

Cohousing

The Newsletter for Cohousing in Canada

Volume 19 ~ Issue 1

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Send news, stories, ads, humour, reports, letters, pictures, etc. to:

**Patrick Meyer, editor
Cohousing Newsletter
#7 - 20543 96 Avenue
Langley, BC, V1M 3W3**

**Tel: 778-298-6835
meyer@windsong.bc.ca**

Spring on Vancouver Island

**By Rosalind McKenzie
Pacific Gardens Cohousing
Nanaimo, BC**

It is springtime once again and it is delightful to hear the sweet bird songs and the quite loud sound of the spring peepers in our pond starting up!

In January Pacific Gardens hosted the final Tree Bressen Consensus Facilitation Intensive weekend on behalf of the BC cohousing communities.

Most of our community participated in one way or another. Our hard-working cooks, Sharon Fulton, Tara Thurber, and the kids, did a fabulous job of feeding us. Our newest member, Bill Woolverton, oversaw all operations, and John Carver and Kari Fetherston took care of the sleeping arrangements and the rest of us helped where we were needed. What an incredible weekend. Thanks Tree. Thanks to our whole community. Thanks to all the participating cohousing communities! Let's do it again. We

all need this wonderful stuff to help us all along the cohousing way.

February was a month full of surprises, with many Mexican-style birthdays being celebrated. Our Libyan family arrived safely back from visiting their family back home just as the unrest in



that country was starting. Our kitchen is now certified so we can use it for home-based businesses, and we changed our downstairs office to upstairs so the kids had a playroom near their parents. The sign on the door says "Royal Raging Rumpus In Progress – Proceed with Caution!", which says it all.

(Continued on page 2)

Fernwood Progresses Through Public Hearings

**By Bill McKechnie
Fernwood Urban Village
Victoria, BC**

The shrill voice from the audience cuts above all the other speakers and rises to the top of the agenda

“Your group is going to keep me awake in the summer, drumming and chanting into the night!”

Oh my, I thought, how do I respond to a comment like this from an elderly lady in a land-use meeting?

How do I explain this could happen on a summer solstice night but the fact is, most of our group of cohousers can barely stay awake watching Peter Mansbridge and the late news.

Ah yes, Victoria City rezoning bylaws require our Fernwood Urban Village to explain itself to the neighbours, and there I

was, holding the first of four public hearings, working towards making our dream of a cohousing “Village” a reality.

That was over a year ago. The good news is we are gaining legs.

This April 5th, we finished our third and final neighbourhood hearing, part of the mandatory process decreed by the Victoria City Council in order for our group to obtain that critical development permit and rezoning.

By the third hearing the attendance was great, and so was our support. By now the word was spreading. There was something different happening in the Fernwood neighbourhood. People were starting to understand that we are a group of homeowners committed to sustainability, organic food production and

community living. We showed drawings of our energy wise facilities, designed so individuals could live with a lighter footprint on the planet. All this... and living near the centre of our beautiful city of Victoria!

This time we had only minor comments from a few neighbours. During the period of these hearings the architects modified our building designs to the betterment of the neighbourhood and the Village as a whole. We lost one unit (now 31) but gained a secure bike shed for 50 bikes.

There was a good sense of support among the audience for the minimal number of cars spaces proposed and the fact we are engaging in car share.

Although the actual rezoning is still to come, we now have 11 members. We have kept the numbers low in order to get some fundamental governance issues resolved and practice consensus decision making. We have a large number of potential members who have filed “expressions of interest,” describing themselves and their desire to live in community near the heart of Victoria. I expect we will be asking a second wave of say, 10 new members to join us soon.

(Continued from page 1)

Having come away from our January Intensive weekend feeling renewed and refreshed, this February was also our launch pad for deciding to host a permaculture course in our dining room, kitchen and garden area. The teachers and students determine what the host property needs and then the class flies at it every second weekend till the end of May. We are thanking our lucky stars because this way

our garden gets the help it needs and there wasn't too much disruption to the regular operation of the community. We are grateful.

