in New Mexico in 1995, I decided that it was time to get my own old wheels on the road again, and I committed in front of the Families Circle to create an international mobile ceremonial ecovillage, *La Caravana Arcoiris por la Paz* (the Rainbow Caravan of Peace) to travel across borders all the way from Mexico to Tierra del Fuego. (See article, *Summer '04 issue*.)

La Caravana's last big event in Mexico was participating in the First Bioregional Gathering of the Americas, which took place in Mezquida, near Huehucoyotl, in November 1996. Since then, the Caravana has traveled in 14 different Latin American countries, and we are just about to enter Argentina, and will in fact soon reach Tierra del Fuego

in Patagonia. Among the many activities that we have brought with us in this long journey across the Americas, we feel really good to have been able to organize several successful events that we have called *Aldeas de Paz*, which are essentially P.E.A.C.E. Villages, or even Temporary Ceremonial P.E.A.C.E. Villages. These consist basically of a week-long ecological camp to which we invite a large spectrum of local or national organizations,

***Plunker was always dressed in ragged leather pants, a colorful fringed waistcoat, and a cowboy hat and cowboy boots.***

ethnic groups, artists, and people involved in the different alternative scenes. Our job is only to set the space for them all to meet and interact. These P.E.A.C.E. Villages offer participants time to get to know each other, to learn that they have more things to share than they ever thought, to solidify alliances and to create bioregional networks.

They share information, experiences, and realize they are all part of a same planetary shift of consciousness. They have a good time, and recharge their batteries with energy to continue the job in their own backyards.

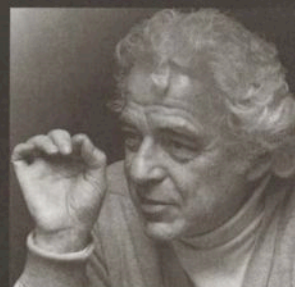
In the last eight years, we have organized and hosted six Temporary Ceremonial P.E.A.C.E. Villages. In 1997 in Venezuela, we ran one at a small Pemon indigenous community in the Gran Sabana. In 1999 in Colombia, we were near Medellin at a farm called Titiribi. In 2002 in Ecuador, it was a P.E.A.C.E. Village for Women, leaders of communities and networks of the mountains, jungle, coasts and cities. In 2003, we helped organize the large international "Call of the Condor" ecovillage and bioregional gathering near Machu Picchu in Peru. In 2004, we were at Apu Wechuraba in the heart of Santiago, Chile. Finally, in March 2005, it was in Chile at a Botanic National Park in Viña del Mar.

Some of those events brought together a couple of hundred people, but some, like the Call of the Condor, drew more than 700 people from 34 countries and many indigenous elders, farmers, women, children, and artisans from the Andes as well. Call of the Condor offered ceremonies

## THE ART OF CO-OPERATION



**In his latest book, British author Benjamin Creme explains the necessity for co-operation in creating a new civilization fully expressive of the divine brotherhood of man, and discusses how to resolve intra-group difficulties.**



*Benjamin Creme*

Available through online vendors and local bookstores. To preview this and Mr. Creme's nine other books, visit:  
[Share-International.org/books](http://Share-International.org/books)  
**888-242-8272**



## Trillium Hollow Cohousing

Discover why Portland is ranked top 10 cities for livability and how you can build community at Trillium Hollow.

- 3.6 acres in a lush forested wildlife setting with a creek and evergreen firs
- Available units: 1, 2, 3, and 4 bedrooms
- Community garden, hot tub, 24/7 Internet, and 3,600 sq ft Common House with guest rooms and kids' play rooms
- Close to light rail and 15 minutes to downtown Portland

[www.trillium-hollow.org](http://www.trillium-hollow.org) or 503.297.1696

starting at dawn and until midnight, a variety of workshops and high-level teachings, rich artistic and multicultural activities, many councils, and the commitment, joy, and bonds created among participants that go beyond egos or ethnic, social, cultural, age, ideological, or spiritual differences. It went beyond all our expectations.

An important offspring of this vision is a loose network of people and organizations in Brazil, the "Om Ganesh" tribe, who have a large bus bought together and who have participated over the past few months in traveling to and setting up temporary Ceremonial P.E.A.C.E. Villages in the Brazilian cities of Curitiba, Brasilia, and the Social Forum of Porto Allegro, in January 2005. They are cohousing with our La Caravana Arcoiris, the coming "Beija Flor Bioregional Vision Council," an international Temporary Ceremonial P.E.A.C.E. Village that will take place September 17-29 near Alto Paraiso, in the heart of Brazil.

## *In 1982 our traveling tribe of rainbow gypsies decided to ground ourselves.*

As I write this, La Caravana is camping at the foot of Aconcagua, the highest mountain peak in the Andes, getting ready to cross the mountainous border and expecting any moment the arrival of our first baby, made and born on the road, parented by Jessica and Manuel. Our temporary base, as every place we stop, has become a small P.E.A.C.E. Village, which as soon as we park the buses, set the tipi, and light the fire, will attract local people looking for new options for their lives. Our mission is to offer them as much as we can, because we know that this project depends mostly on faith, friends, and the help of the common people we meet every day. Our mission is to continue planting seeds of hope, and seeds of change wherever we go, transforming, and being transformed by every situation we encounter on the road. And we thus thank every day the Great Mystery for this lifetime and for the opportunity and the challenges that come along with this No Mad living. Ω



## HOME FOR SALE

### Liberty Village Cohousing Community

Libertytown, Maryland

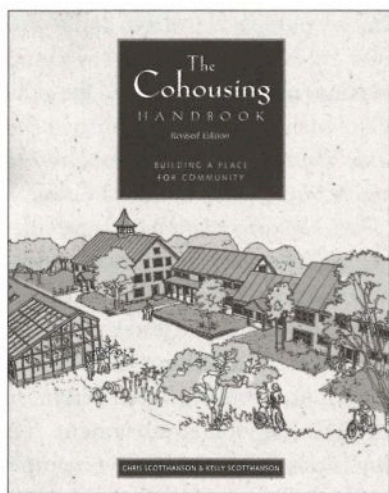
2 Bedroom, 2 Baths w/showers, Front porch, Screened Porch & Deck, Eat-in Kitchen, Full unfinished basement (9' ceiling), Central Air & Ground Source Heating. Unit conducive to inlaw or housemate quarters (2nd floor has separate entrance).

Be sure to inquire & be fully informed about intentional community living.

For more information contact:  
CL Porter, Broker/Owner  
Re/Max Colonial Homes, Inc.  
301.753.4422 ext. 211



# REVIEWS



## *The Cohousing Handbook: Building a Place for Community, Revised Edition*

By Chris ScottHanson and Kelly ScottHanson

New Society Publishers, 2005  
Pb. 290 pp., US\$26.95; CAN\$35.95

Reviewed by Diana Leafé Christian

Because I wrote a how-to book on starting new ecovillages and intentional communities (*Creating a Life Together*, New Society Publishers, 2003), I'm extremely interested in other books on the subject. I just finished *The Cohousing Handbook, Revised Edition* by Chris ScottHanson, a cohousing developer who's worked on more than 35 cohousing projects in the U.S. and Canada, and Kelly ScottHanson, who teaches cohousers how to prepare for the land acquisition and development processes. I can only say, if you're about to start your own community, get this book!

Two of its best and most informative chapters are "The Development Process"

and "Working with Professionals." Chris and Kelly really know how to demystify these roles. Developers, they say, are characterized by vision, intuition, and ready cash. When working with an architect, get one who's done cohousing projects before, respects your budget, and understands the construction process.

But *The Cohousing Handbook* is valuable for noncohousers as well, folks who'll not necessarily ever use a developer or architect. The chapter on the land-search process alone is worth the price of the book, offering some of the best advice I've seen on how to methodically and practically locate your ideal community property (complementary to, yet more thorough than, my own chapter on this subject). Ditto the chapter on design considerations, on how to make the buildings enhance the social aspects of community (and remain affordable), and on environment, which shows how the site plan can do the same. In my opinion, how a new community is designed, has *everything* to do with how well it will succeed, socially and culturally, as Chris and Kelly make clear.

I also liked all the nuggets of practical advice: Don't let associate members who haven't invested money have any

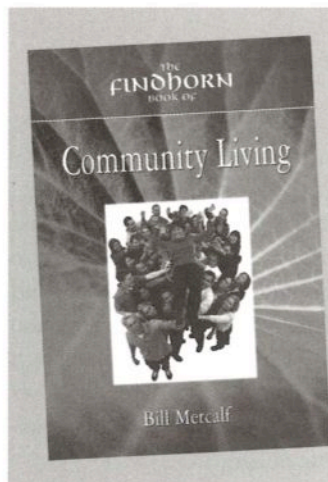
decision-making power; reserve decision making for those who've put cash in; don't get outside investors who expect to tell you what you should do; the best land values are properties not already on the market; the best way to get potential neighbors to understand and support your project is to seek their help and input in the early stages of planning.

I liked the charts showing typical committee structures during the planning/building and living-in-community phases; the glossary of terms used in development and financing; the demystification of budgets and pro-forma estimates (with samples); and the hugely useful, detailed chapters on marketing to potential new group members and on how to schedule the project and make things happen.

As much as I like and recommend this book, however, in my opinion the legal chapter wasn't as helpful as the others and contains errors of fact. For example, the

authors advise against partnerships and 501(c)(3) nonprofits for owning land, but don't say why (no liability protection in the former; no recovering property purchase and development capital if the community disbands in the latter). They also lump together corporations and Limited Liability Companies (LLCs), and make statements which

**Don't let associate members who haven't invested money have any decision making power; reserve decision making for those who've put cash in.**



## THE FINDHORN BOOK OF COMMUNITY LIVING

From regular *COMMUNITIES MAGAZINE* contributor Bill Metcalf, a small but comprehensive, easy-to-read guide to contemporary community living, with all the joys and challenges—and lots of examples from round the world.

128 pages paperback • \$9.95

ISBN 1-84409-032-9

available from your local bookstore

or call tollfree 1-800-856-8664

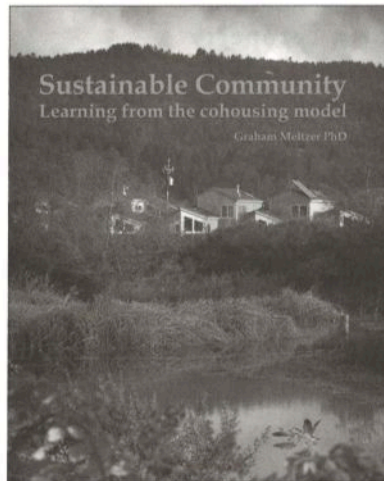
or order online from [www.steinerbooks.org](http://www.steinerbooks.org)

apply solely to corporations but are erroneous for LLCs. Case in point: LLC members do not purchase shares of stock; “shares” and decision making are not necessarily proportional to the amount of an individual member’s investment (LLC members are free to arrange these matters any way they like); and an LLC does not have to elect a president annually. Moreover, no mention at all was made of Homeowners Associations, one of the most common legal entities cohousers in the U.S. use to co-own shared common areas after move-in. These errors and omissions bothered me, but they don’t outweigh the book’s value to community founders otherwise.

I also take issue with some of the (sigh) typical cohousers’ misconceptions about noncohousing in the Introduction. While the authors do see cohousing communities as part of the intentional communities movement, they say noncohousing communities often emphasize community at the expense of privacy. I’d correct that “often” to “sometimes,” as in the case of ashrams with a guru, or high-demand Christian groups with

a leader. But these must be less than two percent of the whole communities movement! The authors also say that cohousing allows people to make a major step towards community without giving up privacy or control over their lives. Arrrggggh! I wish (she says, huffily) cohousers would learn more about noncohousing communities before making misleading statements like this in print. How many noncohousing communities do *you* know of in which people have little control over their lives?! I know hardly any at all. (OK, off the soapbox now.)

All nit-picking and venting aside, however, this is a wonderful how-to resource for cohousing and noncohousing community founders alike.



### ***Sustainable Community: Learning From the Cohousing Model***

By Graham Meltzer, Ph.D.

Trafford, 2005; Victoria, Canada.

Pb. 179 pp., US\$22.50

*Reviewed by Bill Metcalf*

Cohousing and ecovillages are the fastest growing forms of intentional community around the world today. Most ecovillages are in rural areas while most cohousing is found in urban and suburban areas. These two forms of community are quite different and appeal to different sorts of people—while also sharing many features such as a concern with environmental sustainability, closer interpersonal relationships, and personal-scale, aesthetic design.

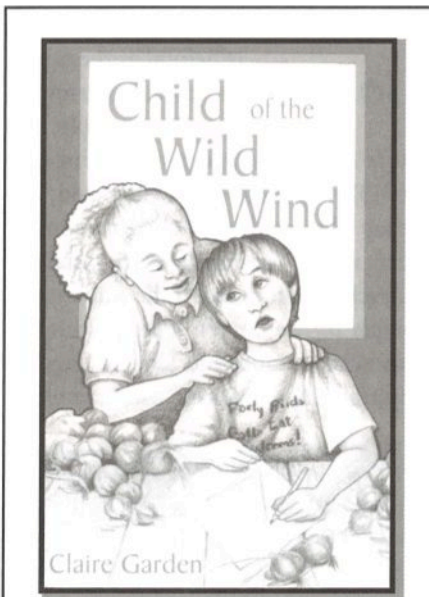
While several widely known books have been published recently about ecovillages and the general intentional communities movement, few have been specifically about cohousing. The only widely known cohousing book has been Katie McCamant and Chuck Durrett’s *Cohousing: A Contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves*, first published in 1988, revised and expanded in 1994, and reprinted in 2005. This, along with Chris and Kelly Scott-Hanson’s *The Cohousing Handbook*, published in 1996 and revised in 2005 (see above) have served as a guide to thousands of cohousers around the globe. Graham Meltzer’s newly published *Sustainable Community: Learning From the Cohousing Model*, picks up where *Cohousing* and *The Cohousing Handbook* leave off.

