



Cohousing in Corvallis

An E Newsletter from CoHo Cohousing
Corvallis, Oregon

Issue 24 August 2006



Remember when your best friend lived right next door?

The Secret Ingredient in Sustainability

Sustainability covers a large domain--from green building to land preservation to energy use. Likewise, there are many factors that influence the success of sustainability efforts--from legislation to weather to local market conditions.

Is there a key factor across all of these variables that provides the basic support and foundation for sustainability? For Jim Leach, president of Wonderland Hill Development Company, that secret ingredient is community. Wonderland has played a role in the development of 20 cohousing communities (about 25% of the 80 built communities in the US), so they have good "depth perception" on cohousing. They have seen first-hand that the likelihood of launching, maintaining, and expanding sustainability projects increases with group support. Cohousing is structured in both its physical and organizational design to facilitate the expression of group values through group action. Working together, cohousers can "turn things around!" (especially with demonstration by our toddlers).



CoHo's sustainability vision is to balance and support the community's relationship with the natural environment moving toward mutual restoration of the land, people and other living things.



The list of [CoHo's sustainability features](#) is two pages long. It's certainly a step in the right direction to support permaculture, preservation and restoration of natural areas, organic gardening, radiant floor heating, solar energy, bioswales for water control, plus green building materials and practices. But what keeps folks stepping in the right direction, making those basic day-to-day choices to make a difference especially in view of dire predictions of global warming and peak oil?

After seeing the film [An Inconvenient Truth](#), several CoHoots got together to explore ways to individually and collectively respond to environmental challenges. The organizer invited folks to "loco mote to this session by carpooling, biking, or walking and to bring food grown locally," urging them to "experiment with some of these dimensions and see what we discover."

Anne biked to Mike's house with her chair strapped on her bike; they carpoled to the meeting location. Robert, Xochil, and Brenda biked. Susan walked. Blackberries picked on the CoHo site were shared as the "local foods" part of the experiment.



The conversation was far-reaching, from global issues to US concerns, from city solutions to community projects to individual commitments. Folks recognized that CoHoots were at different spots along the "green" dimension and that there is a reluctance to have "green police" monitoring our behaviors. Instead, neighbors want support along their paths, sometimes taking individual actions, sometimes tapping the ideas, energy, and camaraderie of the group to amplify solutions. The group was also hopeful that our non-violent communication (NVC) skills would help us to dialogue in a caring way (remembering to speak in a giraffe voice, and also to hear with giraffe ears). It's no secret that CoHo members appreciate the willingness of their neighbors to connect on important issues like sustainability.

3-Way "PreUnion" in California

It wasn't officially a "reunion" because these three CoHo families, all California residents, had never met in person. But it was a LOT of fun--so much fun that they didn't get around to taking pictures!!



Instead, they agreed to send photos of their individual families, along with their reactions to the get-together.

Joey wrote: We met at Ted and Meredith's house in Berkeley. The kids played in the grass and on the porch, on the swing, and on the rope. During dinner, the younger kids enjoyed eating very ripe mangos, and enjoyed smearing them on their faces and shirts nearly as much as eating them.

David and I really enjoyed meeting the others and getting a preview of what life at CoHo might be like for the kids, and we are now even *more* excited about moving in with you all!! (Photo: Joey, Aria and Dave are wearing matching caps she knit)

Ted said: It was really great to have everyone over to our house, especially since I was single handed with two very active kids. Meredith was at a close friend's 40th birthday party and was sad she missed everyone, but it was a lot of fun. We ordered pizza and Joey and Dave graciously brought a whole bunch of yummy fruit from the Berkeley Bowl. They took the Bart Train all the way over from the East bay and walked to our house from the station. Yeah public transit!



Jessica shared: Shoshana's comment is that "it was SO much fun." Jeremy and I were struck by the fact that, just as has happened when we've met other CoHoers, we were all enjoying each other's company from the get-go. The kids were a hoot to watch (throwing balls around was a main feature) and Shoshana and Mason invented an interesting game of tag where the one who is "it" tries to get a cowboy hat on the other player(s). Shoshana learned that playing with boys can be fun (uh oh). And the mangoes were great!



Corvallis Corner

The Benton County Fair runs August 2-4 at the county fairgrounds and offers a wide range of activities. Take family/friends and enjoy the pie-eating contest, watermelon seed spitting contest, talent show, tractor parade and pull, karaoke contest, Willamette Valley Fiddle Contest, and baby celebration. Visit the livestock exhibits, plus check out the photography, fiber arts, and floral exhibits (don't miss the scarecrow contest!). And don't forget all of the musical performances, carnival, and rodeo. P.S. Take the free shuttle running every half hour from downtown and OSU.

Break open your piggy bank and bring a 3-12 year old to Central Park on Friday, August 4th from 1:30 to 4:00pm for the **Penny Carnival**, where games cost—you guessed it!—a penny.

Beating the Heat

What do you do when the temperature peaks above 100 on a Corvallis July weekend (a record-breaking event)? You head for water! Some CoHoots enjoyed getting wet at the Osborn Aquatic Center outdoor swim and slide and splash venue. What an awesome way to watch the sunset....



CoHoots and friends also headed for the Willamette River with inner tubes, kayaks, a canoe and a raft.

After a safety briefing and check-in, the group headed to the entry point. A rope helped folks make the steep descent while some of the inner tubes took a shortcut (they got tossed down from the overpass). A smooth launch was followed by a smooth ride down the river.



The Willamette River clearly has magical properties because when the group came ashore at Michael's Landing (just north of downtown), their appearance was remarkably different....



Inner tubes were turned upright to become wheels and a huge, colorful bumpy surface erupted.

Oh, wait....it looks like our newsletter editor had heat stroke and mixed up the photos. Here's the CoHo group on the right. The

photo at the left is from Corvallis' world-renowned daVinci Days Kinetic Sculpture Race with a course covering land, sand, mud, and water.



Two Homes Available in CoHo

Very soon this sign on our site will be nestled next to construction equipment and piles of dirt. Construction is expected to start this September. Attend our August 12-13th Welcome Weekend and learn more about CoHo. Please RSVP so we know how many visitors we will be hosting.

To find out more about CoHo Cohousing

Website: <http://www.cohousing-corvallis.com/index.shtml>

Email: cohocontact@cohousing-corvallis.com

Phone: Juva DuBoise @ 541-908-5882 →

Susan Hyne @ 541-753-4453 →

The blackberry bounty from Susan's trip to the CoHo site
Juva cooling off in the river



Click [HERE](#) to read issues of previous newsletters on our website

