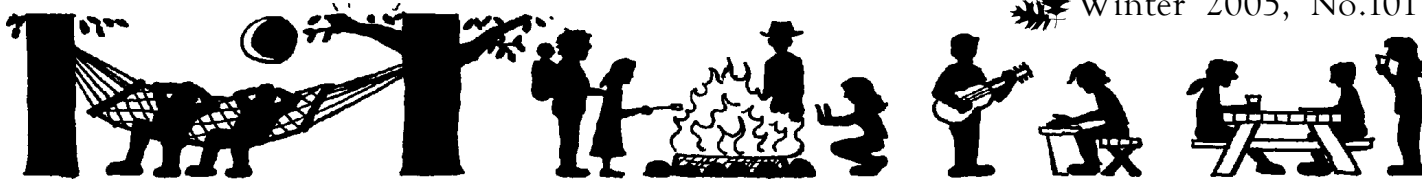


# The Leaves of Twin Oaks

Winter 2005, No.101



## News of the Oaks

by Seamus

As usual, there has been much coming and going since our last issue. After flirting with “pop cap” for many months, we finally reached our population limit of 93 adult members when Pax returned from PAL in early February. Craig, Cleo, and Adrian have said goodbye but live just a short drive away at Shannon Farm. Melissa is in Mali with the Peace Corps, Mele is pursuing graduate school, Philip is on sabbatical at Baker Branch, and Bill and Anissa have also moved on. During this time, we’ve welcomed Emily, Teo, Aubee, Alexis, Scott, Elona, Lesley, and Marielle. Beth worked as our Conference Intern for the summer and is now living in Wisconsin, and Jolane has very recently begun her student residence here. In August, we sent Alyssa, Maia, and Rose off to college—sad to see them go but happy for the great experiences they will no doubt have (see page 4). Sage has sent in her college applications and will be going off to school this fall as well.

The biggest story is, of course, “Austerity” and the loss of Pier 1 (see article *this page*). The hammock shop is quieter than it’s been in a while, but we’re expanding tofu production by taking on additional production for ex-member John’s Sunergia tofu business. Jake has dropped several managerships to focus more of his time on our indexing business, and we’ve had many other creative ideas for new income sources, including “eco-funeral” caskets, audio books, and expanding our college speaking endeavors. We had a good, albeit wet year in the garden; great potato and sweet potato harvests, among others. In dairy news, there have been many new additions in the last few months; the latest is a female named Firefly. They’ve also begun a cow share program to make Twin Oaks milk available to our neighbors and friends. In the slow winter times and with fewer hammocks to make, we’ve lowered quota to 38 hours; we’ll likely bump it back up

*“News” continued on page 7*



*In our “Post Pier 1” days, alternate income sources such as Woody’s cut flowers and ornamentals business have become more important than ever! (see article page 5)*

## Pier 1 and Twin Oaks, Divorced After 30 Years

by Dream

In an established community with over ninety members, sweeping changes are few and far between. While a member or two might be swept off their feet in any given year, Twin Oaks as a whole tends to maintain more of an equilibrium. But this past summer Pier 1 proved to be a broom big enough to affect the entire farm.

After over thirty years of business, Pier 1 told us they had decided to stop carrying our hammocks. Our buyer, Fred Poggemeyer, said their top priority in this difficult economic climate is to recapture customers and increase traffic by changing their image and their product line. Hammocks do not seem to fit into the picture. He also insisted that he enjoyed dealing with us and told us their decision was not meant to reflect on the quality of our products. He even left a small door open, saying they would consider us in the future, if they decided to carry hammocks again.

Even after six months, we are still

trying to figure out how this massive change will affect the community. The most obvious effect can be seen in this year’s trade off game. At the end of each year, the general management team of the products business must project the number of products we expect to sell. From there, we calculate the anticipated income. For 2004, we had projected the products business would make about \$470,000. For 2005, without Pier 1 hammocks to make, the projected income dropped to about \$260,000. This massive drop, over \$200,000, represents about 40% of the entire income of the community.