*Sustainable Community* is an excellent book, clearly written, beautifully illustrated, and user friendly, whether the reader is a would-be cohouser, an architect or sociology student, or just someone interested in this rapidly growing social movement. The writing is clear and concise, the examples well presented, and the logic transparent. Perhaps best of all, this is the first truly international examination of cohousing.

Central to Graham Meltzer’s book is the issue of sustainability in both the environmental and sociocultural senses. He approaches this in two different but complementary ways: firstly as an architect and scholar with an international reputation in intentional community studies; and secondly as a participant for much of his personal life in real intentional communities ranging from hippie communes to Israeli kibbutzim to several cohousing communities.

He opens with a clear and concise coverage of the history of contemporary cohousing from its hybrid derivation from the *bofelleskaber* model in Denmark, the *central women* model of the Netherlands, and the *kollektivhuser* model of Sweden. He gives a quick tour of the spread of cohousing across Europe, North America, Australasia, and Eastern Asia and even looks at the potential in Africa. He then introduces the concept of sustainability, which is the theme that ties together the rest of this work.

Next are 12 case studies: *Quayside Village* and *WindSong Cohousing*, Canada; *Songaia*, *Puget Ridge*, *Marsh Commons*, *N*



“I don’t remember ever reading a book about a community that actually felt like one. Until Claire Garden’s short novel, *Child of the Wild Wind*.”

Diana Leafe Christian  
*Communities*, Fall ‘04

\$13.95 from store.ic.org  
<http://home.centurytel.net/proste/garden>



Street, Berkeley, and Swan's Market Cohousing, USA; *Earthsong Eco-Neighbourhood*, New Zealand; *Cohousing Cooperative*, and *Cascade Cohousing*, Australia; and *Kyōdō no mori Cohousing*, Japan. Each cohousing example includes several excellent photographs and simple site plans. Participants' comments are liberally included to help us gain a sense of the social life of each community.

This is followed by analytical chapters: "Circumstance: Physical Setting and Managed Systems"; "Interaction: Interpersonal Influence and Exchange"; "Relationship: Close Sharing and Social Support"; "Engagement: From Belonging to Efficacy"; "Empowerment: Lessons from the Cohousing Model"; and finally "Sustainable Community: Applying the Lessons."

So, what does Meltzer conclude about international cohousing? As with most intentional communities, he found that cohousing residents are, in general, highly educated and middle-class, but with a broad income range. Members also have a broad age range, although 20–30 year-olds are underrepresented. Most members work, often part time, within social service professions with education and health and welfare predominating. Observing that many members say they want more cultural and ethnic diversity, Meltzer wisely suggests, "perhaps cohousing communities should be seeking a balance of diversity and commonality rather than attempting to maximise diversity for the sake of it" (p. 133).

Meltzer finds that cohousing does result in a lower per-capita use of resources and energy, and living in cohousing appears to increase life satisfaction. While arguing that common meals are important to communal identity, he finds that some cohousing members rarely choose to eat together. While cohousing is often assumed to be a form of "affordable" housing, the data shows that this is not always the reality. As with most intentional communities, Meltzer finds problems to be common in areas of

interpersonal relations, power-sharing, decision making, etc. He also observes, however, that the effort generally expended on conflict resolution is usually successful.

On the architectural design front, Meltzer offers some useful observations for forming cohousing communities, such as "a ratio of

common to private space somewhere between 0.13 and 0.17 is optimal" (p. 140).

In the final two chapters, Meltzer broadens the discussion. He uses his findings about cohousing to describe a community empowerment process that enables members to become environmentally aware and responsible. Furthermore, he argues,

*Cohousing is acceptable to mainstream society and seen not to threaten traditional family or liberal values. For this reason the influence of cohousing will ultimately not be limited to that of the communities that get built. It has the potential to inform future human settlement way beyond the fuzzy edges of the cohousing movement itself.* (p. 158)

Meltzer concludes by speculating on the form of a future, sustainable society.

I highly recommend this low-priced and well-illustrated book to every *Communities* reader interested in cohousing.

**DESIGN FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY  
where Permaculture meets Social Ecology**

Sep 20-25, 2005  
Sahale, Olympic Peninsula, WA

Robina McCurdy (NZ)  
Huckleberry Leonard (WA, USA)

Wholistic approach to sustainable community design. Balancing cultural, social, economic design with environmental/physical design, to give participants sufficient knowledge & skills to facilitate community building & comprehensive designs for urban neighbourhoods, cohousing, rural communities, & ecovillages.

[www.greenworld-earthcare.org](http://www.greenworld-earthcare.org)

Sunrise Credit Union

## Integrity in Money Matters!

One of the things that distinguishes Sunrise Credit Union from other financial institutions is our mission. Integrity in money matters is why we're here! At the core of our work is the desire to provide a demonstration of responsible and compassionate handling of money and the relationships that go with that.

Sunrise Credit Union is community-based and member-owned.

### We offer:

- Online Banking
- Free Checking
- Low Fees
- Visa Card & Debit Card
- Savings, CDs, IRAs, and Money Market
- Loans—Personal and Project
- Excellent Rates
- Federally Insured

Find out more!  
[scu@ic.org](http://scu@ic.org)  
[www.sunrisecreditunion.org](http://www.sunrisecreditunion.org)  
888-871-3482 or 970-679-4311



# THE LAST STRAW

The International Journal  
of Straw Bale and  
Natural Building



"Excellent newsletter,  
both technical and entertaining.  
Essential for any  
straw-bale enthusiast."  
—*Environmental Building News*

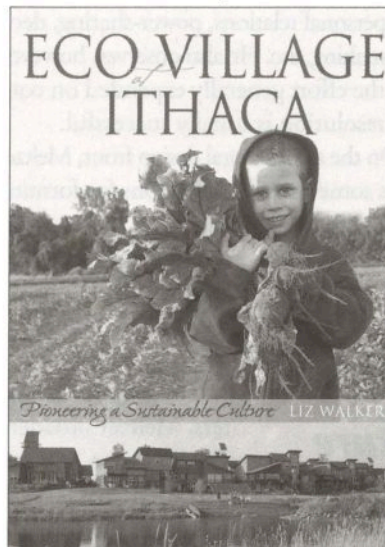


- Technical Details
- Practical Tips
- Testing & Standards
- Resource Guide
- Workshops/Training
- Owner/Builder Insights
- Worldwide Updates
- Project Profiles

## Timely and Timeless

1-year subscription \$28 (\$33US Canada)  
Online Electronic Copy (check the website)

**The Last Straw Journal**  
PO Box 22706  
Lincoln NE 68542-2706  
402.483.5135 / fax 402.483.5161  
<[thelaststraw@thelaststraw.org](mailto:thelaststraw@thelaststraw.org)>  
[www.thelaststraw.org](http://www.thelaststraw.org)



## *Eco Village at Ithaca: Pioneering a Sustainable Culture*

By Liz Walker

New Society Publishers, 2005.

Pb. 256 pp., US\$17.95; CAN\$24.95

Reviewed by Diana Leafé Christian

Here's another book to inform and inspire anyone starting a new cohousing neighborhood, ecovillage, or *any* kind of intentional community. EcoVillage at Ithaca (EVI) is an ecovillage comprised (so far) of two adjacent cohousing communities, and maybe a third someday. Liz Walker, who cofounded EVI with eco-visionary Joan, offers a realistic and heartfelt how-we-did-it story. As noted above in my review of *The Cohousing Handbook*, I recently wrote a book on how to form successful new ecovillages and intentional communities. I wish I could have included this story in it!

Three things stood out for me. First, it's an engaging narrative of how a group of people struggled, learned, and succeeded together to create one of the first cohousing communities—and ecovillages—in North America. Second, it offers down-to-earth, truly useful how-to information for people who want to form their own new community. And third, it's a heartfelt account of the author's own personal journey as a community founder and leader. Founding a community, and living in one, *is* personal, and Liz's narrative shows us what it can be like from the inside: demanding, sometimes excruciating,

and ultimately rewarding. We see why and how community founders need to draw on reserves of creative problem-solving; persistence and patience, good communication skills; good financial planning skills, the ability to inspire, educate, and lead others; and willingness to sometimes just stop everything, admit you don't know what to do next, and humbly seek spiritual inspiration. This tale more than confirms cohousing activist Zev Paiss's oft-quoted adage: "Cohousing—the longest, most expensive personal growth workshop you will ever take!"

I like how the book alternates different kinds of chapters, from the purely narrative, including what was happening in Liz's life at the time, to more objective descriptions of various aspects of the EVI project (its 10-acre Community Supported Agriculture Farm, its role in the international ecovillage movement, its local college-credit educational programs), to typical warm 'n fuzzy scenes of cohousing life. It starts off with how Liz and Joan got inspired in 1990 walking with a group of environmental activists from Los Angeles to New York, and how they and other inspired activists gathered in 1991 for celebrations and workshops to envision what an ecologically oriented community might look like in the hip college town of Ithaca. It also includes how a nonprofit educational organization was formed and employed Liz as project manager; how in 1992 the 176-acre property was found, financed, and, years later, finally paid off; how the first and second cohousing neighborhoods were created; and EVI's inspiring and ambitious plans for future ecovillage activism and educational projects.

I was especially impressed by the chapter on how the group bought land and paid off their debts. I've always seen EVI as a premier example of a successful, innovative community, but had no idea the group struggled so long and so hard just to even get the first neighborhood built and pay off property, development, and construction loans. They stumbled around and made lots of what seem like painful and unnecessary mistakes. But they were *pioneering* cohousing and ecovillages (hence the book's subtitle) in the early 1990s, when the first cohousing communities in the U.S. were just getting started. The "streamlined" developer-partner model wasn't available yet: this was back in the days when cohousers managed the whole

enchilada themselves, regardless of whether they had any previous experience in real estate financing, land development, or construction management. The two things I most admired about this process were how Liz and the group learned and adapted over time, and how Liz continued to find new, innovative solutions and seemingly help manifest financial miracles out of thin air.

I was also especially moved by the chapter on how huge conflicts arose and how the group eventually learned to handle them. One involved three families who offered many gifts to the community, but soon became unhappy with EVI and its consensus decision making. These folks were almost completely ignorant of process and communication skills, and unwilling to learn them or work through difficulties with other community members. Worse, they primarily targeted Liz, as the highly visible leader,

***These folks were almost completely ignorant of process and communication skills, and unwilling to learn them.***

for their distrust and hostility. While the group learned various conflict resolution and "good meeting behavior" skills over time, it seemed to have no effect on these three families. Finally, after two years, all three decided they didn't enjoy living at EVI and moved out. This experience changed how the community orients new members. "We now emphasize how important it is to be flexible and willing to work through differences," Liz notes. "In my view, cohousing simply will not work for people who are not dedicated to these principles."

I highly recommend this readable, engaging account for anyone starting—or living in—an intentional community.

*Diana Leaf Christian is editor of Communities magazine and author of Creating a Life Together: Practical Tools to Grow Ecovillages and Intentional Communities.*

## Wordsworth Typing and Editing Services

As an egalitarian business, we value the time of all our partners equally. The rate for all our services is \$28 per hour.

We specialize in:

Typing & transcribing  
Editing & proofreading  
Graphic design & layout



Wordsworth is a business of Meadowdance Community Group. Meadowdance is an egalitarian, child-centered community that welcomes human diversity, ecological sensibility, mutual learning and joy.

We began our dance with the turning of the new millenium and keep learning new steps as we grow.

Please visit our website: [www.wordsworthcoop.com](http://www.wordsworthcoop.com)  
or contact us at [wordsworth@wordsworthcoop.com](mailto:wordsworth@wordsworthcoop.com)

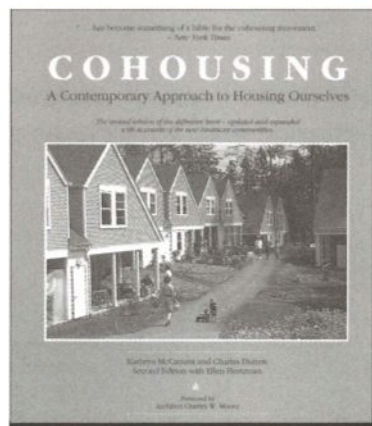
Wordsworth Typing and Editing Services (802) 563-2105 fax  
2078 Vermont Route 15 (866) 761-9362 toll-free  
Walden, VT 05873 (802) 563-2105 outside the US

## CoHousing

Read the book that started it all!

### *A Contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves*

*By Kathryn McCamant and Charles Durrett*



The definitive source with accounts of Danish and American communities. This book's colorful photographs, illustrations and highly readable text has inspired thousands of people. It includes 15 case studies, as well as an overview of the development process and specific design considerations.

—Ten Speed Press

"...has become something of a bible for the cohousing movement."

—The New York Times

To order, send a check for \$30/book (includes shipping and tax) to:  
The CoHousing Company, 1250 Addison Street #113, Berkeley, CA 94702  
Call about quantity discounts: 510•549•9980

# COMMUNITY CALENDAR



**Jun 18-19 • Deep Democracy & Consensus**  
 Earhaven Learning Center, Black Mountain, NC. Arjuna da Silva. Fundamentals of using consensus decision making, facilitating meetings, agenda planning, creating proposals. \$175, incl. food, camping. Indoor lodging also available. [www.earthavenlearningcenter.org](http://www.earthavenlearningcenter.org); [info@earthavenlearningcenter.org](mailto:info@earthavenlearningcenter.org); 828-664-9935.

