This Thanksgiving break, I've been especially grateful for my cohousing bubble. When I drive home in the dark after a long business trip, I look up the hill and appreciate seeing the lights on in the common house. My worries and concerns of the external world stay outside the door as I join the impending common meal.

Like catching a cold, I think I've caught a bad case of negative worldview from the media that I have consumed. It's gotten so bad that I'm sometimes up at night. I think the cure might be a delicious hot bowl of my neighbor Stephanie's soup and some good conversation.

I'll venture to say that my neighbors, and perhaps most cohousers, generally share a positive view of humanity. Our approach to living is predicated on it. Otherwise, how could we trust a decision-making model where anyone can "block" a decision? It all works because we trust each other to place "relationships" over the quickest route to "winning." We are not only tolerant of but have a true interest in other peoples’ viewpoints because they make for a better, more inclusive decision. We explicitly agree to treat each other with respect. This carries over to daily interactions with each other.

Rather than building walls, we both literally and figuratively tear down fences. Our homes foster privacy, but their closeness and orientation towards each other and common spaces creates community. We welcome diversity. Cohousers are fundamentally environmentally conscious. Our buildings are green. We cluster our homes. We drive less. We have organic community gardens. We are typically not ostentatious and status conscious. We believe in living simply. We have smaller homes, share common spaces and tools, to name a few things. In cohousing, there is no need to covet thy neighbor's lawnmower because you can always borrow it.

I am so grateful that my fellow cohousers don't share the dark and scary worldview that I see on the screen. If the news is getting you down, turn it off, go outside and appreciate the wonderful like-minded people living around you.

Peter Lazar, Coho/US Board President

Conferences & Events

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Registration launches January 1st. Meanwhile, check out our sessions and intensives and schedule, and more info. Join us!

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Spending Thanksgiving with FarAways
Andrea Mason, Placitas Sage (Placitas, New Mexico)

While we wait to build our homes, we are committed to building strong ties within our member community. We were so glad that four of our five "FarAway" members could come to stay, and get a chance to live in New Mexico - if only for 10 days. Our final event together on Nov 30 will be attending the County Planning and Zoning. This is when we hope to hear that our application for rezoning our chosen land has been recommended for approval. It isn't easy to develop community when some members don't live near-by, but we have used technology and personal connections to keep our FarAway members involved.

read more and visit Placitas Sage Cohousing for updates

Defining Cooperative Culture
Laird Schaub: Laird's Blog

Back in 1974, when a group of four of us started Sandhill Farm, I started down a path that ultimately added up to dedicating my life to

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building community. While that commitment has never wavered (the need for community today is more urgent than ever), I've frequently adjusted the lens through which I see what I'm doing.

One of the most potent and enduring ways to frame my life's work is that I am promoting cooperative culture-as an alternative to the competitive culture that dominates mainstream society. But what does that mean, cooperative culture? While it's analogous to asking a fish to define water, I can at least nibble around the edges. read more

Election Catharsis + Refugee Resettlement Project
David Entin, Rocky Hill Cohousing (Northampton, MA)

Our monthly cohousing meeting was the Saturday morning after the election. Many of us gathered feeling sad, angry, upset, dazed, and fearful as a result of the election of Donald Trump. We spent 30 minutes of our valuable community meeting time sharing how we felt and the need to support each other and those working for progressive change in the U.S. despite what we perceived as a major setback. We learned of the safety pin movement and put on safety pins to indicate we will serve as a safe place for anyone being threatened or treated unfairly. We reached consensus to help an international refugee family coming to our country; attached is a consensus resolution we adopted. This was one way to indicate we plan to move ahead and not be set back in our efforts to make our country more loving and open to all. I want our fellow cohousers to know that there is still hope and much to be encouraged about in what are often seen as dark times. read more

Living in Community

The Morning After the Election
Ann Zabaldo (Takoma Village, Washington DC)

Election night at 1:45 a.m. my neighbor Carrie and I packed up the projector and headed home. You might consider the emotions at that juncture would be sadness, anger, confusion, bemusement, bewilderment, anxiety, depression, etc. Instead, I felt profoundly lonely... But when I woke up at 5:30 a.m. I was profoundly grateful. I live in cohousing. Now, it's not just that I have all my neighbors so I won't be lonely. It's something bigger than that. A lot bigger.

Cohousing allows me to tackle the issues I want to tackle. I'm not waiting around for "The Government" to deal with issues around aging. Or the challenges single parents face (and two parent households!). Or, environmental and energy challenges. Or, latch key kids. Or any of dozens of social challenges facing society. I have a blueprint for how to tackle these issues: Cohousing. I don't
have to wait around for a government program. I can just keep building more communities. So on this morning after the election, I am moved to say how grateful I am to Katie McCamant and Chuck Durrett for giving me this blueprint. From the day I read the first paragraph in the first edition of "Cohousing" I have never wavered in my belief and commitment that community has the power to change the world - one cohousing community at a time. That's a gift, Katie and Chuck. Thank you.

Coho/US Notes

Keeping Us Alive and Well
Your Cohousing Association is, thank you, alive and well - but only as long as we receive financial support from our communities and individuals. Coho/US is by design a lean and mean organization; our financial needs are modest, but we do need steady support.

If you consider how cohousing has changed your life; how cohousing has made a dent in our otherwise hyper-individualized society; how cohousing values of resilient communities may be a crucial model to combat climate change: isn't that incentive to invest in your association?

Please Donate Now. You will feel good, I promise.
Alice Alexander, Coho/US Executive Director
PS Gifts are tax deductible.

Annie Lehman Joins the Coho/US Board
Having never lived in an intentional community (college doesn't count), I don't know what it will feel like when I move next April to PDX Commons, a senior (I prefer boomer) cohousing community in SE Portland. I do know I will be surrounded by people who want to live in community and who think intelligently about the world around them. I've spent the last two years getting to know these folks (and others have worked for years before I entered the picture) to build this community and the building. What do I love about this? read more

Cohousing Directory Metrics
Established Communities = 163
---Completed = 147
---Building = 16
Forming** = 134
**Thirty three forming groups have acquired land they plan to develop

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Thanks for reading