



Cohousing in Corvallis

An E Newsletter from CoHo Cohousing
Corvallis, Oregon

Issue 27 October 2006



Remember when your best friend lived right next door?

Construction Update

The long-awaited launch of construction on our site has been captured in weekly photos posted in the [Watch Us Build](#) page on our website. "Before" and "After" shots show the dramatic and rapid change. Crews have followed



our Landscaping Committee's mandate to "keep all organics on site!" so tree stumps will be home to wildlife, tree limbs will be chipped for mulch, and timbers will be saved for building projects.



A few CoHoots (who shall remain anonymous) did some pre-construction timber harvesting of special limbs for one-of-a-kind interior and exterior home projects.

[Fortis Construction](#) has assigned three staff members to take the lead on our project. Just as CoHoots have bios on our website, check out the bios of the Fortis crew on their website.

[Greg Wimmer](#)
Project Manager

[Matt Norman](#)
Project Engineer

[Mark Callahan](#)
Superintendent

CoHoots sang, danced, twirled, and shouted to the Hallelujah chorus to celebrate the launching of construction activity on the land. The September meeting closed with a harmonious rendition of "It's A Wonderful World."



Greeting Visitors

While Fortis Construction has been leading the way with the construction of our buildings, CoHoots continue to build community by greeting visitors and spreading the word about cohousing at local events (including Fall Festival, the Northwest Earth Institute Garden tour, and Farmer's Markets on Wednesdays and Saturdays).



With experience gained as a new grandpa, Steve pulls off a "double cuddle" with Alex and Isabelle.



Membership Committee Retreat

CoHoots on the Membership Committee took a break from "meeting and greeting" to have some extended planning time at the ocean. They focused on updating their work plan and thinking about the transition in the committee's role after the project is sold out and again after residents have moved in. All committees share their work plans with the community twice a year so we can all understand what's happening.

MC members took a break (OK, they took more than one break) to walk on the beach. They had a delightful conversation with a woman and her three fluffy white dogs (once dubbed "miniature sheep" by a bewildered stranger). In true CoHo fashion, when the conversation shifted to cohousing, a member whipped out one of our CoHo cards. MC members were out of town, but they are never "off duty" when it comes to spreading the word about CoHo!

Corvallis Corner

Corvallis canines had splashing privileges in the city's outdoor pool September 30th (prior to the fall pool cleaning). This annual fund (and fun) raiser (aka Doggie



Swim) was well attended by a wide array of critters intent on sniffing, swimming, playing, and fetching in 90-minute shifts.

Folks who desired a drier venue enjoyed the annual Fall Festival, with artisan booths circling downtown's Central Park. To close out the summer season, the beautiful flower baskets that had been hanging throughout the downtown area were sold to raise funds for next year's hanging baskets.



Finance Committee—The Buck Stops/Starts Here

CoHo's Finance Committee oversees a range of fiscal matters and regularly updates the membership with graphs, spreadsheets, diagrams, and (fortunately) lots of clarifying information (and they cheerfully answer the same questions more than once).

Finance folks have been a key part of the community since the early days when CoHo became a dues-paying organization. Over the years, they have developed bookkeeping systems, financial summaries, budgets, and financial policies.

CoHo's fiscal year starts in October, so Finance folks are setting budgets and collecting annual dues.



In the recent transition to construction, the Finance Committee has helped members navigate the various legal documents necessary to reserve a home, and make a down payment. In the process, they have learned some legalese and can often translate long technical passages into sensible sentences.

To honor CoHo's commitment to affordability, the Finance Committee has also had a role in tracking the number of income-eligible households in the project. Our developer, Corvallis Neighborhood Housing Services, coordinates the myriad of special financing options that are available to prospective buyers.



The Finance Committee recently worked with our Design and Development Committee to draft a preliminary Home Owners Association (HOA) budget (including operational funds as well as reserves for future needs) so HOA dues could be estimated. A subcommittee of the Finance Committee worked with CNHS on setting unit prices.

Like all CoHo committees, Finance is looking ahead to the transition at move-in when our HOA is in place. More systems will be designed as we move toward taking on the full-time management of our community. In 2008, we can look forward to another financial first—CoHo's first tax return!

CoHoots in the News

"Mr. Mom" (aka our neighbor, Dave) was featured in an article in the July/August 2006 issue (see page 25) of Mom magazine (aka "a brilliant little magazine for moms of the Mid-Valley"). Dave recalled a neighborly neighbor from his childhood who was a valuable adult role model and is looking to CoHo to provide similar connections for his kids. Dave wrote "As a single father of three, it's becoming clear to me that the most important things in my life aren't things, they're the people in my life."

Another CoHoot in the news also does her best to connect with others. Marfa, a 3-year-old border collie and black lab mix, recently became certified as a therapy dog through Welcome Waggers and her story was shared in the local papers. Marfa goes on patient visits with her companion, Anne, who is a hospice nurse. Marfa took time out from her therapeutic duties to go the Corvallis doggie swim and then join the Membership Committee on their retreat. She is a well-rounded, and well-behaved member of the community!

CSA Meal Group

A group of six CoHoots and friends are experimenting with a way to enjoy eating more local food. The CSA Meal Group is buying a 6-week box from [Denison Farms](#) through their Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) plan. In a CSA, folks pay the farmer up front and then get boxes of fresh produce each week.

The Meal Group will pick up their weekly box on Tuesdays, then take turns cooking a meal and eating together on Wednesdays. After the meal, any leftover fresh produce will be split up.

The group's experience will be shared with the CoHo Food Folks who are spearheading a variety of food-related projects in the next few months.



Three Homes Available in CoHo

If you've been tracking our progress for at least a few months, you've seen that CoHo had two homes available, then four, and now three. As predicted, we are experiencing some shift in membership. If you have an interest in CoHo, check us out now. Come to social events and meetings and see if you are drawn to living the cohousing lifestyle. If you could be income-eligible, contact our developer, Corvallis Neighborhood Housing Services, at 541-752-7220 for information on [special loan packages](#).

To find out more about CoHo Cohousing

Website: www.cohoecovillage.org
Email: cohocontact@cohoecovillage.org
Phone: [Juva DuBoise @ 541-908-5882](tel:541-908-5882)
[Susan Hyne @ 541-753-4453](tel:541-753-4453)

Juva and Susan at Membership Committee Retreat
(with canine companionship by Marfa)



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