**Jun 20-Aug 27 • Natural Building Skill Builder**  
 O.U.R. Ecovillage, Vancouver Island, Canada. Elke Cole (Cobworks), Eckhard Beuchel, Tracey Calvert. Straw bale, cob, natural plasters, earthen floors, stonework, timber-framing, design skills, & community building. [www.ourecovillage.org](http://www.ourecovillage.org); [our@pacificcoast.net](mailto:our@pacificcoast.net); 250-743-3067.

**Jun 20-Aug 13 • Ecovillage and Permaculture Certificate Program: Integrating Land, Building, and Social Sustainability w/David Holmgren**  
 Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. David Holmgren, Joshua Smith, Diana Leafe Christian, Mark Lakeman, Toby Hemenway, Jude Hobbs, Rob Bolman, Tree Bressen, & others. Two-month residential hands-on, experiential course in creating ecovillages and sustainable communities. Permaculture design certificate course (organic gardening, eco-building, eco-forestry, appropriate technology, community site design), interpersonal communication, organizational and financial issues in community, Lost Valley's personal growth workshops. [www.lostvalley.org](http://www.lostvalley.org); [sustainability@lostvalley.org](mailto:sustainability@lostvalley.org); 541-937-3351.

**Jun 25-26 • The Earhaven Experience: A Guided Exploration of Community Life**  
 Earhaven Learning Center, Black Mountain, NC. Earhaven: tour, ecovillage slide show, community meals, panel presentation with community members, work project with community members, monthly Council meeting, Coffeehouse evening with entertainment. \$175, incl. food, camping. Indoor lodging also available. [www.earthavenlearningcenter.org](http://www.earthavenlearningcenter.org); [info@earthavenlearningcenter.org](mailto:info@earthavenlearningcenter.org); 828-664-9935.

**Jul 1-3 • Sirius Community Experience Weekend**  
 Sirius Community, Shutesbury, MA. Two-day immersion in Sirius community life: shared meals, work parties, meditation, community

meetings, and more. [www.siriuscommunity.org](http://www.siriuscommunity.org); [sirius@siriuscommunity.org](mailto:sirius@siriuscommunity.org); 413-259-1251.

**Jul 8-10 • EarthSpirit Rising: Ecology, Spirituality and Community**  
 Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio. Cultivating Connections and IMAGO, sponsors. Matthew Fox, Winona LaDuke, Frances Moore Lappé, Miriam Therese MacGillis, John Seed, Malidoma Somé, Diana Leafe Christian, Paula Gonzalez. Explore connections between ecology and spirituality through the lens of community, via education, politics, religion, food, ritual, and cosmology. [EarthSpiritRising.org](http://EarthSpiritRising.org); [llawarre@imagoearth.org](mailto:llawarre@imagoearth.org); 513-921-5124.

**Jul 8-13 • Living on Earth**  
 Easton Mountain Retreat Center, Greenwich, NY. Tom Yeomans, Director of Concord Institute. Program integrates spiritual psychology and environmental activism. [www.eastonmountain.com](http://www.eastonmountain.com); [info@eastonmountain.com](mailto:info@eastonmountain.com); 800-553-8235; 518-692-802

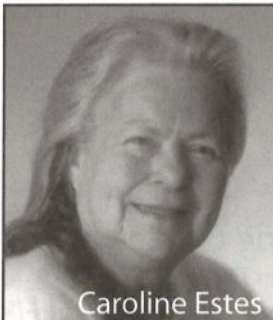
**Jul 8-17 • Network for a New Culture Summer Camp East**  
 Near Hancock, MD. New Culture Intensive: An Extended Journey into Love, Community, and Transformation. Building sustainable, non-violent culture through intimacy, personal growth, emotional transparency, radical honesty, equality, compassion, sexual freedom, and community. \$495-\$895, incl. camping, meals. [www.cfnc.us](http://www.cfnc.us); [sc05e@cfnc.us](mailto:sc05e@cfnc.us); 800-763-8136.

**Jul 9-17 • Ninth Continental Bioregional Congress**  
 Earhaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, NC. Deepen your bioregional skills for living full democracy. Lois Arkin, Mark Lakeman, other speakers. Join participants from Canada, U.S., & Mexico to catalyze social and ecological change. We will create a ceremonial village in a way that models healthy human habitation for the whole planet. \$300, incl. camping, meals. [www.earthavenlearningcenter.org](http://www.earthavenlearningcenter.org); [info@earthavenlearningcenter.org](mailto:info@earthavenlearningcenter.org); 828-664-9935.

**Jul 10-23 • Permaculture Design Certificate Course & Cultural Immersion, Chiang Mai**  
 Chiang Mai, Thailand. EcoLogical Solutions. Max Lindegger. Lloyd Williams. [www.ecologicalsolutions.com.au](http://www.ecologicalsolutions.com.au); [info@ecologicalsolutions.com.au](mailto:info@ecologicalsolutions.com.au); (59 Crystal Waters, 65 Kilcoy Lane, Conondale Qld 4552, Australia); +61 (0)7 5494 4741.

**Jul 10-Aug 5 • Ecovillage Apprenticeships: Permaculture, Natural Building, Ecovillage Living**  
 Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN. Organic food production, natural building, sustainable design systems. Constructed wetlands; cob visitors center; cob/strawbale/earthbag sauna roundhouse, more. \$300/wk, incl. board, lodging, all courses. [www.thefarm.org](http://www.thefarm.org); [ecovillage@thefarm.org](mailto:ecovillage@thefarm.org); 931-964-4324.

**Jul 15-18 • Heart Of Now: The Basics**  
 Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. (Formerly "Naka-Ima.") Part one of experiential workshop about realizing your vision and facing and dissolving the obstacles in the way of being fully and authentically yourself.



Caroline Estes

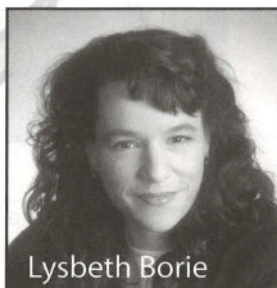
## Building Stronger Organizations Through Consensus

One of North America's leading consensus facilitators, Alpha Institute has been bringing the inspiration and tools of consensus decision making, meeting facilitation and community building to groups of all kinds for more than 25 years.

- \* Consensus training
- \* Group facilitation
- \* Strategic planning
- \* Mediation

More than 50 years' combined experience with consensus and life in community

**Alpha Institute**  
[www.alpha-institute.org](http://www.alpha-institute.org)  
 (541) 302-0925 [db@peak.org](mailto:db@peak.org)  
 Deadwood, Oregon 97430 USA



Lysbeth Borie

Through the practice of honesty, in the context of supportive and loving community, we will explore how to be alive, in the moment, and deeply connected with others. Donation, incl. lodging, meals. \$50 registration deposit; suggested additional contribution \$300–\$650. [www.lostvalley.org](http://www.lostvalley.org); [info@lostvalley.org](mailto:info@lostvalley.org); 541-937-3351, #109.

**Jul 18–Aug 7 • Permaculture Design Course**  
Bullock's Farm, Orcas Island, Washington. Douglas Bullock, John Valenzuela, Toby Hemenway, Sam Bullock, Fungi Perfecti. Three-week certificate design course on 25-year-old permaculture homestead. Design methodologies, observation skills, whole-systems design, annual and perennial foods, energy/water/waste management, appropriate construction, plant propagation and culture, outdoor mushroom cultivation, herbs & natural fiber use. \$1,500. [permacultureportal.com](http://permacultureportal.com); [permaculture.sam@gmail.com](mailto:permaculture.sam@gmail.com); 360-376-2773.

**Jul 22–30 • Village Design and Permaculture Practicum**  
Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN. Albert Bates, Scott Horton, Diana Leafe Christian, Greg Ramsey. Part two of full permaculture design certification course. Sustainable ecovillage design (site selection, master planning, pattern design); consensus & conflict resolution, process skills, finding & financing land, community economics, best practices; ecology, energy & resource conservation, economics of sustainability. \$800 incl. meals, lodging.

[www.thefarm.org](http://www.thefarm.org); [ecovillage@thefarm.org](mailto:ecovillage@thefarm.org); 931-964-4324.

**Jul 22–30 • Building with Earth and Straw**  
Earthaven Learning Center, Black Mountain, NC. Mollie Curry. \$675, incl. food, camping. Indoor lodging also available. [www.earthavenlearningcenter.org](http://www.earthavenlearningcenter.org); [info@earthavenlearningcenter.org](mailto:info@earthavenlearningcenter.org); 828-664-9935.

**Jul 22–Aug 7 • ZEGG Summer Camp 2005**  
ZEGG Community (Centre for Experimental Culture Design), Belzig, Germany. Participants will work on personal and political visions and practical experience of cooperation and trust. Weekends: ZEGG speakers and invited guests present insights into ZEGG's community research. Weekdays: intensive groups to create temporary community, incl. morning attunement, men's and women's spaces, sharing circle/plenary, evening cultural activities (music, dance, theatre), and Children's Camp. [www.zegg.de](http://www.zegg.de); [empfang@zegg.de](mailto:empfang@zegg.de); +49-33841-595-10.

**Jul 23 • Sustainable Forestry**  
Occidental Arts & Ecology Center (OAEC), Occidental, CA. Tim Metz, Brock Dolman, Carol Nieu Kirk. Scale-appropriate timber harvesting; nontimber forest products; stand thinning; fuel load management; forest health; wildlife habitat enhancement; road and upland erosion control; restoration. \$110/\$95 w/advance registration. [www.oaec.org](http://www.oaec.org); [oaec@oaec.org](mailto:oaec@oaec.org); 707-874-1557.

**Jul 23–29 • Earth Spirit Camp**  
Easton Mountain Retreat Center, Greenwich, NY. Join us for a week in community with others interested in living in a more connected and sustainable way. A wide range of workshops, spiritual practices, and group events, some serious, some playful; shared meals, dancing, music, group process, organic gardening, solar energy, cob construction, environmental art. [www.eastonmountain.com](http://www.eastonmountain.com); [info@eastonmountain.com](mailto:info@eastonmountain.com); 800-553-8235; 518-692-8023.

**Jul 25–Aug 4 • Summer University in Tamera, Portugal**  
Colos, Portugal. Tamera Community. "For a Future Without War"—preparation for political pilgrimage to Israel/Palestine in November, 2005, and "Perspectives for Peace"—presentation of the experimental solar village "Monte Cerro." Speakers include Dieter Duhm, Sabine Lichtenfels, Jürgen Kleinwächter, Manitonquat, Max Lindegger, and representatives from Israel/Palestine, Colombia, and India. [tamera@mail.telepac.pt](mailto:tamera@mail.telepac.pt); 00 35-283 635-306.

**Jul 28–31 • Living In Actualization in an Interuniversal-soul Cultural Community**  
Aquarian Concepts Community, Sedona, AZ. Ascension Science and Planetary Divine Administration four-day seminar. Gabriel of Sedona, Niánn Emerson Chase, \$500 pre-registration, otherwise \$700. [www.aquarianconceptscommunity.org](http://www.aquarianconceptscommunity.org); [info@aquarianconceptscommunity.org](mailto:info@aquarianconceptscommunity.org); 928-204-1206.

See what keeps  
our readers going . . .

# Back Home

MAGAZINE

## Your Guide to Self-Reliant Living

Take control of your own life. Thousands of people have gone BACKHOME to enjoy less complicated, more rewarding lives . . . and you can join them. In each bimonthly issue, find articles on topics such as:

- Owner-Built & Mortgage-Free Homes
- Livestock Selection
- Organic Gardening
- Home Projects
- Solar, Wind, & Hydro Power
- Profitable Home Businesses and much, much more!

Subscribe to BACKHOME for just \$21.97/year or try a two-issue subscription for just \$5.95  
Call us at 800-992-2546, write to us at P.O. Box 70CM, Hendersonville, NC 28793 or visit our Web site

[www.BackHomeMagazine.com](http://www.BackHomeMagazine.com)



**Aug 4-7 • Second Journey Regional Visioning Council 2005**

Second Journey, San Rafael, CA. Conversation among architects, developers, educators, healthcare professionals, writers, visionaries, and elders about creating meaningful community in later life. What makes a "great place" in which to grow old? How can elders' wisdom be invested back into the community? [www.secondjourney.org](http://www.secondjourney.org); [secondJourney@att.net](mailto:secondJourney@att.net); 919-403-0432.

**Aug 6-20 • Network for a New Culture Summer Camp West**

Southern OR. New Culture Intensive: An Extended Journey into Love, Community, and Transformation. Building sustainable, nonviolent culture through intimacy, personal growth, emotional transparency, radical honesty, equality, compassion, sexual freedom, and community. \$495-\$995, incl. camping, meals. [www.nfnc.org/sc](http://www.nfnc.org/sc); [sc05w@nfnc.org](mailto:sc05w@nfnc.org); 800-624-8445.

**Aug 12-14 • Starting a Successful Ecovillage**

O.U.R. Ecovillage, Vancouver Island, Canada. Diana Leafe Christian, editor, *Communities* magazine and, author, of *Creating a Life Together*. Overview costs & time frames; vision documents, decision making, finding/financing land; legal structures; financial organization; process & communication skills. [www.ourecoovillage.org](http://www.ourecoovillage.org); [our@pacificcoast.net](mailto:our@pacificcoast.net); 250-743-3067.

**Aug 12-15 • Heart Of Now: The Basics**  
Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. (Formerly "Naka-Ima.") See Jul 15-18.