Through the years, various managers had enacted strategies to prepare the  
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# An Interview with Superdaughter

by Mala

Super Daughter has risen from its obscure beginnings (when everyone thought the sign they posted for their first show said “Suck Dumpster” instead of “Super Daughter”) to the top of the Twin Oaks charts. Their first album, *The Animals We See*, (recorded in Tupelo!), features haunting lyrics, catchy melodies, beautiful harmonies, guitar, saw, banjo, saw, ukele, toy piano, and more! It also led to the achievement of a new high in Twin Oaks cultural self-referentiality when fledgling band Audio Smut Bucket covered Super Daughter’s hit single “Smiles” at a recent TO coffeehouse. I was lucky enough to catch up with the whimsical duo hot on the heels of their Charlottesville debut at the Twisted Branch Tea Bazaar. Here’s the scoop!

## How was Super Daughter formed?

**John:** We started playing music together last winter.

**Summer:** Then I was playing around with recording on the 4-track and asked John to harmonize and play along on some songs.

**John:** Then we decided to keep going, and we needed a name.

**Summer:** Eula noticed that mug that says “Super Daughter” and suggested it.

## Do you usually write music first or lyrics?

Usually music. Then we go through Summer’s journal and find lyrics.

## What’s the process of collaborating on music or lyrics look like?

**Summer:** Well, for “Yerba Mate Girl,” John thought of the first part of the lyrics.

**John:** Then Summer had written a poem about a girl drinking yerba mate at the Mudhouse and we combined that with my original lyrics.

**Summer:** We recorded a version with the whole poem – it was six minutes long – and then cut it down to like, six lines.

**John:** That original version was great.

**Summer:** No, it wasn’t.

## Both of you sing on all the songs on the album. Did you think of doing any with just one of you singing?

**Summer:** John first recorded “Drop in the Snow” solo – I thought it sounded really good like that, but he wanted me to sing on it too.

**John:** “Empty Core Disappear” is like that too – there’s a little bit of me, but it’s mostly Summer, triple-tracked.

## Saw is such a wonderful spooky sound.

**Summer, how did you happen to take it up?**

**Summer:** My friend Erynn from college owned one and loaned it to me to play for the background of a play she was in. That was my saw debut.



## What does the song title “Thieves Stole My Bandits” mean?

**Summer** (looking blank): Should I make something up?

**John:** Sometimes when we need a phrase Summer just lets down the filters to her subconscious . . .

**Summer:** My mind is a random phrase-making machine . . .

**John:** We needed a title for that song, and Sum let down the filter, and that was what came through.

## Explain the lyrics and title of “Most Def Animals We See.”

**Summer:** We had this song without any lyrics, and we looked at the studio door, and there were these posters of animals, and so we decided to sing their names: “Reindeer, elephant, owl, hippopotamus.” I don’t know about the “most def” part.

## How did you come up with the wonderful line in “Vowels” – “You gave him an accent. You made god canadian?”

**Summer:** I was writing lyrics for my friend Ben in Ohio. He was writing religious songs, and he really likes Canada, so I tried to combine those themes to make a song he would use. Then I knew he wouldn’t really use it, so I decided to.

## What are you working on now?

**John:** We have a couple albums in the

pipeline . . .

**Summer:** Should we tell her about the secret album?

(whispered consultation)

**John:** We have a secret concept album. And then another album just with songs. We’re playing around more with beats and computer stuff.

**Summer:** And open tunings. And Teo’s going to give me a hammer dulcimer.

**John:** And we’ll have a euphonium. And more ukele.

## How was your first Charlottesville show?

**John:** Nerve-wracking and terrifying. I was really stiff.

**Summer:** I was glad that we’d practiced so much. And it made me love the folks at Twisted Branch more than ever. But a lot of things went wrong . . . the van broke down, they didn’t have mikes . . .

**John:** But a lot of things that could have gone wrong didn’t. We didn’t

break any strings; the computer beats worked; and when we messed up we got it back together quickly.

## Gordon, who reads *Rolling Stone* (which I don’t) says it’s not a real band interview unless I ask you what your influences are. So what are they?

**Summer:** I listened to Phish 24-7 during several formative musical years. More recently it’s been Iron and Wine, Fruit Bats, Postal Service, Four Tet, the Books, Mississippi John Hurt, Joni Mitchell, Rilo Kiley, Gillian Welch, and What Capitalism Was. Also the Slip, Steve Reich, Death Cab for Cutie, Reverend Gary Davis, Wilco, Paul Simon, Radiohead, Erik Satie, the Beatles, and the All-Request Dance Band. And some more I’m forgetting. Lauren Hill. Joanna Newsome. Yo La Tengo.