So when you plan your next trip to Vancouver Island, please call or email us and plan a day to stay with us! Rent our guest rooms, check out the area, and meet some of the folks living here.

Our website is www.pacificgardens.ca,
Have a lovely spring!



Belterra Files for Rezoning

**By Roger McGillivray
Belterra Cohousing
Bowen Island, BC**

On March 21, 2011 the Belterra Cohousing rezoning proposal was presented to the Bowen Island Municipal Council for the first time. The project was very well received and Council voted unanimously to send it out to the various referral agencies and advisory bodies who will report back with their comments over the next few weeks.

The Belterra members, many of whom attended the meeting on the 21st, were pleased with this outcome as this is the ideal next step towards a successful rezoning. The optimistic and realistic goal is to have the rezoning completed before the municipal elections this November.

In the meantime we are moving forward with all aspects of the project. Monthly information meetings are being held and the Belterra membership now numbers 10 Equity Members as well as another 10

Associate Members, several of whom are very close to becoming Equity Members.

In addition to our public information meetings we also have monthly design, community building, legal/finance, and business meetings.

Ronaye Matthew of CDC Cohousing Development Consulting is leading and

year round stream surrounded by large evergreen trees will become parkland.

Peter Treuheit of Mobius Architecture (Robert's Creek Cohousing and Wolf Willow Cohousing) is working along with one of our members, Steve Snyder, to create a beautiful neighbourhood representing all Belterrans'

dreams and wishes. At this point, we are only at a conceptual stage – but it's a wonderful and realistic concept none the less.

Membership continues to grow and new inquiries are welcome.

Construction is scheduled

to begin in the spring of 2012.

guiding us through the process and we are all confident her involvement will ensure a successful project.

The Belterra rezoning proposal is for 30 residences within 5 buildings plus a common house and other auxiliary buildings on approximately half of a beautiful 10 acre site. The other half, which includes a



Changes at WindSong Over the Last 15 Years

**By Maureen Butler
WindSong Cohousing
Langley, BC**

WindSong has now been a community for almost 15 years, construction was completed in July 1996.

Now, of 34 units, only 11 households remain of the "original" residents, though a few more members who moved in during our first year are also still here. A lot of change of owners/renters has occurred in the last year, leaving me with mixed feelings: I am so happy for the people who have moved away to more appropriate situations, often to a shorter commute to their workplace.

At the same time, I feel a sense of loss and a bit trepidacious about the prospects of getting to know a lot of new people. If WindSong were my extended family, it feels like my sister moved to another country and someone I don't know just married my cousin.

I suspect these mixed feelings are normal in a

cohousing community. We are, after all, a village, and we are sad when someone leaves our home, to relocate or to pass on. WindSong has traditionally held a potluck dinner to say goodbye to residents, and this closure has helped me to say what I need to say in goodbyes and appreciations. All these changes have left me wondering whether cohousing communities have a greater percentage of long term residents than other types of housing.

One reason my husband and I moved to WindSong was for the opportunity for our two year old daughter to grow up in a community. She is now 17 and headed for university, which has led me to re-examine my own priorities. Living in a more urban environment with less reliance on our car is starting to look appealing. But last week my husband said "can you really see yourself living in an apartment downtown, with no neighbours that you know?" This made me re-appreciate

what we have here.

It's also strange to be referred to as one of the "founding members" of WindSong. I was not involved in the planning stages of our community and became a member only a year before construction. But I guess anyone who moved in at the beginning is considered a founding member. WindSong is the place I have lived the longest in my life; before this I moved around 2 dozen times. It's fascinating to settle in a place and have a sense of its history, as many people did in cities, towns and villages in the past. I find myself recounting events and decisions to newer residents to give them a sense of our history here, and I have toyed with the idea of writing down our community history.

Living in WindSong for a long time does have many benefits, one of which is my desire to "pass down" our experiences to newer members.



