

The Leaves of Twin Oaks

NEWS OF THE OAKS

by Valerie

WE CREATE CULTURE:

This Mid-Winter Holiday season, we featured a **Home-Made Craft Bazaar**. Almost a dozen members sold and many bought various hand-made items--knitted socks and legwarmers, home-made lipbalm, earrings (my favourite - felted wool jellyfish earrings!), decorated light-switch plates, chainmaille jewelry, wooden rolling pins, and more. We have an internal currency system based on our time, and so members can "purchase" items from each other using this system, thereby making affordable holiday gifts for family and friends. And in January another dozen members or so performed an **Instrumental and Choral Concert** that they'd been rehearsing for many weeks. The performance space (our dining hall) was packed with many members and also local ex-members and friends who joined us for the evening.

WE GO PLACES, LITERALLY AND METAPHORICALLY:

One of our members travelled to **Kenya** this winter to visit her sister who is living there. Three people are taking a month-long trip, volunteering with an organization called **Sustainable Bolivia**. And on the other end of the sustainability spectrum, weirdly, we have had several members, on separate family trips, visit **Disney World** in Florida. The metaphoric flight we have taken is that Twin Oaks is currently featured in a question on the **SATs!** The community, our founder Kat Kinkade, and Walden Two (the book on which we were originally based) are mentioned in a sentence that the test-taker has to judge for grammatical correctness.

WE PLAY OUTDOORS:

New Year's Day found a small but dedicated

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group of Oakers out on the field (aka the cow pasture) for our traditional **New Year's Day Ultimate Frisbee** game, followed by a soothing sauna and a "refreshing"

dip in the pond. Several weeks later the pond froze over and we were able to get in a few games of ice hockey. One member made a dramatic appearance by bicycling down the path to the pond and continuing to bicycle right out onto the ice! (the bike promptly slid out from under co)

WE PLAY INDOORS:

We're in the midst of a Wintertime **games craze**. *King of Tokyo*, *Love Letters*, *Coup*, *Fairy Tale*, and *Ra* are a few of the more popular ones that members can be found playing at all hours. Some people have even created their own home-made decks. And if you've been following the ongoing saga of **Trout** and **Fox Acorn** in previous Leaves (Winter Solstice proposal at the South Pole, Summer Solstice Wedding here up "north"), the latest installment is that Fox is pregnant with what is sure to be an interesting Trout/Fox hybrid...

WE BUILD BUSINESSES:

Common Wealth Seed Growers (CWSG), a co-op run by several Oakers and other local seed farmers, just put out it's first catalogue, with various varieties of vegetables, fruit and legumes. Several growers from CWSG participated in and presented workshops at the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group Conference. You can find CWSG at commonwealthseeds.com.



LINUS KEEPS THE ZK SLATE CLEAR AFTER ONE OF SEVERAL SNOWFALLS THIS WINTER

Theater, Together

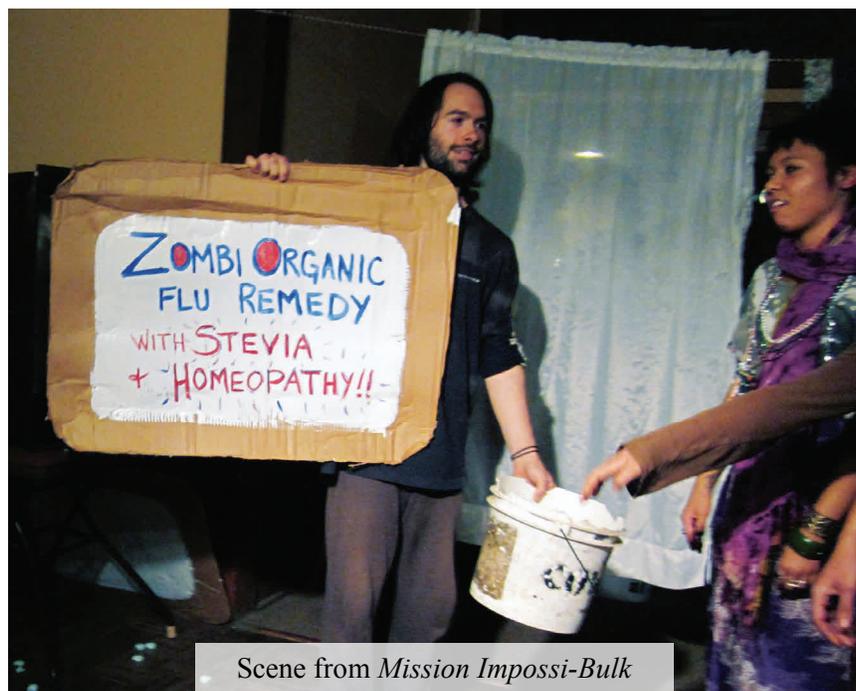
by Brittany

On December 6 and 7, 2014, we staged our first Twin Oaks theater production (not counting the brilliant all-kid production of *Freegan Town*; see Leaves #117, Summer 2014) since 2011's *It Came From the Dumpster*. Like its predecessor, the new play was a product of a 24-Hour Theater project, meaning that the entire play was conceived, written, built, and rehearsed within a twenty-four hour period, with the lights dimming and the curtain rising on the performance exactly twenty-four hours after the brainstorming session began. Under the pressure of a deadline, would our creative processes deliver us a gem?