**John:** Also Iron and Wine, Fruit Bats, Postal Service, Four Tet, the Books, Yo La Tengo. And Mountain Goats, Notwist, Her Space Holiday, Eyvind Kang, Tin Hat Trio.

## Anything else you want to share with the readership of the Leaves?

If you send us \$8 we’ll send you a CD. If you put it in your computer there’s a video and info about the songs.

## Thanks for letting me play reporter!

Thanks for letting us play rock stars!  
(Group hug).



# Building a Kayak

by Cameron

I spent a huge chunk of last summer building a full size replica of an Inuit kayak that had been made for me in Greenland back in 1959. It was too long to fit in the Harmony woodshop so I had to do it outside. As people came by many of them would stop to ask what I was doing and to talk about the project. I felt that most people thought I had to be crazy, but showed incredible patience with my working on it day after day. I'm very grateful for their patience.

It's finished now and it's an OK replica as replicas go. But, for me and for a lot of other kayak enthusiasts, it's the original that was a very special kayak. When I was a young man I was invited to spend a summer in Greenland. It was the most wonderful experience of my life. For a number of years my best friend and I had been kayaking on the West Coast of Scotland. On one of those trips we met Dr. Harald Drever, a geologist who'd already four times visited the small Inuit village of Illorsuit. Illorsuit was one of seven small villages in the Uummannaq District of northwest Greenland. Drever was fascinated by our Scottish kayaks and we were even more fascinated by his stories of life in Greenland.

That winter he wrote to ask me if I would like to spend the summer in Illorsuit. That was surely the most exciting letter I've ever received. Of course I agreed and the following August, of 1959, I was on the m.v. Umanak, sailing from Copenhagen to Nuuk (then Godthaab) the capital of Greenland. From Nuuk, I went by a smaller ship to Uummannaq town where I met a Danish Eskimologist, Bent Jensen. He invited me to spend a week with him in Ikerasak village where he was doing his research. During that week he taught me "all I wanted to know" about living among the Inuit. At the end of the week I went to Illorsuit, set up my tent, and got ready for two and a half months of studying how the men of the village hunted seal by kayak. I had my Scottish kayak with me. It was much wider and more stable than the Greenland kayaks and it was just right for me to be able to go with the men on their kayak hunting trips and to photograph them in action.

I asked one of the older men to build a kayak for me. It took some time but finally we had the four Harp Seal skins needed to skin my kayak. Six women did that job and

they got it done in just one day. The oldest of the six women, Karen, had also worked on the skinning of Dr Drever's kayak back in 1938! I tried out the kayak there in the village bay, but by then it was almost time for me to leave so I never did get to use the kayak for real. After many years, it's ended up in the city museum in my hometown of Glasgow.

When I moved to the States in 1961, I left the kayak in the care of two members of my kayaking club. One of them, Duncan Winning, made detailed measured drawings of the kayak. He sent me a copy of the drawings and except for learning that it was in the museum, that was the last I knew of the kayak for many, many years. Then, last December, I learned that Duncan had sent his drawings to many kayakers, that many copies of the kayak had been made, and that there is even a commercial version of it on the market called the Anas Acuta. ["... a sea kayak with a pedigree. It was designed by Geoff Blackford based on drawings of a centuries old design from the West Greenland village of Igdlorssuit."]

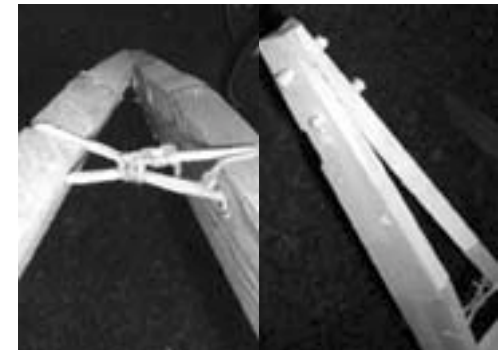
Emailing with members of QajaqUSA and reading and contributing to their bulletin board soon had my old enthusiasm revved up and I decided to build the replica. I knew that there would be a large get-together of Greenland style kayaking enthusiasts at Lewes, Delaware in October and my plan was to build the replica and take it to this "Delmarva Paddlers Retreat." Of course, I'd expected to have the kayak ready well in advance and have plenty of time to try it out and get familiar again with paddling such a narrow, tippy boat. In fact, it was a much, much slower job than I'd expected and I only just had it done in time for the Retreat. So that's where I finally launched it, and several of the experienced kayakers tried it out. They said it was great, that I'd done a good job. I got to watch it in the hands of an expert and it performed beautifully, a great kayak to roll.

