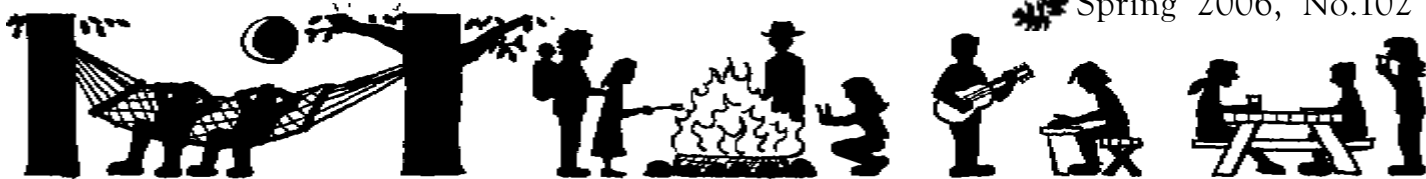


# The Leaves of Twin Oaks

Spring 2006, No.102



## News of the Oaks

by Kassia and Gordon

**Comings and Goings:** On September 27<sup>th</sup>, Mala gave birth to our newest member, a little boy named Zadek who has been charming us all with his adorable smile and appendage flailing. Hawina's neice Irene came from the Netherlands for several months as our new econ intern. After many years of membership, Bob and Stella moved on to warmer climes. Despite many fluctuations, our population has remained in the mid- to high-80s. Alexis, Apple, Emily, Thomas, Sean, Summer spent the last week of September at Sandhill to help with the sorghum harvest. Twin Oaks founder Kat Kinkade has been granted a special membership status that will allow her to return to TO as a dependent member any time she wants. And, our average member age has finally dropped below 40 years, so our "Age Limit" policy is no longer in effect. That means people over 54 can apply for membership without having to get an exception.

**Kid News:** Gwen and Jonah graduated from Piper's Reading Window program, Zadek was born in Beechside Sept 27 at 6lbs 6 oz—the 4<sup>th</sup> baby born in Kaweah; 3<sup>rd</sup> in Beechside. Luuk, 2 years old, joined the community in May (he brought his parents, Elsa and Ben ex-Acorn). Chris graduated high school, and Imani is happy in middle school, after home schooling for many years.

**Business Updates:** In 2005, we made most of our Rope Products sales goals, but our income was low due to inventory adjustments. We are marketing some new products: hemp and silk-spun hammocks, a folding hammock chair frame and our own polyester Envirope. Tofu has expanded dramatically in the past 12 months; we regularly have four days of production. In the first four months of 2006 we sold as much tofu as we did in all of 2004, and in May we had over \$30,000 in sales! We're also making many pounds a week of specialty "More Than Tofu" product for Sunergia Soy Foods (the Charlottesville business started by ex-members Jon and Marsha). In preparation for this summer's Tofu labor crunch, the community agreed on a new labor policy, called the Tofu Reserve Crew. Everyone who isn't a regular tofu worker (and who doesn't have a health exemption) will be on a

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Ultimate Frisbee makes everybody happy! Especially Owen, Joel, Sky, and Hans (pictured)

## The Ultimate Thrill!!

by Ezra

What do you get when you combine 6 – 10 Twin Oakers and a round plastic disc on a sunny Saturday afternoon? Well, if it's anytime in the past few months, you would get a lively game of Ultimate Frisbee, the latest athletic craze to sweep the commune! Although the game is a recent phenomenon at Twin Oaks, "Ultimate" (as it's usually known) has been around for years as the quintessential 'sport for people who hate sports.' The rules are simple enough: one team tries to move the disk by throwing it down the field and catching it in an 'end zone,' and the other team tries to stop them by intercepting or blocking the throw. You can't run with the disk, and if a pass is dropped or intercepted, it's a 'turn-over' and the frisbee goes the other way. The sport has a reputation for being low-key and free of the 'in-your-face' competitiveness and machismo that can unfortunately ruin the sporting experience for us laid-back commune types. Although everyone runs around and plays hard on each point, we don't keep score, and the teams are re-

shuffled if it seems like one team is scoring too many points in a row. Players of all ability levels are welcomed, and no-one keeps track of who's winning.

The merits of Ultimate Frisbee are well known to many Oakers, and its absence has been for years an oft-lamented aspect of life on the commune. For Yours Truly, giving up my weekly pick-up game in Oakland, Ca. was one of the greatest sacrifices I made in moving here. But in the past, Twin Oaks

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rotating list to do a six-month stint of Reserve Crew, doing one tofu shift a week. Indexing is still going strong. Woody is making some money selling produce, cut flowers, hammocks, tofu and his own fabulous crafts at the Charlottesville farmers' market every Saturday morning. Outside Work (OW) has become more important in the post-Pier I world: some folks are doing construction locally, Valerie gives private yoga classes to non-Oakers in the Bijou, Purl (ex-Sean) is a growing presence in the Folk/Outsider art world, and the Vulgar Bulgars continue to turn Klezmer into Labor Credits. Although our overall economic situation is slightly less bleak than we'd originally projected, we're trying not to count our chickens before their hatched.

