

## Cohousing Now! Community FUN



### Community FUN

We cohousers spend a lot of time learning about how to communicate with fellow community members, how to facilitate meetings, we learn to process and encourage participation...but we need to remember to put energy towards simply HAVING FUN! Many communities have some sort of social team, celebration committee or party crew. These are the people that plan fun community gatherings and this positive social time is some of the glue that holds happy cohousing communities together. Here's some activities that I have witnessed or heard of :

New Years Eve dance party - kids included or adults only, hire a DJ or create your own playlist, dress up, maybe even choose a theme such as 1980's prom!



Valentines celebration - spend a day decorating shoe boxes (as mailboxes) and creating handmade Valentines Day cards, leave special notes telling a community neighbor how much you appreciate something about them; celebrate the actual day with a chocolate potluck!

March madness - especially important in climates where you're wondering if winter .. will .. ever .. end, hold a winter play day enjoying summer lawn games in the rain or shine, bean bag toss, badminton, croquet (wicked hard course the snow!)



Easter brunch and egg hunt - wear your Sunday best and fancy hats, oh and this year Easter Sunday is also April Fool's day, how about hiding brussel sprouts and broccoli in those plastic eggs! At the end the month welcome people into your community on [National Cohousing Open House Day](#).

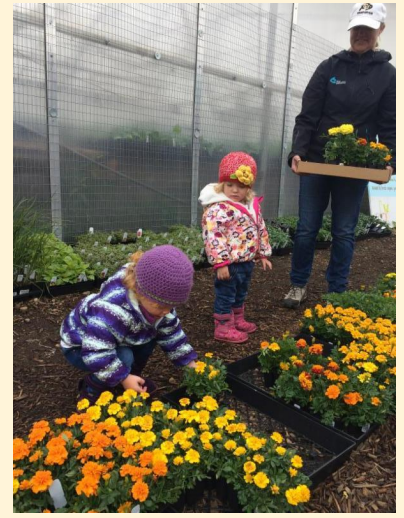
Garden time - turn in loads of manure into gardens and begin planting, try some new and unusual veggies or ornate colorful flowers, and what about a giant strawberry patch?!

Great American Campout - who needs the deep dark backwoods when we have a common green space?! Pitch tents, sing songs around the campfire, roast marshmallows, tell scary ghost stories



4th of July parade - have kids decorate bikes and scooters, create a

marching band with whatever instruments you might have including pots and wooden spoons



End of summer water fun - water balloon toss, slip and slide, splurge and rent a dunk tank! And don't forget about the watermelon, there should be plenty!

Bluegrass brunch - hire a local band, slip on your boots and kick up your heels, serve end-of-summer-beginning-of-fall fruit pies

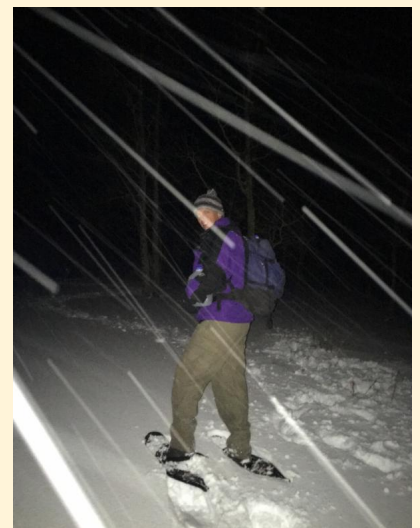


Pumpkin carving - get out the tools and let your imaginations fly, consider serving pizza and pilsner, line 'em up, vote for funniest/scariest/biggest/most unique

Month long art project - create a giant tree trunk out of brown butcher paper (all twisted up) have a basket of paper 'leaves' nearby with pens, encourage community members to share what they are thankful for.

Full moon night - forget the holiday craziness, bundle up, grab your flashlight and head out for a hike, if that's not excited enough finish with a game of flashlight tag!

What are your fun plans for the year?



## Conferences & Events

### Top Ten Reasons To Attend a Cohousing Conference

by Karen Gimnig

#### 10. Get ideas for your community.

Whether you are a brand new community or you've been living together for decades, there is more to learn about how to thrive in community. At Conferences you will meet people who have solved the problems your community is currently facing and hear new ideas for green living, social engagement and community life.