In the old days, in Greenland, there were many ways that a kayaker could be capsized and in danger of his life. A sudden storm, a calving glacier, an iceberg turning upside down, being attacked by a harpooned bladder-nosed seal, getting entangled in the harpoon line, any of those could mean a capsize. So the Inuit had long ago come up with a whole number of ways to roll the kayak back upright again. Typically this was done using the paddle, if necessary it could be done with just the harpoon throwing stick, with two hands, with just one hand, and even with a "no hands" swing of the body alone. Of course, while I was in Illorsuit that was one

"kayak" continued on page 7



*Putting it all together...*



*Rawhide lashings... ...and wooden pegs*



*Nearly finished...*



*At last... .Launching day!*

# Twin Oaks Goes to College!

In spring of 2004, three of our beloved teenagers graduated from high school. In the fall, they all left for college and made their way into the wide world. *The Leaves* caught up with all three during their first semester, to find out how they're doing!

## Maia!

I hope everyone's doing great! I miss Twin Oaks so much - I really didn't understand how lucky I was to live in a place where walking through the forest at night was as safe as walking through the forest in the day. Campus life is a little different from that. The first couple of days at school were definitely lonely and I was desperately missing the smiling faces of all of you at Twin Oaks and of course, my wonderful best friends.

I'm taking some really interesting classes. One that I'm excited about is Contemporary Social Problems. I feel like it will help broaden my perspective on social activism and what I need to be doing. I'm also taking anthropology. My teacher seems like a really strong woman; she had a stroke six years ago and had to relearn herself to walk and talk. She's very intelligent and I feel honored to have such an experienced teacher. I'm also taking chorus, aerobics and humanities.

I have told a lot of people already that I grew up on a commune and it has proved to be an interesting topic of conversation. I've met some really great people so far; one of them is very special and she's taken me to some really great poetry readings in Asheville. There seems to be so much fascinating culture here, so much art and music. I love how vibrant and alive this town is. I also love being nestled in the mountains. I went hiking the other day with some girls and it was incredibly breathtaking.

## Alyssa!

Hello all! As many of you know I left for Hollins University in Roanoke, VA, the 26<sup>th</sup> of August... the last teen girl to leave for college this year. I can't believe it has been over a month since I left my home and everything I've known since birth. I'm still adjusting but so far I absolutely love it and I'm having a blast.

Both of my parents, Colleen and Rollie, helped me move into my dorm room. When I first entered the room, my roommate was nowhere in sight, but I saw her pink comforter and other miscellaneous pink accessories. Oh, I was worried - bias towards pink and girly-girl stuff - but she's great and lovable, my fears were unwarranted.

The campus is beautiful and every day I feel more at home. Along one path, six gigantic magnolia trees stretch their limbs over the pathway. The mountains, which completely surround the Hollins campus, greet me on clear mornings. As I walk to the dining hall, Moody Center, I find myself simply smiling because of the beautiful scenery.

I've made some truly great friends and have been promoting Twin Oaks. A couple of girls have been on tours and are interested in doing a three-week visitor period. One girl is coming with a friend to T.O. for Fall Break this year. Whoop whoop! Almost every woman I've met on campus is surprisingly open-minded and I'm realizing I can relate to all sorts of people without trying or giving it a second thought. And I kind of attribute this to my childhood and adolescence at Twin Oaks.

In class, I bring a unique perspective to the table, just like everyone else. The female-kick-butt-empowering vibe is definitely a high I've been picking up on. I feel very lucky to be here at Hollins and in this environment because already I've received more personal attention from professors and my advisor than some close friends who attend large schools. This semester I chose to take a more intense course load so that in the spring semester I can take some fun electives. So, fall semester: Intro. to Psychology, Microcomputers in the Business World (damn comp. science requirement for a psychology major), Current Social Problems and Buddhist Traditions. The last two are most definitely my favorites!