**Aug 12-20 • Permaculture Fundamentals: Week-Long Program**

Earthaven Learning Center, Black Mountain, NC. Peter Bane, Chuck Marsh. Part I of Permaculture Design Course. Cultural and social aspects of permaculture, hands-on garden and orchard work, pond making, natural building, graywater systems, erosion control, rock work, dances, circles, campfires. \$675, incl. food, camping. Indoor lodging also available. [www.earthavenlearningcenter.org](http://www.earthavenlearningcenter.org); [info@earthavenlearningcenter.org](mailto:info@earthavenlearningcenter.org); 828-664-9935.

**Aug 12-Oct 2 • Internship in Ecovillage Living & Permaculture Design**

Earthaven Learning Center, Black Mountain, NC. Two-month internship incl. courses: two-part Permaculture Design Certification, Earthaven Experience, Edible & Medicinal Plants, Starting a Successful Ecovillage, Earthen Plaster & Paints, Ecovillage Planning & Design. Peter Bane, Chuck Marsh, Mollie Curry, Greg Ramsey, Diana Leafe Christian. \$2,400, incl. camping, meals. Indoor lodging also available. [www.earthavenlearningcenter.org](http://www.earthavenlearningcenter.org); [info@earthavenlearningcenter.org](mailto:info@earthavenlearningcenter.org); 828-664-9935.

**Aug 19-21 • Natural Building for the Real World with Rob Bolman**

Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. [www.lostvalley.org](http://www.lostvalley.org); [info@lostvalley.org](mailto:info@lostvalley.org); 541-937-3351, #109.

**Aug 19-21 • Twin Oaks Communities Conference**

Twin Oaks, Louisa, VA. Workshops, community building, and fun. Ecovillages, communes,

co-ops, cohousing, intentional relationships, group decision making, living sustainably. \$85 sl. sc., incl. camping, meals. *Communities Conference*, 138 Twin Oaks Rd., Louisa, VA 23093; 540-894-5126; [conference@twinoaks.org](mailto:conference@twinoaks.org).

**Aug 19-22 • How to Start a Successful Urban Ecovillage or Intentional Community**  
Los Angeles, CA. Los Angeles Eco-Village.

Diana Leafe Christian, editor of *Communities* magazine and author of *Creating a Life Together*. Overview costs, time frames, vision documents, decision making, finding/financing land, legal structures, financial organization, process, & communication skills. Fri., 8/19 public talk: \$15; weekend workshop, \$150 (Friday night included). [www.ic.org/laev](http://www.ic.org/laev); [crsp@icg.org](mailto:crsp@icg.org); 213-738-1254.

**Aug 25-29 • Heart Of Now 2**

Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. (Formerly "Naka-Ima.") Part two of experiential workshop about realizing your vision and facing and dissolving the obstacles in the way of being fully and authentically yourself. Donation, incl. lodging, meals. [www.lostvalley.org](http://www.lostvalley.org); [info@lostvalley.org](mailto:info@lostvalley.org); 541-937-3351, #109.

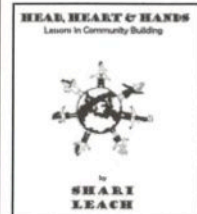
**Aug 26-28 • Twin Oaks Women's Gathering**

Louisa, VA. Twin Oaks Community. "Women Celebrating Ourselves in Community" through workshops, dance, drumming, swimming, creative activities, performances, sweat lodge & mudpit, movement, ritual. \$40-\$140 sl-sc, incl. camping, workshops. Paying in the upper region of the sliding scale helps us subsidize women who can afford less. [www.twinoaks.org](http://www.twinoaks.org); 540-894-5141.



**We Love What We Do Because We Do What We Love**  
**Wonderland Hill Development Company**  
Expert Cohousing Builder and Developer

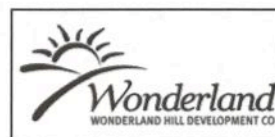
**Now Available!! Head, Heart and Hands**  
*Lessons in Community Building* by Shari Leach



Shari is a community building expert and former President of the Cohousing Association

Order on our website:  
[www.whdc.com](http://www.whdc.com)

- 15 completed communities in CO, CA and AZ
- Pioneering Elder Cohousing in the US
- New Communities forming nationally



"Sustainability Through Community"

4676 Broadway ~ Boulder, CO ~ 80304 ~ 303-449-3232 ~ [www.whdc.com](http://www.whdc.com)

**Aug 26–28 • A World Beyond Capitalism Conference**

Portland, OR. Portland University. multilingual, multiracial alliance-building conference. Volunteers of all backgrounds worldwide, including work-from-home or bilingual volunteers, greatly needed.  
[www.awbc.lfhniiivaaaa.info](http://www.awbc.lfhniiivaaaa.info); [awbcbbupdates@lfhniiivaaaa.info](mailto:awbcbbupdates@lfhniiivaaaa.info).

**Aug 27–28 • The Earthaven Experience: A Guided Exploration of Community Life**

Earthaven Learning Center, Black Mountain, NC. See Jun 25–26.

**Sep 2–5 • Heart Of Now: The Basics**

Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. See Jul 15–18.

**Sep 3–8 • From Community to Communion: Taking a Quantum Leap in Consciousness Together**

Cleveland, NM. Hummingbird Ranch Community. For people yearning to experience cocreative community. Small group interaction, meditation and prayer, silence, time in nature, ceremony and celebration. Small daily “family” groups to focus on personal evolution and inner reflection. \$575–\$825, incl. food, lodging.  
[www.globalfamily.org](http://www.globalfamily.org); [marie@globalfamily.net](mailto:marie@globalfamily.net); 505-387-5100.

**Sept. 9–11 • The Human Dream: Humaculture and our Shared Human Destiny**

Cleveland, NM. Hummingbird Ranch Community. Humaculture is a consciousness-based, whole systems approach to support

human transformation—in one’s self, in groups and communities with a shared purpose, and ultimately for global transformation. Facilitated by Richard Ruster, Ph.D., member of Hummingbird Community and Executive Director of Hummingbird Living School. \$275 (\$325 after 8/20) incl. camping, meals. [www.globalfamily.org](http://www.globalfamily.org); [marie@globalfamily.net](mailto:marie@globalfamily.net); 505-387-5100.

**Sep 9–11 • Starting a Successful Ecovillage or Intentional Community**

Earthaven Learning Center, Black Mountain, NC. Diana Leafe Christian, author of *Creating a Life Together: Practical Tools to Grow Ecovillages & Intentional Communities*. Overview costs, time frames, vision documents, decision making, finding/financing land, legal structures, financial organization, process, communication skills. Earthaven tour. \$250, incl. food, camping. Indoor lodging also available. [www.earthavenlearningcenter.org](http://www.earthavenlearningcenter.org); [info@earthavenlearningcenter.org](mailto:info@earthavenlearningcenter.org); 828-664-9935.

**Sep 9–18 • Natural Building Immersion**

Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN. Intensive instruction in straw, cob, wood, and other natural materials. Wattle and daub, adobe, earthbags, earthships, traditional Mexican styles, bamboo, slipclay, domes and arches, earthen floors, earth plasters and alis, passive solar, foundations and drainage, living roofs. Howard Switzer, Katey Culver, Albert Bates, Matthew English & guests. \$800 f/9 days or \$100/ day; \$175/day for couples, incl. meals, lodging. [ecovillage@thefarm.org](mailto:ecovillage@thefarm.org).

**Sep 11–17 • Natural Building Intensive**

Boonville, CA. Emerald Earth Community. Instructors Michael G. Smith, Darryl Berlin, Sara McCamant. Site analysis, passive solar design, and hands-on practice with strawbale, cob, straw-clay, wattle-and-daub, round-pole framing, alternative foundations, earth and lime plasters, home-made paints, and adobe floors. \$500, incl. camping, meals.

[www.emeraldearth.org](http://www.emeraldearth.org);

[workshops@emeraldearth.org](mailto:workshops@emeraldearth.org); 707-895-3302.

**Sep 17 • Earthen Plaster**

Earthaven Learning Center, Black Mountain, NC. Chuck Marsh. \$55–\$85, incl. food. Camping & indoor lodging also available. Use this ancient, traditional building art to create durable, breathable, beautiful interior and exterior walls for your home.

[www.earthavenlearningcenter.org](http://www.earthavenlearningcenter.org);

[info@earthavenlearningcenter.org](mailto:info@earthavenlearningcenter.org); 828-664-9935.

**Sep. 18 • Earthen Paints**

Earthaven Learning Center, Black Mountain, NC. Mollie Curry. Clay-based paints are nontoxic, very low-impact ecologically, and incredibly beautiful. Learn to make and apply “aliz” (earthen paint) to almost any wall surface (even already-painted drywall), and create “burnished” and matte-finish walls, and learn about other nontoxic homemade (and store-bought) alternatives with other properties. \$55–\$85, incl. food. Camping & indoor lodging also available.

[www.earthavenlearningcenter.org](http://www.earthavenlearningcenter.org);

[info@earthavenlearningcenter.org](mailto:info@earthavenlearningcenter.org); 828-664-9935.



## Catoctin Creek Village

**Find your future** at Catoctin Creek Village — a new Cohousing Community in Northern Virginia!

**Come discover** a magical place in Loudoun County, Virginia — just one hour northwest of Washington, DC.



### Catoctin Creek Village is:

18 energy-efficient, custom, single-family homes on 164 acres of rolling hills, fields and woods. Priced from \$575,000. Lot sizes range from .25 acres to 10 acres.

Community commons that includes over 100 breathtaking acres of private nature conservancy. Rolling meadows, forest, spring-fed lake, barn, and 1 mile of Catoctin Creek river frontage. Large renovated 200-year-old farmhouse where meals, meetings, games and gatherings are held year-round.

An opportunity for Astronomers, Naturalists, Gardeners, Goatherders, Equestrians, Doctors, Musicians, Artists, Storytellers, Paddlers, Philosophers, Hikers, Inventors, Cooks, and Community Visionaries of all ages to join the old-fashioned neighborhood of the future!



**Sep 18–22 • Community Experience Week**  
Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. Immersion in Lost Valley community life: shared meals, work parties, community meetings, and more. [www.lostvalley.org](http://www.lostvalley.org); [info@lostvalley.org](mailto:info@lostvalley.org); 541-937-3351, #109.

**Sep 22–25 • Living In Actualization in an Interuniversal-soul Cultural Community**  
Aquarian Concepts Community, Sedona, AZ. See Jul 28–31.

**Sep 23–25 • The Second U.S. Conference on Peak Oil and Community Solutions**  
Yellow Springs, OH. Community Service, Inc. Keynote speakers include Richard Heinberg (author of *The Party's Over*), John Ikerd, Robert Waldrop, Jan Lundberg, Pat Murphy, Megan Quinn, and Diana Leafe Christian. [www.communitysolution.org](http://www.communitysolution.org); 937-767-2161.

**Sep 23–25 • The Farm Experience Weekend**  
The Farm, Summertown, TN. Learn firsthand about life in community. Community dinner, Farm history slide show/Q&A, yoga, community tour, work party, rock and roll benefit boogie, and nature walk. Workshops available on vegetarian cooking, midwifery, strawbale homes (tour), home-based businesses, community & global sustainability, and more. Camping, all meals (other accommodations avail. at additional cost). [www.thefarm.org](http://www.thefarm.org); [Vickie@thefarmcommunity.com](mailto:Vickie@thefarmcommunity.com).

**Sep 23–25 • Elder Cohousing "Getting Started" Workshop**  
Boulder, CO. Abraham Paiss & Associates. Introducing the Elder Cohousing development process—a resident-planned and managed

socially sustainable community for proactive adults 55 and older—for landowners and people interested in creating or living Elder Cohousing, with national cohousing consultants Zev Paiss and Neshama Abraham. \$350; Additional group members, \$300; elder care or building professionals, \$550. [www.ElderCohousing.org](http://www.ElderCohousing.org); [info@eldercohousing.org](mailto:info@eldercohousing.org); 303-413-8066.

**Sep 23–26 • Heart Of Now: The Basics**  
Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. See Jul 15–18.

**Sep 23–30 • Permaculture Practicum: Applying Ecological Design**  
Earthaven Learning Center, Black Mountain, NC. Peter Bane, Chuck Marsh. Permaculture Design Certificate courses for graduates of 5-weekend or week-long Fundamentals programs. Combines more advanced subjects of permaculture curriculum with design of Earthaven village landscape and culture. Presentations by experienced designers introduce mentored small group design projects. \$675, incl. food, camping. Indoor lodging also available. [www.earthavenlearningcenter.org](http://www.earthavenlearningcenter.org); [info@earthavenlearningcenter.org](mailto:info@earthavenlearningcenter.org); 828-664-9935.

**Sep 24–Oct 7 • Permaculture Design**  
Occidental Arts & Ecology Center (OAEC), Occidental, CA. Penny Livingston, Brock Dolman, and guest instructors. Permaculture Design Certificate course. Ethics, principles, and practice of permaculture, through organic gardening, mulching, natural building techniques, forest farming, water retention and regeneration, erosion control, community processes, and much more. OAEC's 80-acre site, visits to

local permaculture examples, and a group design project in almost 100 hours of course time. \$1,350–\$1,250, incl. meals, lodging. [www.oaec.org](http://www.oaec.org); [oaec@oaec.org](mailto:oaec@oaec.org); 707-874-1557.

**Oct 1–2 • Ecovillage Planning and Design**  
Earthaven Learning Center, Black Mountain, NC. Greg Ramsey, award-winning architect of East Lake Commons Cohousing in Atlanta and other sustainable communities. Introduction to ecovillage movement, incl. current ecovillage designs, assessment of local codes and regulations, village site analysis, village design principles, overview of ecovillage development process. Hands-on individual or team based ecovillage design exercise. \$220, incl. food, camping. Indoor lodging also available. [www.earthavenlearningcenter.org](http://www.earthavenlearningcenter.org); [info@earthavenlearningcenter.org](mailto:info@earthavenlearningcenter.org); 828-664-9935.

