The Leaves of Twin Oaks

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News of the Oaks

by Valerie

Our Newest Baby... On August 11th, at 11:55pm we welcomed our newest baby Tynan Galahad Hewes (7-1/2 lbs) into the world! Born to Cosima and Nairn in his mama's bedroom in Sunrilse, he had his eyes wide open as he was only half way out. "Tynan" is a welsh name meaning "dark" (he was born during an eclipse, and with a head of dark hair). Attending the birth were the mid-wife and a few friends (ex-Oakers and an ex-East Winder).

Tofu Fire... On the other side of the cosmic wheel, the community experienced a brief bout of destruction when a gas leak caused a fire in the tofu hut in September. Luckily a visitor passing by the hut at 11 pm saw the smoke and flames, and the fire department was able to put it out before much serious damage was done.

Minor Raw Food Craze... on the commune lately. Inspired by a raw foodist guest, Katie has been treating us to raw food soups: blended smedleys of fresh tomatoes, cucumbers, corn, garlic and more.

Tatoos... Many communards have been sporting henna tattoos lately, thanks to several workshops Promethea, Katie and Marie have done. These middle-eastern-based tattoos last up to ten days.

Email Lists for Members... In the cyber realm, both Twin Oaks and East Wind have started email lists for ex-members (and any current members interested) to re-connect. Topics on the lists have included strolls down memory lane, the nature of religion, and the idea of creating an "old-folks home" for ex-communards.

Tradeshow News... We sent 5 members (all Pisces!) to attend the national casual furniture tradeshow in Chicago. This show traditionally brings us a sizeable number of new hammocks accounts, and this year was no exception. We've also increased our sales thanks to our new hammocks biz web presence —currently 20% of our retail hammocks orders are through the website (www.twinoakstore.com).

Contingent Quota... In response to the need to make more hammocks to fill orders, we have instituted "Contingent Quota". This means that if we make our weekly hammocks goal (40/day = 200/wk), labor quota for the NEXT week is lowered by 2-1/2 hours, to 43 hrs/wk. If we don't make our goal, quota remains higher at 45.5 hrs/wk. We have also created a "hammocks quota"—each member needs to make at least 4 hours of hammocks per week.

Other Entities... We've started working with "other entities" again, farming out some of our production to other communities such as Acorn and North Mountain Land Trust. A group of ex-members (Joshua, Free, Sophie, Clay, and Elf and Willie ex-East Wind) from the area have formed a company "KnotWork", and they're taking on some orders as well. The Hammocks Business is currently seeking other communities who may be interested in this work—if your community or a group you know is interested, please contact Pavus, or contact us for more information.

Conferences... Both the Communities Conference and the Women's Gathering went well this year. At both weekends, there was a strong presence of "the next wave"—teenagers. A group of young women who've been coming to the WomGath for years were out in full force, holding their own workshops, teaching each other craftwork, and celebrating their rites of passage. The following weekend found a slew of ex-members' teenage kids out to hear Devon and her band, Dr. Bindu as well as TO's own Years for Bon Jovi 80's band rock the house for the Communities Conference. Both gatherings drew over 200 people to participate in workshops, networking and general conference merriment.

Record Harvest... This year we had a record grape harvest, almost three times the usual, and were able to make about 100 gallons of juice. We had our usual abundant crop of watermelons. This year Jake got creative and we were drinking fresh watermelon juice by the gallon!

Wildlife Glimpses... A flock of wild turkeys has taken up residence in the apple orchard. And like a scene from a nature documentary, one evening in August we watched a black-snake ingest a squirrel it had caught by Llano. The entire process took several hours, some of which was captured on video by Ted.

Ready for Floyd... We were well-prepared for Hurricane Floyd—emergency generators in place, water in buckets in each bathroom/kitchen, Sunrilse's solar electricity system charged for back-up—and so it's lack of arrival was very anti-climactic. We did appreciate the big rain it brought, as our land has suffered from the summer's drought.

Birds, Stores, and Safety... Hildegard's beautiful golden pheasant has retired to her daughter's house. Several of our members were successful in working with a local coalition to stop the creation of a second Wal-Mart in Charlottesville. We were concerned for the safety of a member who was visiting family in Turkey during the large earthquake there— It turned out she was in a different area of the country and returned home safe and sound.

Phone Calls... Our new phone system is a mixed blessing—it's easier for outside callers to reach individual residences, but we've been plagued with system breakdowns.

New Book... LeeAnn Kinkade, who grew up at TO and now lives in the area, is hard at work on her second novel. She calls her second book "an exploration of the adolescent psyche and the possible trancendance of guilt." Her first book novel, is yet to be published.

Women's Work

by Valerie

A part of what Twin Oaks is striving to accomplish in our lives is the opportunity for each person to be able to engage in work they desire, free from traditional mainstream barriers of gender, age, etc. I asked several women here about their work: what it entails and what they enjoy about it.

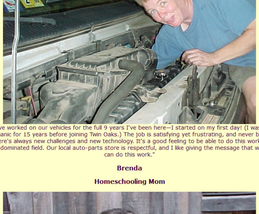
Katie
Co-manages Hammocks Products Desk

"I oversee the administration of the office and take phone orders from wholesale/retail customers. I like the feeling of "solving a mystery"—figuring out what to stock, the best way to ship an order, etc. I enjoy this job because I need some sitting/office work as a balance to all the physical work I do."

Pam
Garden Manager

"This is my first year as the solo garden manager. I shared the job for 3 years until my co-manager left Twin Oaks. I plan the layout of the gardens for the year—what we'll grow, and how much. I manage the garden crew workers, and do extra tasks like rototilling, irrigation, and ordering seeds. I love growing plants and supplying the community with fresh organic vegetables and fruits. I like to be somewhat independent from the money-based economy."

Inge
Auto Manager



"I've worked on our vehicles for the full 9 years I've been here—I started on my first day! (I was a mechanic for 15 years before joining Twin Oaks.) The job is satisfying yet frustrating, and never boring —there's always new challenges and new technology. It's a good feeling to be able to do this work in a male-dominated field. Our local auto-parts store is respectful, and I like giving the message that women can do this work."

Brenda
Homeschooling Mom

"Twin Oaks is an ideal place for homeschooling. Our members provide a pool of talents to draw on, and the kids aren't isolated because they can connect easily with others here. My vision of home-schooling is for the kids to be able to make their own choices and be self-directed in learning. We learn by trial-and-error what the best learning style is for each individual child, and the process is constantly evolving."

Lynn and Hawina
Co-Managers, Craft Fairs Business

Lynn: "There was a job opening for Fairs Manager. I like doing fairs, and I knew I had the skills for the job. My part of the co-management is getting stuff ready and loading the vans each weekend. This is harder than I thought it would be!"

Hawina: "I wanted to be more in touch with non-Oakers, and I like organizing things. I decide which fairs to apply to, and send in the applications. I also recruit members to go do fairs."

Hawina and Lynn: "We love our cozy office space! As co-managers we work well together, with clearly defined roles, and we complement each other well."

Who We Are:

Twin Oaks is an intentional income sharing community located on 465 acres of land in central Virginia. We are a non-sectarian community which espouses the values of cooperation and egalitarianism while striving to eliminate racism, sexism, violence, consumerism, heterosexism, ageism, and competition from our everyday lives. We believe in living lightly on the land, conserving and reusing as much of our natural resources as possible.

For information about our regular Saturday tours, or to inquire about our 3-week visitor program, please call during regular business hours or write to us at:

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