Working... I have mixed feelings about. When I received my work-study assignment at orientation I was thrilled; I'd be at the Circulation Desk in the library. Basically, checkin' books in and out, shelving, referring people with questions that I'm clueless about and some down time for home-



*Alyssa, Maia, Sage, and Rose before their escape from Twin Oaks. Sage is finishing high school in C'ville this year, while the other three have begun their college careers!*

work. The building is architecturally stunning. It's gigantic and I've become so familiar with the secret study rooms and nooks where no one can find me (oh, of course I don't hide from people when I'm working hee hee). So because of the difficult classes this term, working fifteen hours a week is proving more strenuous than I thought it would be. I mean, I've worked since I turned 15 years old, but there's just so much going on here, so many clubs and organizations to get involved with. I have faith that next semester I will be more adjusted to this schedule and be able to become more involved in the Hollins community. I have high expectations for the coming year!

Please write to me, even if it's just a couple words of wisdom, an inspiring quote that I'll add to my quote book, a picture of home sweet home, some gossip about my pops or a new website or magazine article I should try and check out. I'm much better about responding to e-mails and letters than initiating dialogue. So, be friendly and I'd love to hear from you. I hope all is well and good, peaceful and tranquil, gratifying and copacetic, stable and exhilarating!

## Rose!

Wow, where to start? My classes are all WONDERFUL! I have all women profs this semester which is really nice, and my classes are all less than thirty students. I won an essay-writing contest in September and got to meet the author of our freshman summer reading book. I love my environmental science class and am lucky to have a young, passionate woman as a teacher, who is also the director of the environmental science

*"college" continued on page 6*

*"Pier 1" cont. from Page 1*  
 business to survive such a blow. We had grown both our wholesale and retail businesses with the hope of being able to support the needs of the community in the event of losing our biggest customer. Beyond hammocks, the tofu business and indexing had been encouraged to grow to a level where they might take some of the income burden off of hammocks. Unfortunately, while such efforts had made strides, we are still at least a few years away from making up the loss in income.

Longer term members may remember another time where Pier 1 dropped us, only to come back several months later. It remains to be seen whether they will rethink their decision to stop carrying hammocks. For now, the managers who have most recently dealt with Pier 1 are dubious about the prospect of future orders. Some members are relieved to get out of a sometimes difficult relationship, while others are advocating we set out on a course to try to win Pier 1 back.

East Wind has decided to greatly reduce their hammocks business, from making thousands of hammocks to only hundreds a year. Faced with a massive reduction in our hammocks needs, we were forced to fire all of the outside entities, including Acorn, who had been making hammocks for us.

Meanwhile, tofu is ramping up production, indexing is chopping at the bit, the hammocks business is redoubling marketing efforts and striving to reduce expenses, and several members are pursuing new business ideas. I have been encouraged and inspired by efforts on so many fronts to work towards a more sustainable economy. My personal hope is that if Pier 1 comes knocking again in the near future we will have the economic security to politely decline their advances, to tell them to take that big, corporate broom somewhere else.



*Our tofu business is taking a more prominent role in the post-Pier 1 income scene*

## Ornamentals: Cut flowers & other lovely things

Last year, a new income area was established here at Twin Oaks. This income area is what is known in the community as Ornamentals. Woody manages the Ornamentals area and most of the products sold so far have been grown in the area that we are coming to know as New Holland. This small area (less than half an acre) west of the pond and east of the sewage treatment plant was first planted three years ago with thousands of Daffodil and Narcissus bulbs that Woody and Jake brought from Wisconsin. Many cut daffodils were harvested and sold during 2002 and 2003, but things didn't really get serious until this year.

When the 2004 budget was set up, Woody estimated that we would have about \$3,000 in sales during 2004, with about \$300 expenses. What we have seen so far this year for income is over \$3,700 with \$445 in expenses. Woody and visitors and guests have done most of the labor in this area, with some new members pitching in recently.

This year we again sold cut daffodils through Food of All Nations and Whole Foods in Charlottesville. In addition to these outlets, the Charlottesville City Market (commonly known as the Farmer's market) has proved to be profitable. In early May, it became apparent that we had far more Sweet William flowers to sell than we could possibly dispose of through the other retail outlets, so we tried out the Farmer's Market. Between May 15 and September 5, Woody made eleven trips to this Saturday morning market. The market is held in the Water Street parking lot just a block from the downtown mall. In order to get a selling space, it is necessary to get to the lot before 5:30 a.m. This means that Woody had to cut and load the flowers on Friday afternoon, then get up just after 4 a.m. to get on the road to Charlottesville.