#### 9. Share your solutions.

You and your community have put a lot of time and effort into figuring out how to do cohousing. It feels great to share that wisdom and experience with others.

#### 8. Meet cohousing professionals.

Sometimes communities need help from someone who has knowledge and experience working in cohousing, but how do you find that help when you need it? Conferences are a great place to get to know the resources available in our broader community. Meeting someone face to face or attending a session they are leading is a great way to find someone who could be a good fit.

#### 7. Find your community (members).

If you are an individual looking for cohousing or a community looking for members, Conferences are a great way to find each other. Regional Conferences are particularly good if you are looking for cohousing in the region where the conference is being held.

#### 6. Network.

The broader cohousing community is filled with resources for cohousing, green living and almost anything else you might be interested in. Conferences are a great place to connect with others.

#### 5. Visit a new place.

Come a day early or stay a day late to tour the city. The local cohousing communities are sure to offer tips of great things to do while you are in town.

#### 4. See a new (to you) community.

Each cohousing community is unique and beautiful in its own way. Local communities generally welcome Conference attendees to visit.

#### 3. Support the movement.

Cohousing is bigger than any one community. We all benefit from the communities that have come before and the collaboration between cohousers. Conferences are a great place to connect, contribute and learn about the movement.

#### 2. Make the world a better place.

Now more than ever, our world needs people who understand community, who are supported by neighbors and who know how to connect and compromise with others. Cohousing grows those people. Conferences help to grow cohousing. Come and add your support to this vital mission.

#### 1. Meet amazing people.

The number one reason to come to a Conference is to enjoy the fabulous people you will meet. Cohousers come from all kinds of backgrounds and have all kinds of interests and personalities, but we also have some pretty cool things in common. Conferences are an opportunity to spend a few days in the company of people who

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## Classified Ads

### Homes for Sale

[Beautiful Winslow Cohousing Home For Sale](#)

[Four Bed/ Three Bath Home in Heartwood Cohousing near Beautiful Durango, Colorado for Sale](#)

[HOMES FOR SALE !](#)

### Seeking Members

[Join Us In Harrison, VA four Our Upcoming Sire Design Workshop](#)

## Cohousing Professionals

[Caddis Architecture](#)

[CoHousing Solutions | Sustainable Neighborhood Consultants](#)

[Fitch Architecture & Community Design | Home - Community - Planet](#)

[Linda Herman Consulting](#)

[Mary Kraus, Architect](#)

[McCamant & Durrett Architects: The Cohousing Co](#)

[schemata workshop | architecture & planning](#)

## In the News

[Squamish residents can learn from Whistler co-housing proposal](#) Seniors targeted for multi-generational communal living



value community and connection and are investing in ideas like shared spaces, sustainable building and reduced environmental impact. They really are amazing people, and they'd love to meet you.



For more details, to register and to take advantage of discount lodging, [click here](#)



Cohousing communities across the country are welcoming the public for tours and visits. Individuals, families and groups are encouraged to attend this free event. Mark your calendar and plan your day now!

The National Cohousing Open House Day inspires individuals and families to join existing or forming cohousing communities, and sparks the creation of new cohousing communities.

For more details, [click here](#)

## Cohousing Blogs

### Creating Traditions Through Celebration and Ceremony

by Craig Ragland, Songaia Cohousing, and Catya Belfer-Shevett,  
Mosaic Commons Cohousing



by Lauren Boothby / Squamish Chief

Janey Harper decided that if she wanted to live in the type of community she was looking for, she'd have to create it from scratch.

She liked the feeling of the co-housing neighbourhoods she visited in Vancouver and began thinking about starting one herself. As Squamish continues to be pressed for housing, Harper thinks some residents - particularly seniors - may be interested in creating a new community of their own in Whistler or on the Sunshine Coast.

"Living in a co-housing community is like living in a true tribe or extended family where there is a distinctly higher level of trust than you would find in most other communities. Everybody knows everybody else," she says. "Seniors need to age in place, in a beautiful way, not isolated in their single-family dwellings and cut off from the world."