**Oct. 8–9 • The Earthen Experience: A Guided Exploration of Community Life**  
Earthaven Learning Center, Black Mountain, NC. See Jun 25–26.

**Oct 9 • Integrated Mountain Farming and Aquaculture**  
Earthaven Learning Center, Black Mountain, NC. Rod Rylander. Course focuses on increasing the health of the soil through rapid rotation, cover crops, polyculture, integrating animals and plants, terracing, tilapia production, selecting profitable crops and animals, heritage animals, nutrient building, small-animal care, marketing, natural insect control, and weed control. \$55–\$85, sliding scale. [www.earthavenlearningcenter.org](http://www.earthavenlearningcenter.org); [info@earthavenlearningcenter.org](mailto:info@earthavenlearningcenter.org); 828-664-9935.

# Second U.S. Conference on Peak Oil & Community Solutions

Yellow Springs, Ohio, September 23-25

Hear the latest on Peak Oil, and its connection to economics. Learn about new forms of community, designing viable low-energy living solutions, and more.

To register for the conference, or for a free sample of *New Solutions*, call 937-767-2161 or visit us at [www.communitysolution.org](http://www.communitysolution.org).



## Speakers

- Richard Heinberg: Author, *Powerdown: Options and Actions for a Post-Carbon World*, and *The Party's Over*
- Michael Shuman: Author, *Going Local: Creating Self-Reliant Communities in the Global Age*
- Diana Leafe Christian: Author, *Creating a Life Together* and editor of *Communities* magazine
- Jan Lundberg: Founder, *Culture Change* and *Auto Free Times* magazine
- Robert Waldrop: President, Oklahoma Food Cooperative; moderator of on-line discussion group "Running on Empty"
- Steve Andrews: Builder, energy consultant and free-lance writer on Peak Oil and related energy issues
- John Ikerd: Agricultural economist and author, *The Case for Common Sense: The New Economic, Ecological, and Social Revolution*
- Liz Walker: Author, *EcoVillage at Ithaca: Pioneering a Sustainable Culture*
- Pat Murphy: Director, The Community Solution and editor of *New Solutions*
- Megan Quinn: Outreach Director, The Community Solution and its program, "Agraria"



A Program of Community Service, Inc.



**Oct 21–23 • Starting and Sustaining Intentional Communities**

Occidental Arts & Ecology Center (OAEC), Occidental, CA. Dave Henson, Adam Wolpert. Establishing a land-based intentional community—finding/financing land; advantages/disadvantages of various legal structures for holding land; decision-making processes; finding like-minded people; financial organization; legal and insurance issues and costs; dealing w/zoning and regulations; long-term planning. Community tour. \$425/375 incl. meals, lodging. [www.oaec.org](http://www.oaec.org); [oaec@oaec.org](mailto:oaec@oaec.org); 707-874-1557.

**Oct 21–24 • Heart Of Now: The Basics**  
Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR.  
See Jul 15–18.

**Oct 29 • Shiitake Mushroom Growing Basics**  
Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN. How to grow shiitake mushrooms and make money doing it. Will Bates and Frank Michael. [www.thefarm.org](http://www.thefarm.org); [ecovillage@thefarm.org](mailto:ecovillage@thefarm.org); 931-964-4324.

**Oct 31–Nov. 11 • Ecovillage Design Course & Practicum**  
Queensland, Australia. Crystal Waters. Max Lindegger. Lloyd Williams.  
[www.ecologicalsolutions.com.au](http://www.ecologicalsolutions.com.au);  
[info@ecologicalsolutions.com.au](mailto:info@ecologicalsolutions.com.au); (59 Crystal Waters, 65 Kilcoy Lane, Conondale Qld 4552, Australia); +61 (0)7 5494 4741.

**Nov 3–17 • Heart Of Now 2**  
Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR.  
See Aug 25–29.

**Nov 4–7 • Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC) Fall Organizational Meeting**

Los Angeles Eco-Village, Los Angeles, CA. Planning, policies, reports, consensus decision making by FIC board members, staff, and volunteers. FIC publishes *Communities* magazine, *Communities Directory*, distributes *Visions of Utopia* video, and operates [ic.org](http://ic.org) website and Community Bookshelf mailorder book service. Public invited. [jenny@ic.org](mailto:jenny@ic.org).

**Nov 12–14 • Second International Ecovillage Designers Conference**  
Queensland, Australia. Crystal Waters. Max Lindegger. Lloyd Williams.  
[www.ecologicalsolutions.com.au](http://www.ecologicalsolutions.com.au);  
[info@ecologicalsolutions.com.au](mailto:info@ecologicalsolutions.com.au); (59 Crystal Waters, 65 Kilcoy Lane, Conondale Qld 4552, Australia); +61 (0)7 5494 4741.

**Nov 13–17 • Community Experience Week**  
Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR.  
See Sep 18–22.

**Nov 18–20 • Introduction to Permaculture**  
Occidental Arts & Ecology Center (OAEC), Occidental, CA. Brock Dolman. Basic principles and applications of permaculture, incl. water catchment, erosion control, organic and polycultural food production, natural building, site design, and more. \$375–\$325, incl. meals, lodging. [www.oaec.org](http://www.oaec.org); [oaec@oaec.org](mailto:oaec@oaec.org); 707-874-1557.

**Nov 18–21 • Heart Of Now: The Basics**  
Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR.  
See Jul 15–18.

**Nov 21–Dec 2 • Permaculture Design Certificate Course & Cultural Immersion**  
Queensland, Australia. Crystal Waters. Max Lindegger. Lloyd Williams.  
[www.ecologicalsolutions.com.au](http://www.ecologicalsolutions.com.au);  
[info@ecologicalsolutions.com.au](mailto:info@ecologicalsolutions.com.au); (59 Crystal Waters, 65 Kilcoy Lane, Conondale Qld 4552, Australia); +61 (0)7 5494 4741.

**Nov 24–27 • Living In Actualization in an Interuniversal-soul Cultural Community**  
Aquarian Concepts Community, Sedona, AZ.  
See Jul 28–31.

**Nov 27–Dec 11 • Winter Permaculture Design Course**  
Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. Two-week hands-on Permaculture Design Certificate course with Rick Valley.  
[www.lostvalley.org](http://www.lostvalley.org); [info@lostvalley.org](mailto:info@lostvalley.org); 541-937-3351, #109.

**Dec 5–9 • Plenty Solar Installers Workshop - Punta Gorda, Belize**  
Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN. [www.thefarm.org](http://www.thefarm.org); [ecovillage@thefarm.org](mailto:ecovillage@thefarm.org); 931-964-4324.

**Dec 5–15 • Permaculture Design Certificate Course & Cultural Immersion**  
India. Max Lindegger. Lloyd Williams.  
[www.ecologicalsolutions.com.au](http://www.ecologicalsolutions.com.au);  
[info@ecologicalsolutions.com.au](mailto:info@ecologicalsolutions.com.au); (59 Crystal Waters, 65 Kilcoy Lane, Conondale Qld 4552, Australia); +61 (0)7 5494 4741.

**Dec 9–12 • Heart Of Now: The Basics**  
Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR.  
See Jul 15–18.

# Mid-Atlantic Cohousing

Is one of our neighborhoods your new home?



**Communities that are Building**

- 3 Catocin Creek Village  
Taylorstown, VA
- 6 EcoVillage of Loudoun County  
Taylorstown, VA
- 8 Liberty Village Cohousing  
Liberty Town, MD

**Communities Seeking a Site**

- 2 Blue Ridge Cohousing  
Charlottesville, VA
- 4 Chesapeake Cohousing  
Annapolis, MD

**Community that Owns Site**

- 11 Wheatland, VA

**Completed Communities**

- 1 Blueberry Hill Cohousing  
Vienna, VA
- 5 Eastern Village Cohousing  
Silver Spring, MD
- 7 Eno Commons Cohousing  
Durham, NC
- 9 Shadowlake Village  
Blacksburg, VA
- 10 Takoma Village Cohousing  
Washington, DC

We provide member communities with technical support, facilitation and mediation services, training, workshops, and places to find answers to the challenges encountered on the path to creating community.

Member communities pool resources at the regional level to answer community needs for technical assistance, education, information, etc. We also organize tours for the public as well as educate and inform interested parties about cohousing and about opportunities for living in our member communities.

North Carolina



703-453-0487

[www.cohomac.org](http://www.cohomac.org)

Now in our 20th year!  
\$23 / 4 issues

## Permaculture Activist

### Aquaculture

Bill McLarney—  
North American Polyculture  
John Todd—  
Ecological Aquaculture  
FISH FOR HEALTH  
DESIGNING PONDS



LEARNING TO DOWSE  
AQUACULTURE AT HOME  
GREYWATER BIOTREATMENT  
FRESHWATER FISH FARMING  
MANAGING FOR NATIVE SPECIES  
INTEGRATED VILLAGE FISHERIES  
PHILIPPINES, HAWAII, VIETNAM



## Permaculture Activist

permacultureactivist.net

PO Box 1209  
Black Mountain, NC 28711  
828-669-6336

### GreenSingles.com

Free Photo Ads for  
progressive singles in the  
environmental, vegetarian  
& animal rights  
communities. Thousands of  
searchable ads for  
friendship, dating, marriage.  
Quick & easy sign-up.  
Celebrating our 20th year!

"where hearts and minds connect"

### VeggieLove.com

Free Photo ads for single  
vegetarians, vegans, raw  
foodists and others who  
seek a plant-based diet.  
For friendship, dating,  
marriage. Sign up in  
minutes and meet your  
VeggieLove.

# Reach



REACH is our column for all your Classified needs. In addition to ads intended to help match people looking for communities with communities looking for people, Reach has ads for workshops, goods, services, books, products and personals of interest to people interested in communities.

You may use the form on the last spread of Reach to place an ad. **THE REACH DEADLINE FOR THE FALL 2005 ISSUE (OUT IN OCTOBER) IS August 20.**

The special Reach rate is only \$0.25 per word (up to 100 words, \$0.50 per word thereafter for all ads) so why not use this opportunity to network with others interested in community? We offer discounts for multiple insertions as well: \$0.23 per word for two times and \$0.20 per word for four times. If you are an FIC member, take off an additional five percent.

Please make check or money order payable to Communities, and send it, plus your ad copy, word count, number of insertions and category to: Patricia Greene, 381 Hewlett Road, Hermon, NY 13652, email: [patricia@ic.org](mailto:patricia@ic.org) (If you email an ad, please include your mailing address, phone number and be sure to send off the check at the same time.)

Intentional communities listing in the Reach section are invited to also visit our online Communities Directory at [directory.ic.org](http://directory.ic.org) Listing on our web site is free and data from the site is used to produce our print version of the Communities Directory, with a new edition coming out annually. Contact: [directory@ic.org](mailto:directory@ic.org) or 540-894-5798 for more information on being listed in the Communities Directory.

## COMMUNITIES WITH OPENINGS

**ABUNDANT DAWN, Floyd, Virginia.** Our 90 acres of beautiful mountain land is home to two small pods/subcommunities, Dayspring Circle and Earth Pod. Our land includes a river, forests, pastures, barns, gardens, homes, a community house and temporary housing available for new members. We are looking for additional members for our existing pods and are also open to an additional already formed group to join us as a pod. We welcome individuals and families of diverse peaceful lifestyles and are particularly interested in adding some families and younger folks to our mix. [www.abundant-dawn.org](http://www.abundant-dawn.org); POB 433, Floyd, VA 24091; 540-745-5853; [info@abundantdawn.org](mailto:info@abundantdawn.org)

**AQUARIAN CONCEPTS COMMUNITY, Sedona, Arizona.** Founded by Gabriel of Sedona and Niánn Emerson Chase in 1989. Currently 100 adults and children. International members. Global change work for Destiny Reservists in Divine Administration. God-centered community based on teachings of *The URANTIA Book* and *Continuing Fifth Epochal Revelation The Cosmic Family Volumes* as received by Gabriel of Sedona. Organic gardens. Starseed Schools of Melchizedek, Global Change Music record label, CosmoArt, CosmoTheater, and audio and video productions. Light construction, stone masonry, landscaping, cleaning and maintenance. Serious spiritual commitment required. POB 3946, Sedona, AZ 86340; 928-204-1206; [info@aquarianconceptscommunity.org](mailto:info@aquarianconceptscommunity.org); [www.aquarianconceptscommunity.org](http://www.aquarianconceptscommunity.org); [www.globalchangemusic.org](http://www.globalchangemusic.org)

**AQUARIUS COMMUNITY, Vail, Arizona.** Share picturesque mountain wilderness ranch blessed with ideal weather. \$150/mo. includes utilities. SASE. Box 69, Vail, AZ 85641-0069; [jkubias@hotmail.com](mailto:jkubias@hotmail.com)

**CAMPBILL VILLAGE MINNESOTA, Sauk Centre, Minnesota.** Part of the International Camphill movement. Located in rural central Minnesota. Life-sharing community of 60 people, 25 of whom are adults with special needs. We are on 400 acres—woods, fields, river, ponds. We have a dairy farm, beef farm, weavery (rugs and scarves), woodshop (toys and household items), bakery (bread, cookies, cereals), dollmaking shop, food processing kitchen, and large vegetable gardens. We provide our own bread and biodynamic/organic meat, milk, and vegetables. We live and work together with respect for each person's abilities. Although we work out of a nondenominational Christian philosophy, we accept people of all spiritual paths. Fostering a mood of reverence and gratitude is an essential part of Camphill life. We celebrate the seasonal and Christian festivals of the year with songs, stories, plays and other activities that are prepared together in the community. We seek people to join us—families, couples, single people. We need people who can be House parents (usually with four special needs people and one or two other "coworkers"), a dairy farmer, gardeners and people willing to lend a hand wherever needed. We are looking for long-term, committed people generally starting with a six month get-acquainted period. We provide health insurance, three weeks vacation and meet each person's needs as possible. For information: 15136 Celtic Drive, Sauk Centre, MN 56378; 320-732-6365; Fax: 320-732-3204; [CVMN@rea-alp.com](mailto:CVMN@rea-alp.com); [www.camphillvillage-minnesota.org](http://www.camphillvillage-minnesota.org)