In the wee hours of the morning, while pretending not to sleep on the couches in ZK dining hall, we came up with our title. *Mission Impossibulk: Trouble in Gainzville* is the story of protein-deficient weightlifters on a quest to find out what happened to all the East Wind nut butters. When their quest takes them on a road trip to East Wind, our sister community in Missouri, the truth is more than they bargained for. Featuring zombie raccoons, sugar-free okara brownies, inside jokes about community politics, and a throwback to *It Came From the Dumpster*, our new play was a celebration of Twin Oaks culture and quirks. One might also call it navel-gazing. Nevertheless, it was a fitting story for a homegrown production.

While actual theater companies do a 24-Hour Theater event with experienced writers and directors and a strict schedule, our process was a little more...fluid. Both writers anticipated that anyone but them would be writing. We didn't have anything resembling a director until 4 pm. And in my search for actors, I personally harassed three people who were still in bed. (Sorry!) But despite these anarchic tendencies, we persisted, surprising each other every few hours with a hilarious song, ingenious props, or a new cast member. And at 8 pm, we had costumes, props, lights, a set, stagehands, actors, musicians, a thirty-minute run time, and an audience with standing room only. Not too shabby for twenty-four hours and a handful of hippies with an aversion to hierarchy!

Although 24-Hour Theater is a bite-sized way to get busy communards to commit to a project, it also highlights what we can do with limited resources when we set our minds to it and work together. I like to think this is the heart of what we do here most of the time, really - working together to create something greater than we could create separately. The results, it turns out, are remarkable. Our play was the talk of the farm for weeks after, and people have been talking about Twin Oaks for almost fifty years.



Scene from *Mission Impossibulk*

Members Only? An Inside Look at the CMT

by Stephan (with special thanks to Mushka and Gordon)

The Community Membership Team (CMT) is made up of six full members who are responsible for interpreting community input regarding all aspects of membership at Twin Oaks. Their work includes: interviewing prospective members, gathering community input on provisional members, and dealing with members' guests. The team operates via consensus, which is generally pretty easy to reach. Existing policy paired with community sentiment often makes it clear which direction the decision should go, but still requires CMT to make the final call. If a CMT member doesn't fully agree with a decision, but doesn't feel strongly enough to block it, they may stand aside and let the decision move forward. Even though the team is large, everyone prioritizes attending meetings because issues may come up at any time and a quorum of three is necessary to make decisions.

Confidentiality is very important since the CMT is privy to a lot of very personal information on members, visitors, and guests. Some of the few locks in the community are on the CMT input box and files. Gordon, a seasoned CMT member, recalls:

"There was a huge ruckus many years ago when a member forced open the input box to see how people were 'voting' on someone or something they cared about (...something that they cared about more than they cared about proper process and the people they lived with). CMT's level of confidentiality is the subject of considerable controversy in the community. Some Twin Oakers have strong feelings - on both sides - about how much information should be public."

The CMT tries to reflect the diversity of the overall membership in terms of getting people from different social groups, work groups, age groups, etc., so that they are accessible and approachable. CMT decisions directly affect not only people's lives who are coming or going, but those who already live here. Because of this, the CMT is often open to harsh judgment from the community about any controversial decisions and strives to be tactful, well-worded, and following proper process. While the CMT is a sensitive and difficult job, there are certainly benefits. Mushka, a relatively new CMT member, says:

"The best part of the job are visitor interviews. Visitors who want to pursue membership get interviewed by two CMT members. First, we ask them to tell us their entire life story, and then we ask them over 90 questions about various lifestyle/community-related things. It's so unique to be able to hear about someone's whole history, from their own perspective. People come from so many different starting points, and handle challenges so differently. I think doing interviews has made me a more open-minded, compassionate person--a huge perk I never realized I'd get from being on CMT." ✨



Twin Oaks Video

Here is a video made about Twin Oaks by [Transition Bus](http://transitionbus.org/en) (<http://transitionbus.org/en>) - <https://vimeo.com/89076764>



You can also find more videos on our webpage at: www.twinoakscommunity.org/photos-videos/video-gallery