During June, many of the bouquets sold were mixed, including a lot of wild flowers gathered from our ditches. Then in late July other domestic species began to bloom. Hildegard provided many zinnias and other flowers were gathered from various spots throughout the community.

In August and early September the biggest sellers were the annual asters and celosia. The huge cockscomb celosia brought \$2.00 per stem and small mixed bouquets of

celosia and asters were sold for \$5.00 each.

Ornamentals is much more than just cut flowers. In addition to the flowers, ornamentals also sold wheat weavings and dried gourds. The "big apple" gourds were sold for \$5.00 each if varnished and \$8.00 each if painted in colors. Small wheat weavings, priced at \$3 to \$5 each were very popular.

In addition to the products of ornamentals, Woody took hammocks and soy products to the market. About \$200 worth of tofu and soysage and a total of thirteen hammocks was sold this way.

Ornamentals has much greater hopes for next years' sales and in order to meet the demand for gourds and other items we have now allocated a portion of "Lawson land" to the use of ornamentals. This area fronts the road near the intersection of Baker branch and East old Mountain road. Rollie plowed and disked a strip of land that is sixty feet wide and over five hundred feet long.

In late September, Jake and Woody's brother Julian visited here at Twin Oaks for a few days. With him he brought many more thousands of flowers bulbs. Six full rows of bulbs are now planted at "Lawson land" (about seven thousand bulbs) as well as four long rows of garlic. The garlic will be grown and harvested by the ornamentals crew and it is hoped that much of it can be sold as garlic braids at the Farmer's market and other retail outlets.

In the spring we will be planting many more hard-shell gourds and other ornamental types of produce, mostly non-perishable or semi-perishable. Work also continues at the original New Holland as more of the area is freed of weeds, wiregrass and rocks and put into production of flowers. A large quantity of Aquilegia (Columbine) was started from seed this summer and much transplanting still needs to be done. The Columbine should be ready to harvest and sell shortly after the Daffodils are finished next year, yet before the main crop of Sweet Williams are ready.

This year's crop of apple gourds at New Holland was small, due to space problems and rabbit damage. It is hoped that our crop of gourds at Lawson land next year will be a good one, but those gourds will not be ready to sell until 2006.

There is really no upper limit to what we can produce in the name of Ornamentals. There may be a limit, however, to what we can sell. We'd like to see what that limit is. Next year we hope to expand our sales by attending some of the other Farmer's markets in this area.



*My Week at Twin Oaks*  
*A Mother's Point of View*  
by Anna (Ezra's mom)

You know - just between you and me (and all the other Oakers) - my boy Ezra has always been an inspiration. So it came as no surprise to me that he would chose such a unique place as Twin Oaks for a home. I must admit that I felt a bit like Scarlett O'Hara upon her return to Tara. Never had a place so strongly lured me. Temporarily freed from financial responsibility and the daily grind of meaningless work, introduced to new minds and souls, fed on good healthy home-grown food, surrounded by nature's glory, feeling useful, and graciously received by those of you I had the good fortune to hold forth with, I certainly had a wonderful week-long visit.

Sitting here in my study in West Athens, Maine, I'm trying to conjure up all the impressions I had during that bucolic week. There were so many, it is difficult to know where to start and even more difficult to avoid treacle. So bear with me.

Overall, what impressed me the most was that despite the fact that there were over 90 people living in a relatively small complex, there was such a peaceful sense of privacy and quiet industry. What gave me the greatest joy was not having to deal with money, per se. My needs were provided for - from soup to nuts. Good food, good company, and a healthy intelligent lifestyle. And I never had to take out my wallet. Who could ask for anything more?

Is it Utopia? No, not yet - nor will it ever be. Everyone has an 'Irk' - yes, even at Twin Oaks! The vegans resent the efforts expended on the care of animals; they'd rather be raising soy. The polyamorous folk regret the increasing state of monogamy; their grazing grounds are diminished. Some are seen to work too little while others work too much. There are those who are too officious while others never speak up. Some complain that the kids are too noisy and unproductive and need to be reined in. Hard liners want the lights along the path dismantled and claim that finding your way in the dark is a true badge of courage. Others think that's a pretty stupid idea!