**DANCING RABBIT, Rutledge, Missouri.** We are actively seeking new members to join us in creating our vibrant home and sustainability demonstration project. We are building our homes with earth-friendly materials on our 280 beautiful, rolling acres in northeast Missouri. We live, work and play together; with cooper-

ation and feminism as basic principles. We grow much of our food and share delicious organic meals together every day. We make our decisions by consensus. If you're looking for a nurturing home where you can live more sustainably and make a difference in the world, come visit us. Help make our ecovillage grow! *One-CM Dancing Rabbit Lane, Rutledge, MO 63563; 660-883-5511; dancingrabbit@ic.org; www.dancingrabbit.org*

**EARTHAVEN, Blue Ridge Mountains, North Carolina.** Aspiring ecovillage on 320 forested acres near Asheville. Multigenerational, 60 members. Omnivores; vegetarians; some raise livestock. Natural-built homes, organic gardens, off-grid power, composting toilets, constructed wetlands. We value sustainable ecological systems, permaculture, consensus, right livelihood and vital, diversified spirituality. Businesses/services include: Red Moon Herbs, Trading Post, café, *Permaculture Activist* and *Communities* magazines, logging, permaculture design, landscaping, tool rental, woodworking, carpentry/construction, solar design/installation. Workshops on permaculture, natural building, herbal medicine. Seeking hard-working, visionary people, including organic growers, families with children, people with homesteading skills. [www.earthaven.org](http://www.earthaven.org); Free information pack or larger \$10 pack: [info@earthaven.org](mailto:info@earthaven.org); 1025 Camp Elliott Road, Black Mountain, NC 28711; 828-669-3937.

**EAST WIND, Tecumseh, Missouri.** A 75-member Federation of Egalitarian (FEC) community, est. 1973. Located on 1,045 acres of land in the Ozark foothills of southern Missouri. The topography is heavily forested and scenic. Like other FEC communities, East Wind members value ecological awareness, equality, cooperation, and nonviolence. Personal freedom is important to us. We enjoy flexible work schedules, incorporating choices from our successful businesses and domestic labors. Write or call and please contact us before visiting. *East Wind Commu-*

*nity, Box CM-R, Tecumseh, MO 65760; 417-679-4682; visit@eastwind.org*

**ECO-FARM, Plant City, Florida.** We are a small, farm-based intentional community near Tampa, Florida looking for others seeking this type of community. Our core group has interests in achievable sustainable living, alternative energies, books, drumming, environmental issues, farming, social justice, etc. We farm vegetables and ornamental trees, and also have a small farm mechanic shop in which community members participate. If interested, check out our web site at [www.ecofarmfl.org](http://www.ecofarmfl.org) and phone: 813-754-7374.

**ELDER COMMUNITY, near Cherokee, North Carolina.** In Smoky Mountains near Great Smoky Mountain National Park. We are looking for more community-oriented family members (retired or semi-retired) to share ownership in an expanding project of group homes with private and shared space. This land is part of an 80 acre intentional community and near a 40 plus acre spiritual retreat center. Decisions are made by consensus. Contact Anthony or Ann at 828-497-7102 or email: [annariel@dnet.net](mailto:annariel@dnet.net)

**THE FARM, Summertown, Tennessee.** Founded in 1971 on the principles of nonviolence and a respect for the earth, The Farm offers a vibrant social life mixed with rural lifestyle. The Farm is opening its doors for new members, with a special invitation to young families seeking to put their ideals to work in a nurturing environment. The best introduction to our culture is to visit us for a Farm Experience Weekend. Receive an in-depth look at our history, tour the grounds and participate in a variety of workshops that highlight our many diverse interests and experiences. To learn more, visit [www.thefarmcommunity.com](http://www.thefarmcommunity.com)

**FELLOWSHIP COMMUNITY, Spring Valley, New York.** We seek coworkers. Located 30 minutes north of NYC, we are an intergenerational community founded in 1966, centered

around the care of the elderly. Now numbering about 150 elderly, coworkers and children, we grow our own fruit and vegetables bio-dynamically. All ages work together in our practical work activities. They include a candle shop, metal shop, wood shop, weavery/handwork group, greenhouse, publishing press, bakery, outlet store and medical practice. The spiritual science (anthroposophy) of Rudolf Steiner is the basis for our work. There is a Waldorf School and several other anthroposophical initiatives nearby. Our lifestyle is an intense social/cultural commitment to the future of mankind. Check out our web site at [www.FellowshipCommunity.org](http://www.FellowshipCommunity.org) If you are interested in coworking or need additional info, please contact our office at 845-356-8494; or write to: Ann Scharff, c/o The Executive Circle at 241 Hungry Hollow Rd., Spring Valley, NY 10977; [rsffoffice@fellowshipcommunity.org](mailto:rsffoffice@fellowshipcommunity.org)

**PLEASANT HILL COHOUSING, San Francisco Bay Area.** Available Units: 3BR/2BA; 1BR/1BA. Vibrant community life of 32 households. Eco-friendly design, constructed 2001. At the end of a quiet street. Walking distance to a hiking/biking trail, downtown, and public transit. Common House, pool, hot tub, kids room, guest rooms, organic garden, workshop with kiln, LAN. Shared dinners, social events, yoga classes, collective babysitting, work parties, and consensus-based decision making. For details: 925-685-6877 or [www.phch.org](http://www.phch.org).

**SANDHILL FARM, Rutledge, Missouri.** We are a small family of friends living together on an income-sharing organic farm. We value cooperation, raising children, living simply, caring for our land, growing most of our own food, working through our differences, making good ecological choices, and having fun with our friends. We've been at this for 31 years and continue to grow in our visions and our capability to realize them. Sound like home? POB 155, Rutledge, MI 63563; [visitorscm@sandhillfarm.org](mailto:visitorscm@sandhillfarm.org); 660-883-5543; [www.sandhillfarm.org](http://www.sandhillfarm.org)

## There's a New Cohousing Community in Oregon's Beautiful Willamette Valley!

CoHo is forming an environmentally-conscious community of 34 homes, designed for energy efficiency, and low environmental impact and toxicity, on 7 acres. We are economically diverse, and handicap accessible. If you are interested in intentional living in a beautiful natural area, then we want to meet you!

- Near historic downtown Corvallis with scenic riverfront park.
- Close to public transportation and bike paths.
- Short drive to the Oregon coast, the Cascade mountains, and old growth forests.
- Hiking trails, wildlife preserves, organic farming nearby.



[www.cohousing-corvallis.org](http://www.cohousing-corvallis.org) • Special opportunities for income-qualified first time home buyers! • 541-758-3347



**MADISON  
WISCONSIN**

35 new and retrofit  
units using green  
construction

\*

Active neighborhood  
association

\*

On bus line and  
bike trails

\*

Walking distance to  
downtown and UW

\*

Next to  
UW Arboretum and  
Vilas Park

\*

Excellent public  
schools

\*

Estimated move-in:  
Spring 2007

**Neighborhood  
Community Living**

arboretumcohousing.org

**SHIVALILA COMMUNITY, Pahoia, Hawaii.** We are seeking new members. Established in 1992, we have three adults and three children on our 37 acres. Values: honesty, nonviolence, shared parenting, income and assets. Organic juice and sawmilling business, homeschooling, marimbas, sustainability nonprofit, exotic fruit orchards, animal husbandry. Contact: *shivalila@aol.com*; or RR2 #3315, Pahoia, HI 96778.

**TWIN OAKS, Louisa, Virginia.** Twin Oaks has been crafting culture and sustainable community for over 35 years. We are currently looking for new members, and would love to have you visit. Right now we would especially like more woman members. We can offer you: work in our community businesses, an abundance of homegrown organic food, a thriving social scene, and an established culture of non-violence, feminism and egalitarianism. You can offer us: your talents and skills (or your unskilled enthusiasm) and your desire to live an ecological and income-sharing lifestyle. For information: *Twin Oaks, 138-R Twin Oaks Rd., Louisa, VA 23093; 540-894-5126; twinoaks@ic.org; www.twinoaks.org*

**COMMUNITIES FORMING  
AND REFORMING**

**COMMUNITY, Possibly Near Boulder, Colorado.** Mature adults seeking others to form spiritual, nondenominational, semirural western community. Contact *Moonwolf. lightascolor@frontier.net*

**KAKWA ECOVILLAGE, McBride, British Columbia.** Forming community seeking young families, families with children and committed communitarians for a unique cooperative housing opportunity. 540 organic acres in the magnificent Robson Valley with over a mile of frontage on the Fraser River, including flat pasture and scenic bluffs. Organic farmers, home-based businesses and creative "North-erners" are particularly sought. We have a four-season climate and are close to one of the gems of the Canadian Rocky Mountains, Kakwa Provincial Park. One Mind, One Heart, One Spirit and One Prayer. Contact:

*info@kakwaecovillage.com* or POB 725, McBride, BC Canada VOJ2E0; *www.kakwaecovillage.com*

**NAMASTE GREENFIRE COHOUSING, Center Barntsead, New Hampshire.** Intentional Cohousing Community, nature sanctuary, permaculture, activism. Loving more relationships. Real investments. *NGC, POB 31, Center Barnstead, NH 03225; 603-776-7776; nhnamaste@yahoo.com*

**UPSTATE NEW YORK/Catskills, Oneonta, New York.** Multiaged visionaries (about a dozen and growing) pooling acres and resources, seeking fabulous ways to create community life, living in harmony with nature, our inner spirit and each other. Sustainable, ecological, permacultural, income sharing, loving, open to creative lifestyles, peaceful, arts creative, spiritual, evolving. Our holistic health retreat is in the making with a health and environmental issues seminar given weekly. We encourage living foods/homegrown organics, sustainable alternative transportation, biodiesel, home energy and construction. So if you're a creative soul with skills plus fabulous ideas just bursting out and seeking an ideal vibrant community to apply them in, please get in touch. Don't put off your dream of enriching cooperative community living. Visualize and materialize. Contact *Nathan Batalion ND (naturopath) at 800-268-3259; batalionn@earthlink.net*

**NORTHWEST USA.** Forming: networking for Peace Multicultural Cohousing Resource Neighborhood, *www.abwwwrpeace.org*

**RURAL COOPERATIVE COMMUNITY, USA.** My husband and I are currently in Hawthorne, Florida with assets to invest into community. We've identified the values: oppose the root causes of war; the major goal: personal freedom for the individual. Help us make it happen! *Phone 352-481-0275 or for complete details and pictures, see www.everything-is-related.info*

**TRILLIUM FARM, Jacksonville, Oregon.** We, a couple of artists, educators and activists, are rebirthing Trillium Community Farm in southwestern Oregon! Equity memberships in LLC owning land and community buildings; private dwelling ownership, several available. Powerful wilderness landscape. Quiet, remote, scenic, yet less



**Study Abroad for a  
Sustainable Future**

Semester, J-Term, & Summer programs  
in Ecovillages around the world.  
College credit through UMass-Amherst

**Living  
Routes**

[www.LivingRoutes.org](http://www.LivingRoutes.org)  
(888) 515-7333

than an hour from several towns, regional city. Operate Birch Creek Arts and Ecology Center and university program. River, creek, ponds, excellent soil, organic gardens, sunny dry climate, gravity flow sweetwater. No dogs, much wildlife. Vegetarian community spaces. POB 1330, Jacksonville, OR 97530; 541-899-1696; [www.deepwild.org](http://www.deepwild.org)

**WHITE OAK FARM, Williams, Oregon.** Openings for community members on nonprofit farm and education center. [info@whiteoakfarmcsa.org](mailto:info@whiteoakfarmcsa.org)

**WHITE HAWK ECOLOGICAL VILLAGE, near Ithaca, New York.** Our vision embraces principles of ecological living, simplicity and diversity. We will express this through building affordable natural homes, developing land-based livings, farming and alternative schooling. [www.whitehawk.org](http://www.whitehawk.org) Contact Henry at [beauty77@lightlink.com](mailto:beauty77@lightlink.com) or 607-273-5879; Heather at [hbmcarty@msn.com](mailto:hbmcarty@msn.com)

## COMMUNITY HOUSES AND PROPERTY FOR SALE OR RENT

**AIRVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA.** Community-minded alternative homesteaders looking for kindred spirit(s) to rent mobile home, share organic garden space in rural Airville. Opportunity for market garden/CSA. Commuting distance to York and Lancaster, PA and Bel Air, MD. Beautiful hiking trails, Susquehanna River nearby. Contact us at: 717-862-1737 or 657 E. Posey Rd., Airville, PA 17302.

**ARTISTS' COMMUNITY, Eugene, Oregon.** Private two-bedroom house with studio in secluded urban artists' community. Live, work, sell. Gallery, greenhouse garden. \$650 plus utilities plus deposit. Partial work trade. 541-683-0626.

