



# Cohousing in Corvallis

An E Newsletter from CoHo Cohousing  
in Corvallis, Oregon

Issue 16 June 2006



Remember when your best  
friend lived right next door?

## Working Together and Playing Together

If you go to the archives for the [cohousing national list serv](#), and type "participation" in the search feature, you'll get 750+ messages. Participation and participation policies in cohousing have been the focus of much discussion on the national cohousing list serv and undoubtedly, much communication within cohousing communities.



Interaction is the foundation of community. Knowing your neighbors comes from spending time with your neighbors, working together and playing together. People who want more community in their lives and opt to live in

cohousing are choosing a high-participation lifestyle.



How will the "work" of cohousing get done within CoHo?

Currently, members are expected to attend 75% of community meetings (out-of-town members can attend via conference calls), stay current with email messages, be an active member on at least one committee, pay dues, and complete nonviolent communication training and [consensus training](#). When folks first join CoHo, their [buddies](#) can help with the transition from "starry-eyed newcomer" to "active member" by exploring committees and projects that fit folks' talents and interests.

As move-in approaches, there will be a transition to our [WorkShare Policy](#).

Because CoHo uses [nonviolent communication](#), we start policy-building with identifying the community's needs. Here's our list of needs for our Workshare Policy:

- Accomplish the tasks that are needed in order to have a well-functioning community.
- Build community by doing things together and enhancing our environment.
- Reduce our homeowner's dues.
- Maintain the health and prosperity of the community.

Based on these needs, the community opted to develop a policy that was simple, easy to understand and administer, allowed for flexibility, offered a variety of tasks and encouraged residents to participate according to their abilities.

The WorkShare Policy addresses the tasks done on a regular and ad hoc basis, except for our common meal program. All residents (including renters) are expected to participate at least 3-4 hours per week. Non-participation may result in a financial assessment by the HOA Board.

The work will be planned, coordinated, and tracked within teams. To help plan future projects (planting the garden, for example), records of the time and expenses involved in tasks will be compiled. Residents will be directly accountable to their teams.

Our nonviolent communication training will be helpful in responding to feelings about the inevitable imbalances in participation, which can be experienced at either the individual or interpersonal level.

With our NVC skills, we don't "point fingers" or place blame. We talk.



At the individual level, an NVC inner dialogue about work issues might sound like:

"When I don't participate, I feel guilty because I'm not honoring my commitments to my neighbors."  
or

"When I worked 20 hours on CoHo projects last week, I felt irritated and burned out because I'm needing more balance in my life."



At the interpersonal level, an NVC dialogue between team members might start with:

"When you attend less than half of our team meetings, I feel frustrated because the workload isn't balanced. Would you be willing to discuss ways to share the work that meet both of our needs?"  
or

"When you didn't come to our last two work days, I felt sad because I'm wanting more connection with you. Can we talk about ways to spend some work time as well as some fun time together?"

Our WorkShare Policy will be reviewed and revised six months after move-in and then annually.

With our current membership expectations and our adoption of a WorkShare Policy now, CoHo is setting clear expectations for future members. **We will ALL be sharing the chores, sharing the fun, and sharing the adventure of living in community.**

## M&M—the first half...

Our Marketing and Membership Committees (collectively known as M&M) have sometimes functioned as one group, and sometimes split into two. In the current configuration, our Marketing Committee is responsible for spreading the word about CoHo. When there is an initial contact from a prospective member by phone or email, or in person, the Membership Committee steps in.

Although ALL CoHo members are “marketing ambassadors” (because word of mouth is very effective advertising and folks respond to our “Ask Me About Cohousing” buttons), the Marketing Committee takes the lead role in letting folks know about CoHo. Our [website](#) is constantly being updated with [photos](#), [bios](#), [calendar](#) items, and new features. Many folks find us initially by searching on-line and have given our website rave reviews.



Marketing folks coordinate CoHo booths at the [Farmers Market](#) and other local events. Plus they generate displays, posters, buttons, bumper stickers, and business cards to reach out to the community. The Marketing Committee also advertises in local publications, like the [First Alternative Coop's](#) monthly newsletter, The Thymes, as well as on the national cohousing website. If you're local, you've probably seen our “Remember when your best friend lived right next door?” logo (shown at right) on posters and ads around Corvallis.



Remember when your best friend lived right next door?

And, this [newsletter](#) is a recent offering by the Marketing Committee.

The Marketing Committee is always interested in learning **HOW** folks heard about CoHo, so let us know!

More to follow about the Membership Committee in the next newsletter (aka M&M—the second half)....

## Next Welcome Weekend and Community Meeting Dates

Our July Welcome Weekend is set for Saturday, July 8<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, July 9<sup>th</sup>.

In July, August, and September, our community meeting dates will be shifting from our typical schedule (the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays) to a different schedule (the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays) due to holiday conflicts. If folks can't join us for a Welcome Weekend, it's best to target the Sundays that community meetings are held (attending is a prerequisite for submitting a membership application). Call us for details and to arrange a visit.

## Member Close-Up

Dave joined the community "forever ago" (aka September 7, 2003) after exploring community options in Corvallis and finding he really clicked with CoHo members. Dave has served as CoHo secretary and archivist and on several committees, including Facilitation, Tech, Design & Development, Landscaping, Home Selection, and Policies & Procedures.

In a former life, Dave was a bass player and vocalist in several "garage bands" with fascinating names—100 Proof, Babylon, The Little Girls ('cause the female singers were petite), Fender Buddies, and Idle Brides.



Dave's entire family could be stiff competition for Anne, our trapeze artist (see her bio in Newsletter 15), in CoHo's future talent shows. Teresa is active in high school drama and singing. Patrick and Andrew, when not indulging in their love of skateboarding, rollerblading, and mud (not necessarily in that order), took time out to build a trebuchet (a medieval catapult) which earned a "most creative project" award at a science fair.



### Is it time to make your dream of living in community come true?

The clock is striking 8, marking the time that 8 homes are still available in CoHo!

This clock is on the Benton County Courthouse in downtown Corvallis. Built in 1889, it is the oldest active courthouse in the state of Oregon.

## To find out more about CoHo Cohousing

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

Email: [info@cohousing-corvallis.com](mailto:info@cohousing-corvallis.com) (answered by Mike Volpe) ↓

Phone: Juva DuBoise @ 541-908-5882 →

Susan Hyne @ 541-753-4453 →



Juva, Mike, Susan

If we look a little nervous, it's because a game of Vampire had just started during the break at a community meeting, and if the Vampire winks at you, you're dead! Luckily, our photographer was NOT the vampire.

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