To read full article, [click here...](#)

**Community by design:** Spokane Cohousing seeks to build a village in the Perry District



by Treva Lind

Mariah McKay looks forward to sharing dinners with neighbors most evenings, along with having elders around to mentor future children.

That's because McKay, 34, her husband, Jim Dawson, 37, and about 15 adults are planning a cohousing community in the Perry District.

The Spokane Cohousing group includes families, singles, empty-nesters and seniors seeking a village-like setting and options for residents to interact. It would join 165 cohousing communities nationwide, and another 140 in planning stages, according to the Cohousing Association of the United States.



How do people in cohousing create traditions? How do we mark the major life events of our members, such as births, coming-of-age, marriages and deaths? How do we celebrate community events, such as groundbreaking or community anniversaries? How about birthdays, new jobs or people moving in or moving out?

Because we come together in community from different cultural and religious traditions, we must choose our own traditions. As a group, we decide what to celebrate and what to do.

To read more, [click here...](#)

## Relationships and the Uncommon house

by Sue Cosentini Amabel Pocket Neighborhood (Ithaca NY)



Have you ever noticed that when you go to dinner at a friends' house you frequently have intimate, fun conversations that make you feel closer and more connected? Have you noticed that doesn't usually happen at a dinner parties attended by lots of people? When we hang out one on one or in small groups the intimacy of the setting is conducive to personal dialog, we get a chance to share about ourselves and our lives. There is so much going on for any of us at any given time and there is so little time to talk about it all: what we are worried about, what are our fabricated fears that our minds conjure up, what are our passions, what do we wish we had done differently, who and what do we love and why, where we would like our lives to go, and much more. People are as vast and multi-dimensional as the cosmos and have much to say and feel that never gets a chance to be heard or felt.

To read more, [click here...](#)

## Neighborhoods on Purpose

by David Wann

Cohousing projects are planned by residents who join in a vision to create a neighborhood with a mix of private living units and common spaces, including space to eat meals together.

"Much of our society is isolated," said McKay, whose mother also plans to be in the neighborhood.

"People are maybe part of a church community, maybe they have a casual relationship with the person in the house or apartment next door, but as far deep, trusting relationships, a lot of people are missing that."

To read full article, [click here...](#)

## Group seeks different kind of housing development



by Brandon Stone

Shelly Parks is tired of feeling isolated. Parks lives with her husband in a condominium complex in Edmonds, next door to 26 other households.

"And I know one of my neighbors," she said. "That's it."

In December, she and her husband signed on with a group in Skagit County that's working to start a new neighborhood built around community.

"We can live better if we create a neighborhood that establishes strong social bonds," she said. "I'd love to work with these people to make it happen."

Now a group of five families, Skagit Cohousing has spent the past year and a half searching for land that it hopes will become the county's first cohousing community.

To read full article, [click here...](#)

## Trend watch: Cohousing makes its way to Cleveland



by Karin Connelly

About two or three years ago, Cleveland Heights resident Mary Kelsey and some friends began talking about the concept of cohousing-creating a community of homes that are clustered around shared spaces like a common house and outdoor areas,



I used to have contingency plans for where I wanted to live in another five years. For a while, it was New Zealand, then upstate New York, then a small town in western Colorado that doesn't feel the pace of a fresh-air-challenged metro area like Denver. Where would I try to be comfortable next? Where would I try to meet as many needs as possible with a minimum amount of stress?

Those questions aren't easy to answer because in many places - let's face it - residents are hooked up to a "lifestyle support system": all the pipes, wires, lines of credit, electronic waves, roads, trucks and vans that deliver a bizarre, excessive way of life. When we ask someone where they live, all too often what we really mean is "how long will it take me to get there?" The question too often implies "where do you watch your 4 1/2 hours of TV, generate 4 pounds of trash, and consume 15 kilowatt hours of electricity each day?" Not as healthy as we'd like.

After all, just about everything we need to be champion consumers is delivered right to our homes - except the money to buy it all, and the ethics and values to make sense of it. The truth is, in the spacious rooms of our technically correct houses, we may not be as healthy as we'd like. We may feel isolated from people, disconnected from nature, and short on time. Our diets of fast food and ready-to-eat meals may deliver abundant calories, but not much in the way of vitality. The evening news we rely on for a reality check may leave us feeling unsettled and fearful, sorely in need of good news.