**EAST LAKE COHOUSING, Decatur/Atlanta, Georgia.** Mature, professional looking to share attractive, light/airy two bedroom, 1.5 bath townhouse in large, family-friendly, conservation-oriented community with four-acre organic garden. Convenient to downtown Atlanta, Emory U, CDC, Agnes Scott College. Many

community amenities. No smokers or pets. Rent \$455 or \$435 with four hours community work a month. One year lease. \$250 deposit. Contact [sstolzfus@cobbcrrb.com](mailto:sstolzfus@cobbcrrb.com)

**OAK CREEK COMMONS, Paso Robles, California.** Well-constructed newer home with beautiful views. Three bedrooms, two baths plus office with French doors, great kitchen has large island, low maintenance landscape with fruit trees. Enjoy privacy along with benefits of a cohousing community. Amenities include ten acres of oak woodland open space, off-leash dog park, 4000 sq. ft. common house, pool and spa. \$429,000. For more information please contact Christine McDonald of Prudential Hunter Realty toll free at 800-350-7171, ext. 135, or send email at [cmcd4re@charter.net](mailto:cmcd4re@charter.net)

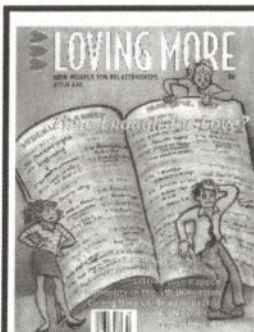
**ROCK RIVER, Floyd, Virginia.** 25 acres for sale of 65 acre community in the Blue Ridge Mountains in fabulous Floyd, Virginia, half hour to Virginia Tech in Blacksburg. Two homes, three cabins, outbuildings, studio/barn with workshop, stream, pond, 2000 feet of river frontage, open field, woods. Land one hundred percent usable. Structures are all ready and welcoming. \$425,000. Owner financing available. Call 540-789-7897; [rockriver@swva.net](mailto:rockriver@swva.net)

**SEBASTOPOL, CALIFORNIA.** One million dollar home for sale next door to like-minded family. Sebastopol is an amazing town with three Waldorf schools. To learn more, call Spencer at 707-824-4801.

## CONSULTANTS

**FACILITATION AND WORKSHOPS** on consensus and other decision-making tools. Learn skills to make your meetings upbeat and productive, from planning agendas to dealing with "difficult" people. Save hours of time and frustration and deepen your sense of community. Contact: Tree Bressen, 541-484-1156; [tree@ic.org](mailto:tree@ic.org); [www.treegroup.info](http://www.treegroup.info)

**SACRED ARCHITECTURE'S HARMONIZING INFLUENCES.** Buildings can generate vibrant, life supporting influences. Visit: [www.vastu-design.com](http://www.vastu-design.com);

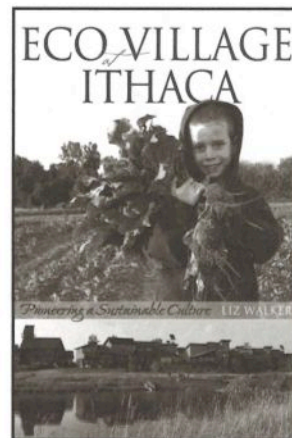


**Loving More®** is the only magazine on polyamory—open couples, triads & moresomes, sharing a lover, expanded family, sexual healing, jealousy, sacred sex, co-parenting, community, and other topics of interest to those who are open to more than one love. Plus regional groups, events, and personal contacts.

**Send** \$6 for sample issue or write for info on subscriptions, books, tapes, and East & West **summer conferences**.

**Loving More, Box 4358C, Boulder, CO 80306**  
[LMM@lovemore.com](mailto:LMM@lovemore.com) / [www.lovemore.com](http://www.lovemore.com) / 1-800-424-9561

## Living the Dream

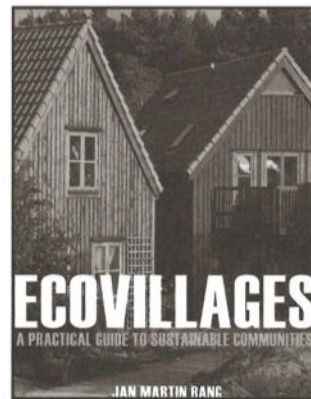


### EcoVillage at Ithaca

Pioneering  
a Sustainable Culture

LIZ WALKER

This hopeful book tells the story of an innovative community *living* a sustainable culture. \$17.95



### Ecovillages

A Practical Guide to  
Sustainable Communities

JAN MARTIN BANG

A unique combination of permaculture design and ecovillage planning—with examples from around the world. \$24.95

Available September



[WWW.NEWSOCIETY.COM](http://WWW.NEWSOCIETY.COM)  
800-567-6772



*Seeking creative ways  
to attract new  
community members?*



Neshama Abraham Paiss



Zev Paiss

**Our Services Include:**

- Getting Started Workshop
- Working with the Press
- Group Process Training
- Spokesperson Training
- Grassroots Marketing
- Website Development
- Membership Building
- Special Event Planning
- New Member Integration
- Ads & Promotional Materials



Call us at 303-413-8066, email us at  
Zpaiss@Comcast.net  
or visit [www.AbrahamPaiss.com](http://www.AbrahamPaiss.com)

**INTERNS AND RESIDENCIES**

**HEATHCOTE COMMUNITY, Freeland Maryland.** Internship in natural building and sustainable community living. April to November 2005. Minimum one-month commitment. Gain experience in construction and natural building techniques, including strawbale, cob, natural plaster, earthen floor and natural paint. Interns will work 40 hours per week on our new strawbale residence in exchange for room and full tuition to our natural building workshops. In addition interns will be integrated into community life and participate in our food coop. For more information see our web site: [www.heathcote.org](http://www.heathcote.org) or contact *Heathcote Community, 21300 Heathcote, Rd., Freeland, MD 21053; call 410-343-3478; email: info@heathcote.org*

**KAKWA ECOVILLAGE, McBride, British Columbia.** We seek intern(s) to manage our organic vegetable garden, where we grow food for our resident community, visitors and workshop guests. Other tasks are likely to include light construction, occasional housekeeping and workshop support. Flexibility, self-starting, and industriousness are desired qualities. May 1-Oct. 1. Minimum stay 30 days. Room, board, and workshop attendance included. For an application: [info@kakwaecovillage.com](mailto:info@kakwaecovillage.com); [www.kakwaecovillage.com](http://www.kakwaecovillage.com)

**SANDHILL FARM, Rutledge, Missouri.** Internships in Sustainable Community Living. April 1 to November 1, 2005. Gain experience in organic farming, food processing, tempeh production, home-stead maintenance and construction skills, consensus decision making, group and interpersonal process. Learning is informal and hands-on. Come for six weeks or longer. More information about the Sandhill Farm Intentional Community and applying for an internship: 660-883-5543; [interns@sandhillfarm.org](mailto:interns@sandhillfarm.org); [www.sandhillfarm.org](http://www.sandhillfarm.org)

**WINDTREE RANCH, Douglas, Arizona.** Land Stewardship Internships of 10-90 days. Living simply in the high desert on 600 acres, mild winters, tobacco/drug free, vegetarian, multi-generational. Physically demanding. Request application. [www.windtreeranch.org](http://www.windtreeranch.org); 4200 E.

Summerland Road, Douglas, AZ 85607-9779; 520-364-4611; [windtreeranch@direcpc.com](mailto:windtreeranch@direcpc.com)

**PEOPLE LOOKING**

**Interested in Eco-Forestry, Permaculture, Organic Gardening?** Seeking community-minded, secular, educated individuals with reason-based values. We have 29 acres to share in Yamhill County, Oregon. Located 30 miles SW of Portland. Call John or Pam 503-538-8096.

**PERSONALS**

**GREEN SINGLES.com** Free Photo Personal Ads for progressive singles in the environmental, vegetarian and animal rights communities who value natural health, personal growth and spirituality, for friendship, dating and marriage since 1985. Thousands of listings. Quick and easy sign-up. [www.GreenSingles.com](http://www.GreenSingles.com)

**PUBLICATIONS, BOOKS, WEB SITES**

**THE CONSENSUS POCKET GUIDE:** This 50-page guide offers leaders and facilitators the basic principles and methods for bringing about consensus-based decisions. A portable, easy-to-read reference. \$11.95 and s&h. Purchase at [www.consensustools.com](http://www.consensustools.com) along with other tools for participative decision making. Call 303-440-0425, ext. 3, or email: [info@consensustools.com](mailto:info@consensustools.com)

**COHOUSING: A CONTEMPORARY APPROACH TO HOUSING OURSELVES** by Kathryn McCamant and Charles Durrett. Hundreds of color and black and white photos to inspire, hundreds of drawings and diagrams to explain, and thousands of words to tell the story. You will want to start your own cohousing community by the time you have finished the first chapter. \$25 plus \$5 shipping (It is \$32 in store!) Order today from *The Cohousing Company, 1250 Addison Street, Suite 113, Berkeley, CA 94702. 510-549-9980, [coho@cohousingco.com](mailto:coho@cohousingco.com); [www.cohousingco.com](http://www.cohousingco.com)*

**COMMUNITIES MAGAZINE REACH ADVERTISING ORDER FORM**

Please specify which section you wish you ad to appear under:

- Communities with Openings
- Communities Forming     People Looking
- Internships     Resources

Cost: 25¢/wd. to 100 words, 50¢/wd. thereafter.  
23¢/wd.-2 inserts, 20¢/wd.-4 inserts. FIC members get 5% discount. Please include payment with submission.  
Abbrev. & phone # = 1 wd., PO Box = 2 wd.

\_\_\_\_ Word Count at 25¢/word = \$\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ Word Count at 50¢/word = \$\_\_\_\_\_  
TOTAL PAYMENT ENCLOSED \$\_\_\_\_\_

*Please type or print text of ad on separate sheet of paper.  
Make check out to Communities magazine.*

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

TOWN \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form with payment (by August 20 for the Fall issue) to:  
**Patricia Greene, 381 Hewlett Road, Hermon, NY 13652;**  
[patricia@ic.org](mailto:patricia@ic.org)

**NEW SOLUTIONS: THE COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS REPORT** contains original research on a variety of issues relative to living in a post-oil society. Recent issues include "Cuba: Life After Oil," reporting on Cuba's creative response to the loss of oil and food subsidies when the USSR collapsed in early 1990: "Community Resurgence and Oil Depletion," an in depth report on the second annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Peak Oil (ASPO) in France, 2003; and "Report from Germany: The Third International Meeting on Peak Oil and Gas," covering the 2004 ASPO meeting and giving an in depth explanation of hydrogen. Upcoming issues will cover "The First US Conference on Peak Oil and Community Solutions," held November 2004, a detailed look at alternative energy, and ASPO 2005. New Solutions is published by Community Service, Inc. (CSI), under its new program "The Community Solution." CSI, a nonprofit organization founded in 1940 to promote small local community, is the original founder of the FIC. Yearly subscription/membership is \$25. For a free sample of New Solutions, write or call POB 243, Yellow Springs, OH 45387, 937-767-2161; [info@communitysolution.org](mailto:info@communitysolution.org), or read them online at [www.communitysolution.org](http://www.communitysolution.org)

**HAVENS:** Stories of True Community Healing. This new book by Leonard Jason and Martin Perdoux presents a relatively low-cost and effective solution growing in neighborhoods across the country: true community. People are moving in together to meet each other's needs and to offer a way to recover the caring, structure, direction and respect that a healthy family can provide. People living together in these healing communities include the elderly, recovering alcoholics and drug addicts and people suffering from mental illness and chronic illnesses. To order a copy of this book from Praeger Publishers, call 1-800-225-5800.

**INTRODUCTION TO CONSENSUS.** Useful information about participatory group process and sustainable decision making. Includes 28-page Guide For Facilitators. Also available in Spanish. [Briggsbea@aol.com](mailto:Briggsbea@aol.com); \$15 check or money order to Beatrice Briggs, POB 25, Black Earth, WI 53515.

**WHY PAY RENT OR MAKE MORTGAGE PAYMENTS,** when you can live rent free? The

Caretaker Gazette contains property caretaking/housesitting openings, advice and information for property caretakers, housesitters and landowners. Published since 1983. Subscribers receive 800+ property caretaking opportunities each year, worldwide. Some estate management positions start at \$50,000/yr, plus benefits. Subscriptions: \$29/yr. *The Caretaker Gazette*, POB 4005, Bergheim, TX 78004; [www.caretaker.org](http://www.caretaker.org).

## RESOURCES

**FEDERATION OF EGALITARIAN COMMUNITIES (FEC). LIVE YOUR VALUES, LEARN NEW SKILLS.** For 25 years, the FEC has welcomed new members to our groups based on cooperation, ecology, fairness, and nonviolence. No joining fees required, just a willingness to join in the work. We share income from a variety of cottage industries. For more information: [www.thefec.org](http://www.thefec.org); [fec@ic.org](mailto:fec@ic.org); 417-679-4682; or send \$3 to FEC, HC-3, Box 3370-CM00, Tecumseh, MO 65760.

## WORK OPPORTUNITIES

**SHANNON FARM,** Afton, Virginia. Summer in community! Interested in trying intentional community living briefly? Our community celebrated its 30th anniversary last year! I'm a twelve-year member, a busy, lively mother of two (7 and 11), work full-time and have a comfortable room that could be yours for the summer (June to the end of August). Explore our community in exchange for helping me drive the kids around (summer camps, soccer, etc.) and doing some light housework/chores. Be over 18, a nonsmoker and provide three references. Email Amelia: [inkwell@alumni.virginia.edu](mailto:inkwell@alumni.virginia.edu)

## WORKSHOPS AND CLASSES

**LAMA FOUNDATION,** near Taos, New Mexico. We are offering VERY EXCITING Permaculture programs this summer! See [www.lamafoundation.org](http://www.lamafoundation.org) or call 505-586-1269 for details.

