
Still Summer Here

Oakcreek Cohousing

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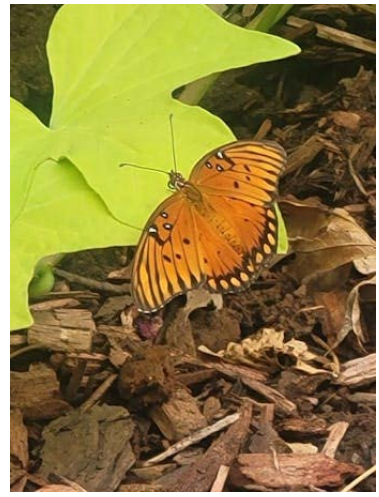
www.OakcreekStillwater.com



Still anticipating actual Fall weather, but experiencing dry, high 90's at Oakcreek, our neighbors are continuing efforts to encourage native blossoms and grasses, along with the wildlife they support. Our Landscape Team has reminded us of this original Community Value, and educated us about plants to use as replacements in our yards, when needed. A side effect will be conservation of water, as the native plants are normally more drought tolerant.



Having a Team of experts on these subjects is a benefit of cohousing -- sharing our skills and knowledge!



A bumper crop of potatoes and tomatoes, as well as strawberries, okra and jalapenos, contributed to our weekly common meals. Growing local (though sometimes misshapen; i.e, this potato) produce offers our gardeners the opportunity for outdoor activity, rewarded with beautiful and much appreciated edibles.



Tracy and other neighbor chefs convert the garden proceeds into healthy dinners.





Bob is a living travelogue, taking classes in Alaska to learn native survival and food preparation skills, and teaching classes in West Virginia and Arizona. Ghislaine joins the trips when she can leave her beautiful horse for a few days.



Summer 2024 included extended travel for many Oakcreek members, including camping at Voyageurs National Park for Audrey and Mike, as well as attending the twin's (Audrey and her twin sister, Alice) 50th high school class reunion. Gotta love those bell bottoms and tie dyes!



Visits to our relatives often provide opportunities for wonderful tours, such as Pat and Steve's during their Scotland trip.





While others are traveling, our local Goldilocks uses her rare time at home to enjoy other benefits of cohousing --

Polite Goldilocks: A Cohousing Fairy Tale by Natalie

Once upon a time, I walked into our common house while my neighbor was giving a tour. She was explaining the list of food allergies and intolerances posted on the refrigerator, and introduced me by saying, “That’s Natalie. She’s our problem child, but we like her.”

I never expect the cooks to accommodate my dietary needs – it’s a lot of work to prepare meals for 30 people and it rotates amongst a small, but hearty band of volunteers every five days. So, I am always touched when someone reaches out with the recipe, asking if it will work for me. Sometimes, we conclude that the meal can’t be adapted, and I choose the “I’d like a seat, but will bring my own meal” option on the signup sheet. And I have been surprised and pleased by the frequency that the cooks and I work it out for me to provide substitutions (e.g. “I’ll leave a ¼ cup of shredded goat cheddar and a half cup of almond milk in the CH fridge by 1 pm on Wednesday”) and I arrive to the meal to find a separate little casserole just for me.

Recently, a menu was posted including homemade bread, with a gluten-free option available. That means I need to skip the bread or bake my own. My neighbor mentioned her bread machine, and it sounded awfully easy – maybe I could finally use that yeast that I bought on impulse but have been too intimidated to try. This began a “Dare to fail” project that exemplifies some of the joys and benefits of cohousing.

It started with that neighbor lending me her bread machine, giving a brief tutorial and some advice (“Just throw it all in there.”). Then I retrieved my spelt flour from another neighbor’s garage refrigerator, where she lets me store my bags of flours and seeds that are too big for my apartment-sized fridge. I borrowed a food scale from a third neighbor. And lastly, I gathered a bread knife and ingredients I don’t normally buy (small amounts of butter and sugar) from a fourth neighbor (a.k.a. Mom).

Let me point out that neighbors #2-4 were not at home, but they leave their doors unlocked in case any of us need to come in. Unlike Goldilocks, I had prior permission and left no dirty dishes or broken furniture.

I had low expectations at this first attempt, but happily, the results turned out well enough for me to enjoy at last night’s common meal. Honestly, the bread wasn’t

good enough to share, but the story sure was!



Those are the times when we really enjoy cohousing.

Then, because we become so close to each other, there are times that are hard. Oakcreek had a couple of those this summer.



Our good neighbor Margaret was an important founder of Oakcreek Community, along with her husband Sidney. After sharing her humor and life with us for 12 years, she passed from life this summer, leaving such a space in our community

We remember this poem that she had written about her love of Oakcreek's woods:

Journey at the Edge of Winter
Oakcreek 2015

Late sun stripes the path,
a steep slope for box turtles,
but he's decked in red,
and a female takes him on.

The pathway down cuts through
the slope of smooth liriop
escaped from yards above.
Below, a burning bush
marks the streambed's base.

A trail through trees, small and large, leads to seats
where we lean back to watch
the trees' progress into the sky.
The old cottonwood oversees
the rest, including namesake oaks.
Tall sycamores let go
a grey cascade of bark,
their trunks gleaming white
even in the dusk.

In motion, slender yellow
leaves of willow catch the sun.
Begun a seed in muck,
content in water, it has grown
across the stream to rise
way above the bank.

We can walk right through
our intermittent branch
or choose a bridge
well above its water.
In wind or calm
the wide mainstream
slowly carves its banks.

From a handy bench
I watch the water
on its way downstream.

The waterfall chatters
around the bend.
I have to go and see.

A barred owl calls.
I resist the urge
to wade the creek,
instead making my way
home along these trails,
the gift of neighbors
who knew our need
for paths to equanimity.

with thanks to
Julie and Mike

Margaret

In addition, our longtime neighbor Sidney Morgan passed from this life a few weeks ago, following a brave struggle to remain in community as long as possible. She was an example for all of us -- as a devoted grandmother, teacher, and friend.





Both Margaret and Sidney are sorely missed, as there are daily reminders of their times spent with all of us.

Even as we remember those we've lost, we do look forward to our times together, as fall surely WILL arrive. We'll clear the leaves and store for composting, enjoy roasting marshmallows at the new fire pit, plan for holiday visits with family, continue volunteering at the local food bank, and take our sunset walks around nearby Boomer Lake.



As always, Oakcreek would love to have you visit. Just contact us to schedule a time. If you have an interest in hearing more about Oakcreek and cohousing in general, please ask to be placed on our Interested List. You will receive more detailed information about life at Oakcreek, and will be among the first to hear about Homes Available. If you're already receiving Interested List mailings, there's no need to re-list yourself.

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