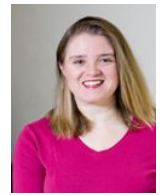
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For more information contact:



Andrea Welling
andrea@momcoach.ca

Become a member of the Canadian Cohousing Network

The Canadian Cohousing Network (CCN) is a registered non-profit organization that promotes the creation of cohousing communities as a model for sustainable development by raising public awareness about cohousing and by bringing people together to form communities.

The most valuable function of the CCN is making connections with people who are interested in living in a cohousing community. The CCN links individuals and cohousing groups together to share resources and make the process of creating a community easier and more economical.

For more information contact:

Western Canada

Canadian Cohousing Network
#27 - 20543 96 Avenue,
Langley, BC, V1M 3W3

Eastern Canada

Canadian Cohousing Network
186 Ridgewood Crescent,
Bolton, ON, L7E 4V6
Tel: 905-857-8738

www.cohousing.ca

Homes for Sale or Rent

By Patrick Meyer
Editor, Cohousing Newsletter
Canadian Cohousing Network

Advertising homes for sale or rent is a free service provided to members of the Canadian Cohousing Network. To draw attention to this feature we've added this special feature to this newsletter. All the listings can still, of course, be found on the CCN website: www.cohousing.ca

The information provided in this section has been uploaded by subscribed members of the Canadian Cohousing Network. The CCN does not take responsibility for the accuracy or reliability of any of the information contained in this section.

Vancouver Island

Pacific Gardens Nanaimo, BC www.pacificgardens.ca

5 New units still available
Unit sizes:
1 bdm+den to 3 bdm+den
Price \$289,000 - \$509,000

Previously owned:
Apartment three bdm+den
Price: \$495,000

Creekside Commons Courtenay, BC www.creeksidecommons.ca

Duplex 4 bdm+den
Price: \$375,000

Duplex 3 bdm
Price: \$330,000

Duplex - 3 bdm
Price: \$339,000

Note that Creekside Commons also has a 4 bedroom duplex for rent.

Metro Vancouver

Quayside Village North Vancouver, BC Apartment 1 bdm Price: \$309,800 sites.google.com/site/quaysidevillage/home

WindSong Langley, BC www.windsong.bc.ca Townhouse 3 bdm Price: \$349,900

BC Interior

The Middle Road Nelson, BC Single family - 4 bdm Price: \$519,500 propertyguys.com/property/index/id/58051

No listings presently for other areas of Canada.



Vignettes from Cohousing — Business Meetings

By: Sarah Arthurs
Prairie Sky Cohousing
Calgary, AB

It was a grey Sunday afternoon - the kind that used to be dreadfully boring as a kid. Church done, parents napping or taking a walk. Nothing much really to do and no one to play with.

I come home from Church. My family is all occupied. I know there is a Prairie Sky business meeting scheduled. The agenda is low key. No proposals, no group processes to be attended to.

I feel kind of ambivalent about going, slipping into the knee-jerk response that no meeting is a good meeting; certainly something one does because it's the only way to make certain things happen. It is the means to various ends, a necessary evil in our doing and accomplishing as human beings. If things could happen without meetings that would be better, that would be ideal!

I decide to go, nothing else better to do. Take the dog for a walk, show up late, in time for check-in .

And then the tableau begins to shift as I sit there feeling guilty about being late, about being ambivalent about my participation. I listen to my neighbours "checking in", sharing briefly the highlights, low lights, quests, pursuits

and gifts they are currently enjoying. Folk speak of work; too much, too little. Kids sick again, the music they are making, the cinnamon buns and bike ride they enjoyed this morning. The particular and the general. There is safety, laughter, caring; each person has a place in this space of sharing.

As I move through my ambivalence and start my check-in I add one more bead to the bracelet of connected neighbour stories. I feel very good and very settled. Where else would I rather be? What else would I rather be doing? Who else would I rather be with?

