

Leaves #126

Table of Contents

News of the Oaks
by Valerie

Seed Racks: A Growing Business
by Elspeth

You Might Be A Feminist At Twin Oaks if.....
by various members

News of the Oaks

By Valerie

Hello from Twin Oaks! It's been a while since we published an issue of the Leaves, but quarantining has a way of making more time available....We are currently essentially in **lock-down** due to COVID-19—we are allowing no guests or visitors to come into the community, and only emergency trips out. We don't know when this will end, but it will continue for the foreseeable future.

QUARANTINE PHOTO HERE

There were various activities happening over the winter. Our mid-age home-schooled kids (ages 7 – 14) participated in **NaNoWriMo**--National Novel Writing Month—and during the month of November, each of them produced a short work which were all displayed for the community to see. We also kept busy with **Positive Gossip** each week; we put the names of every member in a hat, and as we drew each name, we went around the circle and people said the things they love and appreciate about that person.

Other news of the commune: We re-formed our **Diversity Team** to be POC-only (Person Of Color) and they have been working on encouraging the community to address issues of race as they manifest in our predominantly white community. Our author-member Pam spend 2 months this past winter promoting her **second book** “The Year-Round Hoophouse” **URL LINK HERE** by touring many sustainable agriculture conferences around the country. We're continuing being sustainable in the community by **constructing a lagoon** to turn what we

think of as “wastewater” from our tofu business into a resource which will be captured and used for irrigating and fertilizing our pastures. A few of our members took a **trip to Costa Rica** pre-coronavirus and are now quarantining there—we keep in regular touch by email.

It's unfortunately looking increasingly likely that our summer events—Queer Gathering, Women's Gathering and Communities Conference—will be canceled but we will post updates at twinoaks.org as we know more.

Seed Racks: A Growing Business

by Elspeth

PHOTOS are in the same #126B folder, use the one of the 1217 and 624

Caption 1217: The climate-controlled seed storage room

624 Elspeth selfie with boxes of seeds

It's spring here at Twin Oaks -- coat-and-hat weather in the chilly mornings, paired with sunny afternoons and crisp blue skies, and the excitement of the first spring flowers. Gardeners are focused on getting ready for planting, and here in the Seed Racks office we're busy getting seed orders fulfilled.

Seed Racks ((((POST LINKHERE LINK: And if this is a web edition you could put in a link to <https://www.southernexposure.com/retail-stores-ezp-17.html>))) is currently the third largest business at Twin Oaks. It's the wholesale branch of Southern Exposure Seed Exchange (SESE), owned by our sister community Acorn. We sell large quantities of heirloom and organic seed packets, as well as racks to display our product on, to retailers like garden centers and organic groceries from Maine to Texas, with the majority of locations in the Mid-Atlantic states. Two of our biggest customers are the MOM's Organic Market chain in MD/NoVA and Fifth Season Gardening stores based in NC.

Seed Racks is truly a collaboration between multiple communities, as Acorn owns SESE, members of nearby Mimosa community work in the business when we need extra help, and our sales rep/marketing manager is a comunard living in DC. This partnership between communities makes this unique among our businesses. Twin Oaks is responsible for operating SESE's wholesale branch, for which Acorn pays Twin Oaks an hourly wage for our labor, and both communities share the profits from Seed Racks.

Managing Seed Racks is my favorite job, as well as my most stressful job. Our busiest time of year is from November to March, bringing long days of order processing, packet printing, assisting customers, and frantically trying to get orders ready for shipping, at the time of year when many Oakers find themselves with a much-deserved chance to relax and take it easy after a summer of hard physical work.

Some of the nice things about Seed Racks are that it's an opportunity for indoor work which is easy on the body -- not everyone is able to work for hours in the sun. It helps support organic agriculture in the world, which makes it a great fit for our values, and fosters collaboration with a sister community. I feel good about this business's impact on the earth. Our paper recycling bin needs to be emptied much more often than our trash bin! We produce very little plastic waste, and sell a product that is genuinely valuable, as well as thoroughly biodegradable.

One of the biggest challenges comes from running a web-based business with our spotty rural internet connection -- a day or two of the internet being down, as happens not infrequently around here, makes it hard to get much done in the office. Another challenge comes along with the flexible, opt-in nature of work here at Twin Oaks -- not many folks here are interested in doing marketing and sales work, office work, or web programming, while weighing out seeds for hand-packing is a reliably popular job. On the bright side, that means there's a lot of potential for growth here. We have not had much in the way of time or energy to put into marketing thus far, and are still very busy every winter filling orders.

You might be a feminist at Twin Oaks if....

USE PHOTO IN WOMGATH / PICTURES / BRITTANY 2015, #5527

We asked various members of Twin Oaks to finish this sentence. Here are some of their answers:

you've ever taken Movement Support
labor credits for some activism, and
realized that all oppressions are linked

you've ever asked a male visitor
to put his shirt on at a meal-time

you've ever done a post-structuralist,
anti-colonialist, neo-marxist
deconstruction of a Disney princess
movie.....while singing
along with the movie

you've ever shared a Diva cup

you've ever looked at your friend's
vulva in a workshop

you've ever been assigned non-traditional work
for your gender and realized you enjoyed it

you've ever been assigned non-traditional
work for your gender and didn't even
notice it was non-traditional

you acknowledge that we
carry the patriarchy with us

you use the pronoun "co"

you've asked a woman to open
the stuck canning jar lid

you use peoples' preferred pronouns