Shouldn't the question "where do you live?" mean "where do you come to life?"

To read more, [click here...](#)

according to the Cohousing Association of the United States.

In fact, the notion of cohousing communities is growing in the U.S., says Kelsey. "Cohousing began in the 70s in Denmark, and most senior housing these days is communal in Denmark," she explains. "In Europe, there are hundreds of these [cohousing communities], as well as in Asia and South America. It's not a new idea, but it's new to some." Kelsey says there are fewer than 200 cohousing communities across the United States, with "quite a few" in progress, including Northeast Ohio.

Heights Cohousing has been gaining momentum in the past year, and the group of five members are looking to recruit 10 to 20 total households-of all ages- to create a cohousing community. The group bases its design on the book *Creating Cohousing: Building Sustainable Communities* by Kathryn McCamant and Charles Durrett, with the aim of creating a diverse community of residents who will share community management decisions, as well as social interests.

To read full article, [click here...](#)

## Resources

[Finding Cohousing](#)

[Creating Cohousing](#)

[Living In Cohousing](#)

[Aging In Cohousing](#)

[Group Process](#)

[Policy Database](#)

[Tag Cloud](#)

## [The Cohousing Directory](#)

New or Updated listings:

Day Star Cohousing in  
Tallahassee, Florida

[Edit your Community Profile here..](#)

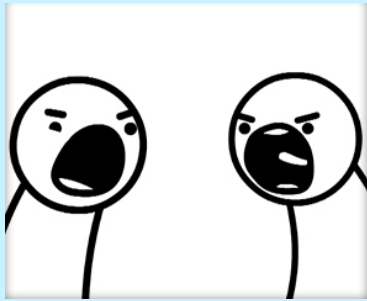
## Living in Community

### What Causes Conflict in Cohousing?

by Sharon Villines, *Takoma Village Cohousing, Washington DC*

## [Join Our Mailing List](#)





I thought a question on the cohousing email list what causes conflict in cohousing was an interesting one. There was an element of surprise in the question. Do you allow conflict? Sometimes we paint ourselves to potential new members as rainbows and candy.

The usual suspects that cause conflict are "parents, pets, and pesticides". Or children's behavior, outdoor pets, and cleaning or killing chemicals used in the garden or the common house.

As an example, I'll list the ones that have been issues as Takoma Village- some small, some big. Some private and individual and some with everyone on one side or the other. Some still toasting.

...

4. Are parents responsible for cleaning up the kids room even if the parent didn't know their kids were there, the kids say they weren't, and several people say they were?

13. Should dogs be allowed to run without leashes? Cats be outdoor cats?

19. Should we have a TV in the common house? Who pays for cable? Should it be in a locked or unlocked room?

28. Can members keep dangerous pets like pythons?

...

These may seem overwhelming or trivial but they all cause conflict.

The worst kind of conflicts, in my opinion, are the small ones that people grouse about but are never resolved.

They are often dismissed by others as trivial. These pile up and cause unhappiness that is hard to resolve because it seems so petty. But one person's petty is another person's emotional burden.

Just talk about it first, as a community. A community is only as strong as it's fully committed members. And unhappy members won't be fully committed.

To read more, [click here...](#)

## Coho/US Notes

The Mission of CohoUS is to advance cohousing by assisting forming and existing communities through a robust network of resources and access to technical assistance; and educating the public about the benefits of cohousing, from resource

conservation and sustainability to resilient communities and healthy families.

As the BOD plans it's annual retreat for the spring of 2018, please free to contact [your regional representative](#) if you would like to see CohoUS focus on a particular topic (see the [strategic plan](#) that currently guides the association)

I look forward to meeting many of you at the Boulder, Colorado conference April 20-22, please do say 'HI' and let me know if you are interested in volunteering and would like to become involved in the cohousing movement.

In community,  
Karin  
[karincohous@gmail.com](mailto:karincohous@gmail.com)

### **Cohousing Directory Metrics**

Established Communities = 165

---Completed = 148

---Building = 17

Forming\*\* = 142

\*\*Thirty five forming groups have acquired land they plan to develop



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## **Thanks for reading**

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