I like these people. I enjoy them; the shifting and morphing of their persons, the good jokes and bad, the kindness and interest in their eyes. I like the energy and intimacy we have together as a group that comes from the practices of respect, integrity, openness and authenticity

which we try to embody in our community.

This is good. This is what it is all about. Rather than the business meeting becoming a means to an end and each person an object in that process, this group of people, the way we are together, the way we show up and listen, laugh, speak and be together is an end in itself. This is the reason for meeting. The reason for the existence of cohousing is so that we can be together on a journey which holds and makes space for occasions such as this.

So the tableau has shifted. The business meeting, folk and processes as obstacles or conduits to various ends is no longer the picture.

Instead the picture is of smiling faces, taking turns watching, thinking, speaking, listening and laughing. This is our destination. This is our goal. This is what we are wanting.



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A Vision for Community; a Celebration of Spring!

**By: Kylie Sandham
Fernwood Urban Village
Victoria, BC**

The Fernwood Urban Village is a new cohousing community located in the rapidly evolving district of Fernwood in Victoria, BC.

The Fernwood Urban Village is designed to be a neighbourhood of individuals sharing social and physical resources in a sustainable and ecologically responsible community setting. We are a community of active adults interested in living with a lighter footprint on the earth.

Located at the corner of Chambers and North Park Street, the Village is away from major street traffic, and across from a public park and a community garden. It is an easy walk or bike ride to local amenities as well as Downtown Victoria.

The efficient, purposeful design of the Village allows residents to build relationships with their neighbours. Homes are set in an inward facing circle around a secure and inviting pedestrian centre. Common amenities and leisure areas draw residents into shared spaces. Shared amenities include a community kitchen/dining area, laundry area, greenhouses, terraces,

gardens, workshops and tool shed.

Intensive vegetable and flower gardens are a planned component of our village atmosphere. Organic gardens are maintained by residents who have an interest in permaculture. The sunny exposure and micro climate surrounding our location enables a variety of fruits and vegetables to flourish. We



look forward to growing much of our own food onsite! Cooking and gardening “in community” are hallmarks of cohousing developments.

The Village hosted a Coming of Spring Potluck and Celebration on March 12th. The purpose of this event was to inform Fernwood residents and potential members about the Fernwood Urban Village. The event was also an opportunity to build

connections, learn about something new and have fun in the local community!

In addition to the potluck dinner and the wonderful spring decor of daffodils and cherry blossoms we had two guest speakers for entertainment. Guest Speaker Ian Gartshore of Shore Energy Solutions addressed energy efficient development practices.

Susan Tychie of Food Roots Distributors Co-op gave a presentation on buying organic and utilizing community resources.

Presentations were insightful and sparked much discussion among guest and Village Members.

The meeting seemed as though it could have gone well into the night! Approximately 30 individuals attended and for many it was their first Village event! The Village will continue to host public events in the future in order to stay in touch with the community and keep Fernwood residents informed of our progress.

If you are interested in Membership or receiving more information check out our website at fernwoodurbanvillage.ca or email : info@fernwoodurbanvillage.ca