## Northwest Intentional Communities Association



Communities networking  
WA, OR, ID.  
Intentional Communities  
and Cohousing.  
Newsletter and gatherings.  
Huge web resource library at  
<http://www.ic.org/nica>

For sample newsletter send \$1 or SASE to: NICA 2007 33rd Ave S.  
Seattle, WA 98144 Email [floriferous@msn.com](mailto:floriferous@msn.com)

## PASADENA COHOUSING

A DIVERSE COMMUNITY  
OF 20-25 UNITS FORMING  
IN THE PASADENA  
CALIFORNIA AREA.



FOR INFORMATION CALL  
(626) 737-4196

OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE

[WWW.PASACOHU.ORG](http://WWW.PASACOHU.ORG)

## Virgo Editing



All the editing you need:  
order from chaos  
or a touch of perfection.

Reasonable rates  
(sliding scale available)  
Small jobs welcome



Susan T. Brown  
7 Dancing Rabbit Lane  
Rutledge, MO 63563  
660-883-5669  
[virgoediting@yahoo.com](mailto:virgoediting@yahoo.com)

**Communities Magazine—  
Subscribe Today!**

Your source for the latest information, issues, and ideas about intentional communities and cooperative living!

Supplements the *Communities Directory* (see *Directory* ad on the inside back cover) with update listings about communities in North America—including those now forming.

**Fellowship for Intentional  
Community (FIC) Memberships!**

The FIC is a network of communitarians promoting communication and understanding about and among intentional communities across North America. The Fellowship:

- publishes *Communities* magazine and the best-selling *Communities Directory*.
- built and maintains the Intentional Communities site on the World Wide Web

<[www.ic.org](http://www.ic.org)>.

- hosts gatherings and events about community.
- builds bridges between communities and the wider culture.
- serves as an information clearinghouse for all aspects of community—for individuals, groups, and the media.

FIC membership supports these efforts and offers the following benefits:

- our quarterly newsletter.
- discounts on selected products and services.
- advertising discounts in our publications.
- invitations to board meetings and other activities.
- first notice on whatever we're doing, and the opportunity to get in early! Join the Fellowship team today!

FIC MEMBERSHIP, COMMUNITIES MAGAZINE, & DIRECTORY ORDER

**Fellowship for Intentional Community Membership**

- Yes, I'll join the Fellowship for Intentional Community! (Check appropriate membership category)
- New member     Renewal
- Community:  \$30 Individual     \$15 Low Income
- Organization \$50
- Donor:  \$40 for under 10 members,  \$75 for 10-40 members,  \$100 for over 40
- Supporting, \$100 & up;  Sustaining, \$250 & up;  Sponsoring, \$500 & up.
- Amounts greater than basic membership are tax deductible.
- Please send me more info on FIC services

**Communities magazine** (Outside US prices in parentheses)

1 year, quarterly - \$20 (\$24 Canada, \$26 other),  2 yr \$34 (\$42 Canada, \$46 other),  3 yr \$45

(\$57 Canada, \$63 other),  Single issue \$6 (\$7 Canada, \$8 other)

**Communities Directory** (See the ad on the inside front cover)

\$27 US, postpaid book rate. Call or visit [store.ic.org](http://store.ic.org) for other destinations and options. Please call for quantity discounts!

Enclosed is my check payable to FIC in US funds.

Charge Visa/MC/Dscvr # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp Date \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount - \$ \_\_\_\_\_  Check Enclosed     Charged

NAME OF INDIVIDUAL OR CONTACT PERSON \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

GROUP NAME OR AFFILIATION (IF APPROPRIATE) \_\_\_\_\_

STREET \_\_\_\_\_ STATE/PROVINCE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP/POSTAL CODE \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/TOWN \_\_\_\_\_

Please *don't* share my name with other like-minded organizations.

Photocopy and mail to: **FIC, 138-CM Twin Oaks Rd, Louisa VA 23093. Ph 800-462-8240**



## PERIPATETIC COMMUNITARIAN

(continued from p. 80)

"The ownership structure," as explained on their website, "is diverse—some houses are owned by community residents, some by absentee landlords, and others as partnerships of (former) tenants in the community." Over the years the residents have recruited their friends and other cooperatively oriented folks to join the community, filling vacancies or occupying new units as they become available. The reality is that few of the residents could have afforded to buy their own home on their own, yet collectively they had the creativity, economic power and vision to help each other purchase their homes and to rebuild their common house. Rentals were added to the mix when people interested in joining the community talked the absentee landlords into signing long-term leases—with the agreement that the fence could be removed as long as the boards were saved for potential future reconstruction.

After some inspired local organizing, in 1999 the city council agreed to rezone the community as a "planned development," allowing the construction of larger granny flats with each unit. This meant, in essence, the group could double their housing units without buying any additional land, thus eliminating one of the big expenses of new housing. This summer, they will be rebuilding their common house and adding a four-bedroom unit above the new downstairs common space and elder suite.

N Street has pioneered a lot of options for making community life fulfilling and affordable, and they hope others will gain practical ideas and inspiration from their model. For in-depth details about the community and how it evolved, check out their website, [www.nstreetcohousing.org](http://www.nstreetcohousing.org), and also read Donna Spreitzer's thesis about N Street Cohousing, which is linked from there. Ω

*Geoph Kozeny has lived in various kinds of communities for 32 years, and has been on the road for 17 years visiting communities—asking about their visions and realities, taking photos, and in general exploring what makes them tick. Presently, he is editing part two of a video documentary, "Visions of Utopia," on intentional communities, aspiring to convey the vision and passion that drives the movement, and tell stories about what works. N Street will be featured in one of the video segments.*

## NEW YORK CITY

# Ganas

A 25 year-old intentional community with 10 houses, 4 businesses and a commitment to open communication



We especially need people with renovation skills and/or able to move furniture

[www.ganas.org](http://www.ganas.org)  
718-720-5378

## The CoHousing Company

a division of  
McCament & Durrett Architects

Founded in 1988 by  
Kathryn McCament and Charles Durrett  
No one in the U.S. has more cohousing  
design and development experience



### Complete Design & Development Services

- Architectural Design emphasizing Sustainability
- Design Programming Workshops
- Site Feasibility and Project Management
- Slide Presentations and "Getting-It-Built" Workshops
- Experienced in all aspects of cohousing development

Nevada City (530-265-9980) • Berkeley (510-549-9980)  
[www.cohousingco.com](http://www.cohousingco.com)

## Cohousing: Affordable Housing?

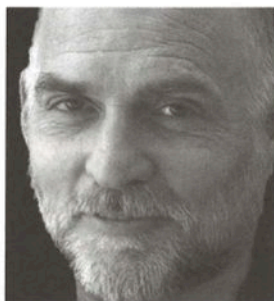
When cohousing first arrived on the scene in the U.S. in the late 1980s, I heard lots of excitement from prospective cohousers about this new approach to community living, including the idea that it would provide new “affordable” housing options. For the most part, those hopes of affordability were soon dashed upon the shoals of economic reality.

The first reality was the fact that most new cohousing communities were of new construction—built from the ground up and including substantial site development costs, notably land, roads, utilities, and sewers. New construction is rarely cheap, especially given that most zoning regulations and building codes prevent or greatly restrict the use of recycled materials and alternative building techniques. Further, there’s a tendency for the members of a budding community to give in to the temptation to customize the design of their units, and customization always adds to the price tag. And to the question: “Might remodeling an existing structure be more affordable?” Rarely. Remodeling, at least when extensive in scope, is typically more expensive than building new.

The second reality was that, by its very nature, the cohousing concept includes extensive common facilities in the master plan. Such amenities are often available in larger market-rate housing developments, however in those cases the costs are typically spread out over many more units—thus cohousing’s per-unit cost of shared facilities tends to be higher than in conventional developments. Based on analysis of completed projects, the average cohousing development costs at least as much as conventional developments, and in some cases as much as 10 to 20 percent more.

There are two notable exceptions to the not-so-affordable trend: subsidized units, and neighborhood retrofit projects where not much upgrading or expansion is required.

In some areas, either state or local regulations require that multifamily developments include a certain percentage of affordable units. Occasionally, the residents find ways to finance those units through mark-ups on the construction of their own homes. Most often, the subsidies come in the form of grants or low-interest loans from public agencies or charitable organizations.



BY GEOPH KOZENY

My favorite model for affordable cohousing is N Street in Davis, California. The community started in 1979 as a cooperative household in a single rental unit in a working class and student rental neighborhood (i.e., relatively inexpensive small units on 6000 square foot lots, nothing especially fancy, with affordable rents). In 1984 one of the members bought the house they were living in, and the group began turning the back yard into a permaculture garden. Two years later one of their group purchased the house next door and took down the fence between them. Since then the group has grown to include 17 houses with 15 contiguous

back yards without fences. A celebratory fence demolition party is scheduled each time a new house is added to the community. This subdivision has no alleys behind the lots, so joining back-to-back lots is as easy as for those situated side-by-side.

The community has grown to include 40 adults and 18 children who enjoy sharing a common house kitchen, living room and eating area; flower, vegetable, and herb gardens; large lawn and play structures; picnic area; hot tub and sauna; pond and water gardens;

community laundry; and a chicken coop. They also have weekly community meetings, monthly work parties, and three to four community dinners each week. Many of the residences are shared homes in which unrelated individuals participate as one household sharing food costs, utilities, and household expenses.

(continued on p. 79)

***A celebratory fence demolition party is scheduled each time a new house is added to the community.***

Intentional Communities Store

http://store.ic.org/products/communities-directory-2005.html

Community Classifieds

Intentional Communities Store

Fellowship for Intentional Community

Store Home | ic.org Home | Directory | Shopping Cart | Search | Shipping | Discounts | Privacy | Help | Contact Us

Community Made .com

◆ New! ◆ Specials ◆

◆ Membership

◆ Communities Magazine

- ◆ Subscriptions
- ◆ Samples
- ◆ Back Issues
- ◆ Reprint Collections

◆ Visions of Utopia Video

◆ Community Bookshelf

- ◆ Communities Directory
- ◆ CCR Consensus Books
- ◆ Books by Category
  - ◆ Finding Community
  - ◆ Building Community
  - ◆ Community Stories
  - ◆ Communication Tools
  - ◆ Natural Gardening
  - ◆ Natural Food
  - ◆ Living Sustainably
  - ◆ Social Change
  - ◆ Sustainable Building
  - ◆ Alternative Energy
  - ◆ Parenting
  - ◆ Rituals, Celebrations, and Transitions
- ◆ View All Books by Title
- ◆ View All Books by Author

◆ Published by the Fellowship for Intentional Community

◆ Donations

◆ T-Shirts

**eNewsletter**  
Monthly, Free

Name:

Email:

[More Info](#)

Products Made in Communities  
[communitymade.com](http://communitymade.com)

Developed by  
[Glory Day Software Company](#)

[Acknowledgements](#)

[Copyright](#)

## Communities Directory

### Fourth Edition

published by the Fellowship for Intentional Community, Rutledge, Missouri, USA  
**Pre-Release Offering** -- Book Will Be Shipped Summer 2005  
Approximately 275 pages; paperback; 8-1/2x11 inches; ISBN: 0-9718264-2-0



\$30.00  
now \$24.00

[Large Picture](#)

**This is a pre-release offering of the new 2005 *Communities Directory*, scheduled for publication in the summer of 2005. It is based on the data collected through FIC's new Online Communities Directory, <http://directory.ic.org>. Product will be shipped on publication. Credit cards will be charged at time of shipment.**

This special discount is for those ordering directly from the FIC. Price is subject to change.

For updates on publication schedule, please see <http://directory.ic.org/book.php>.

*Communities Directory: A Comprehensive Guide to Intentional Communities and Cooperative Living* is the essential reference tool for those interested in finding or creating community. As well as listings for over 700 communities, it includes a set of useful articles about finding, joining, and starting communities, and an overview of the history and tools of shared living.

The *Communities Directory* is the door to an amazing range of choices in cooperative living today - some of which have been tested by time, and others that are on the cutting edge of experimentation. The *Communities Directory* is an encyclopedia of positive alternatives to a mainstream culture that is often fragmented and alienating. It is the inspiring stories of groups all over the world pioneering ways to share resources and live cooperatively. Whether used as a reference, educational resource, or a road map for a personal quest, the *Communities Directory* is a comprehensive and easy-to-use tool offering the following.

**LISTINGS:**  
Descriptions from over 700 intentional communities in North America and around the world. Entries offer contact information, core values, availability for visits, and a glimpse of the vision that holds them together.

**MAPS:**  
Locations of North American communities are displayed on a set of regional maps, great for trip planning and proximity to cities and other communities.

**CHARTS:**  
A fast and easy reference. Searching for a large, urban ecovillage? A community with lots of children? Just use the handy chart to quickly find the community that meets your needs.

**ARTICLES:**  
Covers the basics of intentional community including what they are, how to visit, and the state of the communities movement.

A comment from Patch Adams:  
"The *Communities Directory* is one of my favorite books. It is so clearly the best book for anyone who wants to live community. The articles are the fantastic nuts and bolts of making community, written by many so that one can get a wide selection of voices. The listing of communities is a cornucopia of free better homes and gardens; an invitation to a much deeper kind of wealth and economy, asking only for your joyful effort. The resources and index are gold. All this in one book? Should be illegal. If humankind is to survive, it will be because it learns to live community. This is its guidebook--please get it." --Patch Adams, Gesundheit! Institute

**community**  
tools and resources

**“I believe women are naturally good communicators, and do well in community settings. In communities like ours, women weren’t suppressed in any way. And it was great for the kids. Ask them today and they all want to live in cohousing communities.”**

**— Hildur Jackson**



**Communities, Journal of Cooperative Living**  
Rt 1 Box 156  
Rutledge MO 63563

Subscriptions - 4 issues: \$20; \$24 Canada; \$26 outside U.S./Canada; US dollars