Oh well. What else is new? Would you want it any different? It seems to me that the honest rubbing up against one another with differ-

ent edges of the puzzle makes for good dialogue, sound decisions, and is, as contentious as it may seem from time to time, the true demonstration of free speech. The only irk I had was trying to remember your names. I mean, come on! It's not like you've got easy ones - to pronounce or to spell!

But, all irks aside, there were so many things in your world that I loved. I loved the fact that you recycle conscientiously and live in such an ecologically sound manner. I loved that you have a choice of work and that your efforts aren't draining so that you have the time to indulge in what you truly want to do. I loved it that you're not all stuck on a couch in front of a TV set. I loved it that you do 'people' things together and that you are lusty as well as industrious and you swing in all possible directions and flavors.

I loved the feeling of knowing that the work you do benefits everyone, that it's not just about 'me' but about 'us.' I loved being in a place where being 'politically correct' is a way of life and not just a slogan. I loved swimming naked at night in a twirl of laughter with a gaggle of joyful people on a night filled with stars and the dance of the fire flies. I loved how people dressed, so individually, so originally, so without pretension. I loved the fact that men could wear women's clothing without impunity and I loved seeing them walk down the hall in the buff without the hint of self-consciousness.



I loved the efficiency of your communication system and admire how your 'rules' are so practical and sensible they seem invisible. I loved being served two delicious meals a day - it was like being at summer camp - and finding myself in the midst of such good table conversation. I loved the fact that I didn't have to cook. I loved kitchen detail and my Dutch obsession with cleaning was in 'dish washing heaven' with that big machine you've got there.

I loved my morning walk as the promise of coffee lured me into the hammock studio. I loved lying in bed with a good book and hearing the dulcet strains of my son's mandolin as he walked down the path to Tupelo House. I loved the abundance of good books and magazines. I loved the way the electric golf cars were decorated. I loved being in the midst of youthful energy with the flow of life: intrigue and couplings, love affairs and heartaches - all intermingled. The vibrant unpredictability of human nature.

You've got the right idea there. No doubt about it. And if the rest of the world could fashion their lives 'a la Twin Oaks' it would indeed be a better place for everyone. And needless to say, I am very much looking forward to my next visit!



*"college" continued from page 4*

program here at NKU. I am seriously considering environmental science as my major, but won't declare until next year. It's really exciting researching all of the career possibilities that would be open to me with a degree in env. science. I have been accepted into the honors program here and will be taking a really great-sounding seminar next semester: it explores our sense of self using literature, film, philosophy and science.

I have joined the College Democrats organization; even though I am more of an independent, it's nice to talk to a group of people who are politically aware, which is what i am striving to be. I also joined an enviromentally concerned and aware students group; we passed out literature on Bush's environmental record and are gathering signatures in hopes of getting the university to provide more containers for recycling.

I like the area, less than ten miles in one direction is downtown Cincinnati and in the other is country. I haven't found people to go hiking with yet, lotsa friendly people but not a lot of like-minded people I feel like I can really relate to. I am spoiled by exceptional friendships and have high standards, but I am optimistic, although of course I have lonely, down days. The girls and I have been in touch through email and Instant Messenger; we also talk one to three times a week.

It's pretty wild that an 18-year-old, recently graduated chick moved into my room. Kinda neat though too. I'll be home for a good three weeks in mid-December for winter break. I am looking forward to walking the paths of Twin Oaks again!



"news" continued from page 1

when spring arrives. One of the more notable casualties of the leaner economic times has been....COFFEE!! People are now on their own to get their caffeine fix—some have formed a buying collective and staved off withdrawal, others are shakily trying to make do.



Sean performed an elaborate puppet show during his C'ville art opening

And of course, it's not all work and no play. People are up to all sorts of things. The Vulgar Bulgars have been busy sharing their love of Klezmer music with folks in Richmond, Charlottesville, and miles beyond. They'll soon be heading out for their worldwide tour of Florida. The dynamic folk duo Superdaughter (John & Summer) is now a veteran of two Charlottesville gigs as well. Dream, Aubee, Marielle, Kate, Cherry, and Ione put on two performances in January of *The Effects of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds*, and work has begun on our spring musical, *Cabaret*. Sean had an art opening at Nature Visionary Art in Charlottesville, where he and other Oakers have had works on display for some time. Unprecedented in my time here, we had a mobilization of five or six cars carrying nearly 40 Oakers on his opening night.