Canadian Cohousing Communities at a glance

LOCATION GROUP NAME ADDRESS	HOUSEHOLD TOTAL (CURRENT)	CONTACT NAME	WEBSITE PHONE EMAIL	DESCRIPTION
BRITISH COLUMBIA				
COMPLETED COMMUNITIES				
BURNABY, BC Cranberry Commons 4272 Albert Street, Burnaby, BC V5C 2E8	22 (22)	Ruth Walmsley	www.cranberrycommons.ca 604-298-9220 ruth@cranberrycommons.ca	Mixed townhouse & apartments. 20 min drive to downtown Van. Parks, schools, rec centre, restaurants, shops & other amenities all in walking distance. Spectacular mountain views!
COURTENAY, BC Creekside Commons 2202 Lambert Drive, Courtenay, BC	36 (36)	Pam or Don Munroe	www.creeksidecommons.ca 250-338-0187 dpmunroe@telus.net	36 duplex-style homes clustered on 9.8 acres within walking distance of downtown Courtenay. Adjacent to a park with salmon stream. 3500 sq ft common house. Many sustainable features incorporated into the design.
LANGLEY, BC WindSong 20543 96th Avenue, Langley, BC V1M 3W3	34 (34)	Valerie McIntyre	www.windsong.bc.ca valerie333@windsong.bc.ca	Environmental award-winning townhome development with glass-enclosed pedestrian streets. Nestled on a 6 acre site, with 4 acres of natural salmon creek reserve, organic community gardens, & 5000 sq ft Common House. Visitors & tours welcome.
NANAIMO, BC Pacific Gardens 312, 347 Seventh St, Nanaimo, BC V9R 1E3	25 (25)	Pacific Gardens	www.pacificgardens.ca 250-754-3060 joinus@pacificgardens.ca	4.37 acres with tranquil river setting; 25 condo-style apartment homes; glass-covered atrium, 8000 sq ft central common house, gardens, green building design.
NELSON, BC The Middle Road 3140 The Middle Road, Nelson, BC V1L 6M3	11 (11)	Stuart McKinnon	www.cohousing.ca 250-825-0012 buffalo.sage@shaw.ca	Single-family, owner-built homes on 50 acres overlooking Kootenay Lake. Households own their lots plus share in 25 commonly held acres, two acres garden land. Common House is a beautifully renovated barn.
NORTH VANCOUVER Quayside Village 510 Chesterfield Ave, North Vancouver, BC V7M 2L9	19 (19)	Quayside Village	www.quaysidevillage. googlepages.com quaysidevillage@gmail.com	Mixed townhouse and apartments. Incredible views of ocean, mountains, and city. Walk to the public market, shops, restaurants, cinemas, parks, and gardens.
ROBERTS CREEK, BC Roberts Creek Cohousing 1131 Emery Road, Roberts Creek, BC V0N 2W0	31 (31)	Gary Kent	www.robertscreek cohousing.ca 604-885-2971 garykent@telus.net	Located in the heart of Roberts Creek. A mix of single homes & duplexes clustered on 8 acres, with 12 acres preserved as natural habitat. 2840 sq ft common house plus two converted portables, workshop and multi-purpose room. Mature coniferous trees throughout and salmon creek adjacent to the development.

LOCATION GROUP NAME ADDRESS	HOUSEHOLD TOTAL (CURRENT)	CONTACT NAME	WEBSITE PHONE EMAIL	DESCRIPTION
BRITISH COLUMBIA				
PROJECTS IN DEVELOPMENT				
BOWEN ISLAND, BC Belterra Cohousing Carter Road Bowen Island, BC	30 (10)	Roger McGillivray or Stephanie Legg	www.belterracohousing.ca 604-947-9486 info@belterracohousing.ca	Belterra is a beautiful 10 acre property within a 15 minute walk of the village of Snug Cove on Bowen Island (a 20 minute ferry ride from West Vancouver). The site has sloping open meadows, forested areas, steeper rocky bluffs with exceptional ocean and mountain views and a year round creek. Our goal is to create an affordable eco-village while preserving the natural features of the land.
YARROW, BC Groundswell Cohousing 42312 Yarrow Central Road, Yarrow, BC V2R 5E2	31	Yonas Jongkind	www.yarrowecovillage.ca yonas.jongkind@gmail.com	Groundswell consists of 31 homes on 2.5 acres of the greater 25 acre Yarrow Ecovillage. We strive for harmony with nature as we live, work, play, grow, farm, shop and operate businesses in a sustaining community including organic farms. Of the 31 homes, 6 are presently occupied, 7 are under construction, 6 more are already spoken for. We have room for 12 more households
DENMAN ISLAND, BC Triple Rock Land Co-operative	15 (10)	Corinne Bjorge	inthesmog@hotmail.com	15 homes clustered on a 90 acre parcel with one common building. Homes will range from 900 to 1500 sq ft. Cars will be kept to the outside of the living cluster. Each dwelling will be individually designed with the potential for certain design/construction elements in common. Household water from cisterns only Hydro will be provided to the lot line. Each household to decide whether to be on the grid. Common gardens, orchards and small-scale animal husbandry are planned.
FORMING GROUPS				
VICTORIA, BC Fernwood Urban Village Corner of Chambers & North Park Street	31	Bill McKechnie	www.fernwoodurbanvillage.ca 250-888-9167 info@fernwoodurbanvillage.ca	Land has been assembled, floor plans are based on best principles and practices of urban cohousing communities. Some units will be available as rentals. Located on the rim of Victoria's urban core in the Fernwood district. It's an easy walk to town. Proximity to services and downtown encourages the use of bicycles and car-share. Sheds for kayaks and bikes are part of the common infrastructure. Permaculture. intensive vegetable, and flower gardens. Sustainable lifestyle encouraged.
ALBERTA, SASKATCHEWAN, MANITOBA				
COMPLETED COMMUNITIES				
CALGARY, AB Prairie Sky Cohousing 402 - 30 Avenue N.E. Calgary, AB	18 (18)	Prairie Sky	www.prairiesky.ab.ca info@prairiesky.ab.ca	Located in the inner city community of Winston Heights. 2 & 3 bedroom townhouses & apartments, 3200 sq ft common house central courtyard with community gardens and children's play area.