Our social calendars have been quite full on the farm as well. Lots of dance parties, including contra dances called by Kathryn and Kate. The Halloween party was quite a showcase, from Jake as "Elvis Parsley" singing about the garden to River as a baby who sucked his thumb and took a bite of raw squash. Festivities at New Year's included plenty of everything...except inhibitions.

"kayak" continued from page 3  
of the many things I wanted to see and learn about. Several of the men demonstrated how to do it and coached me some as well.

Later, in Scotland and then in the States, I'd gotten to be quite good at kayak rolling. So, a part of my dream when I decided to build the replica was that I would still be able to. At the Retreat, out in the bay, I was coached in chest and layback sculling in my

Friday afternoon tea in Beechside was a can't-miss for many this past fall, and the cooler weather also brought the welcome return of Alex's Thursday morning pancake breakfasts in Morningstar. Along the lines of food, Shayn and Summer are fermenting everything they can get their hands on. So far, they've made watermelon soda, sourdough, dosas, sauerkraut, and sassafras/ginger soda.

Some Oakers have also been involved in activism (as individuals and not representatives of Twin Oaks, of course). A small group went to the Republican National Convention protests in New York in August, and several Oakers recently returned from the counter-inaugural protest on January 20<sup>th</sup>. The National Conference on Organized Resistance (NCOR) happened in early February, and 15 members traveled to DC to network, skill-share, and feast on a salmagundi of subversive ideas. In addition, there has been much organizing over Dominion Virginia's plan to expand its North Anna Nuclear Power Plant in Louisa County by two additional reactors (the first new reactors planned since the Three Mile Island accident in 1979).



Over 20 Louisa-area communards from Acorn, Little Flower, & Twin Oaks danced and puppeted in DC on Jan 20.

And lastly, events that don't fit into any other category. We had a visitor here in the fall who is a metaphysical hypnotist. So many Oakers were interested in the experience that he stuck around for a couple of weeks after his visitor period and hypnotized about 30 of us by the time he left. The weather is our final story—January was a month of extremes. It was nearly 80° on the first day of

replica. Those are techniques where you go over only half way and then come back up again. That went reasonably well. Next day in the swimming pool, which felt a lot less intimidating, I managed to roll an Anas Acuta.

A few days later, I launched the kayak again here in the Twin Oaks pond, named it "Ajungilak" (Inuit for good or wonderful), and a group of us celebrated with champagne and camembert. If the weather

the year, and a false spring ensued for nearly two weeks. But the latter half of the month saw two ice storms and Oakers slipping and sliding all over the place. Speaking of which, we had several good days of ice skating on the pond; the river froze as well, but not thick enough to skate on. How will the rest of winter treat Twin Oaks? That we can't say, but our first crocus bloomed in front of ZK on January 12<sup>th</sup>...



## There is Life after Twin Oaks by Steve

After being at Twin Oaks for over twelve years, I recognize a necessity to move on. Staying in the same environment for so many years, I feel relatively stuck and a need to move on for my spiritual, emotional and psychological growth.

At this stage in my life, I want a more intimate living situation with far less people. I am seeking to live with like-minded folks wanting to sit with each other everyday with the intention to truly get to know one another. I want to share our lives through open and honest communication, be a beacon of light for each other, and help each other grow through our own love, understanding, and compassion. In the next year, I will be exploring possibilities of living in Central America and/or the Caribbean, right by or near the ocean. I feel a strong desire to live year-round in a warm tropical climate for my physical and mental well-being. I will also try to choose to live off the land, growing our fruit and vegetables.

Getting to know our neighbors, the way they live, their wants, needs, desires, will also be given priority.

If you have a similar desire like myself, please contact me at [steve@twinoaks.org](mailto:steve@twinoaks.org) and check out my website through [twinoaks.org](http://twinoaks.org). I thank Twin Oaks for being here and providing me a safe home for all these years.



holds, I hope to practice rolling the kayak some more once the spring arrives. Meantime, there it is -- after many hours of work, a successful replica of that famous 1959 Illorsuit kayak.