LOCATION GROUP NAME ADDRESS	HOUSEHOLD TOTAL (CURRENT)	CONTACT NAME	WEBSITE PHONE EMAIL	DESCRIPTION
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ALBERTA, SASKATCHEWAN, MANITOBA

PROJECTS IN DEVELOPMENT

DOWNTOWN SASKATOON, SK Wolf Willow Cohousing	21 (15)	Eliza Meggs	www.wolfwillowcohousing.ca 306-242-4765 ea.meggs@gmail.com	We are creating a community for older adults (ages 55 plus). Our site is located on the edge of Saskatoon's revitalized cultural core that meets our goal of being within walking/biking distance of most of our needs. We start construction in April this year and have an estimated completion date of spring 2012. Individuals or couples interested in our project are invited to contact us.
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FORMING GROUPS

CENTRAL CALGARY, AB Dragonfly Cohousing	20-25	Jana Vander Kloet	www.dragonflycohousing.ca 403-945-2725 Info@dragonflycohousing.ca	The Dragonfly Cohousing initiative plans to develop the next cohousing project in central Calgary, with a strong focus on community-building, inclusiveness, and sustainable building options. Well-designed common spaces will complement private homes (townhouse and apartment style) to create the right balance for a higher-density urban environment. Members and committees are meeting twice monthly to move this project forward!
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ONTARIO

COMPLETED COMMUNITIES

OTTAWA, ON Terra Firma Cohousing 166 Drummond Street Ottawa, ON K1S 1K4	7(6)	Signy Fridriksson and Steve Fick	613-233-8438	Located in the center of the city and close to the Rideau Canal. Consisting of 2 3-unit townhouses and a recently build 7th unit and common house. Includes solar hot water, play structures, treehouse, gardens, bicycle storage, composting bins.
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FORMING GROUPS

TORONTO, ON GreenSong	25-30	Laurie Mace	www.greensong.ca info@greensong.ca	GreenSong is building an environmentally sensitive cohousing development near Toronto, Ontario, where individuality can flourish within a vibrant, diverse neighbourhood. We plan to create an inclusive, multi-generational community where the arts thrive and newness is encouraged.
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QUEBEC

FORMING GROUPS

QUEBEC CITY, QC Cohabitat Québec	35 (20)	Hélène Langlois	www.cohabitat.ca relationspubliques@cohabitat.ca 418-527-4205	Our challenge is to create a living environment that will promote harmony between the individual, the community and the environment a healthy space where the generations enrich one another and simply feel good. Our only limit is our imagination.
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