**Construction Projects:** Cameron completed construction of a beautiful kayak storage shed on the east side of the old Dairy Barn, and Keenan and Ezra built a big new second-storey deck on the west end of Kaweah, with almost all recycled materials. Before their departure, John and Anja completed construction of a beautiful hanging tree house near the river. It's a true haven with views of the river and solar-powered lights. **Vehicular**

**Updates:** Vanarchy, one of our large Fairs cargo vans was stolen, causing great anguish because it was quite new and not insured against theft. It was gone so long we gave up on getting it back, until heard that it had been found abandoned in a lot. We happily paid the several hundred dollars to reclaim it. It also needed re-naming. The winning name was "Rider's Redemption", because some Oakers had thought it very suspicious that Vanarchy had disappeared almost the same day that the member Rider vanished in the night, just ahead of police with a court order. In the grand hammock shop naming party tradition, our new dark red Corolla was named Red Menace (not New Crusty Menstruals). Indigo Girl ALMOST made it to 400,000 miles. She died at 398K.

**Food News:** The gardens look great: We had TONS of wonderful salad greens and dark



Summer gives Zadek his first guitar lesson.

leafy greens all winter, thanks to our big greenhouse. This is a bumper year for the courtyard cherry trees. Climb the ladder and pick yourself a cup, or a quart, of "sour" cherries. We're also getting lots of mulberries. Food budget cuts have lead to dumpster items filling the void where expensive purchased fruit used to be. We've been harvesting Shiitake mushrooms from our own logs, and we've also traded home-made cheese for them with ex-members Ted and Free. We've also exchanged our cheese for nutbutters from East Wind and sorghum



of Project Poopelo. During construction of Tupelo's composting toilet, we asked for the community's input on two things- the name of the structure, and the communities preference of toilet seats. The community overwhelmingly liked the name, "Poopelo." But the nature of the toilet seat was cause for much debate. The two choices were a delightfully campy, cushioned seat with an embroidered rose on it, or an elegant, all wood seat made of maple. After much discussion of the desirability of a cushioned throne, and would plastic stand up as well outside, the wooden seat was selected to grace the throne of Twin Oaks' newly completed fourth composting toilet.

The Concept of Poopelo has gone through many transitions. Originally it was going to be a grain silo decked out to be a super funk flashback rocketship. But that idea got changed when a Dave and Julie came to guest at Twin Oaks and wanted to build a strawbale house. Bales were purchased, but turned out to be musty and unusable, so a compressed earth option was explored. Eventually, the original honchos left, followed by several other cos who had filled in temperiaraly as fearless leaders

of Project Poopelo.

So when I came on as Poopelo's, 4th (or 5th) honcho, the foundation, the roof and the framing were already up. 2 x 4s had been packed with a slurry of clay and sawdust to form an insulating barrier between the framing; at least that was the idea. Unfortunately, the packed earth had been left to weather for an indeterminate amount of time. The earthen walls had suffered cracks and shrinkage, and they were posed to go through



Ted achieves a state of pure bliss as he creates his first poopeloid.

another winter unprotected. Plaster was the intended coating sealer for the earth, but I could crumble the test areas with my bare hand.

We decided to change the already often transmogrified plan yet again. "This toilet shall

have wooden walls," we declared. Wood being a natural resource that is renewable and plentiful at Twin Oaks, it was the logical choice. We coated the toilet inside and out with 3/4 inch red oak boards. Outside the toilet, the classic board and batten method was used, while inside it was just paneled. The resulting structure looks very similar to many of the buildings on the farm, which also use board and batten; in fact, many people comment that Poopelo looks like a miniature version of Tupelo.

Poopelo is a toilet with all the amenities. It features one of the strongest foundations of any of the structures at TO, including cement block layed by ex-member Teo. As you enter to do your business, you just may decide to linger on Poopelo's very own porch, complete with hanging chair, or loll in the hammock next to it. If the need to enter is urgent, be sure to glance above the door to see the faux stain glass window, naming the structure. Inside, while you engage in your business, you can appreciate small touches like the large windows that let in lots of light, which features a delightful view of the Tupelo's bedrooms. The fixtures include coat and magazine racks, as well as sawdust holders. And be sure to enjoy the lovingly dovetailed throne pedestal that has been buffed with wax until you can see your face. So don't just dream the impossible dream, come to Twin Oaks were you can truly poop outside in luxury.



"News" continued from previous page from Sandhill!

**Crimewave:** While Mr Bush et al held forth on all the scary things that might befall our nation, Twin Oaks endured several incidents close to home. Last year, the Llano Office cash drawer was pried open the same night that one of our cars, Midnight Oil, went AWOL (not likely a coincidence). We strongly suspect the same very short-term, rumored coke-head, ex-member who presumably stole Vanarchy, robbed a Farmville VA bank at gun-point, and is now serving a long, long prison sentence. During our traditional New Year's Eve party, four guest's cars had valuables removed from them. Following this for a month or two, it seemed that every weekend one or another of our cars would be mysteriously and improperly used overnight. We'd find it with cigarette butts and such, parked in an odd way, with a couple of hundred extra unexplained miles on it. Finally, Inge stumbled on some youths returning our minivan one Saturday morning. Even after catching the kids in the act, we couldn't get much help from the local police or courts. Since then, the community has taken some steps to improve vehicle security, and we haven't had any trouble in months. Whew!

**Various and Sundry:** After some STP difficulties in the summer of 2005, the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) required us to

hire a certified treatment plant operator, at great expense. Fortunately, Darwin got himself certified as soon as possible, saving Twin Oaks 10s of thousands of dollars a year. McCune and Casey are also being trained, so we will have some reassuring backup. Library manager Mala plus helpers are Dewey Decimalizing the library (again). Various publications sang Twin Oaks' praises in the past year or so: Virginia Living, Fortune Small Business, and Yoga Journal. Thea was quite seriously injured by a double copperhead bite to the hand. Two months later she still suffers lingering effects. We hosted folks for a memorial for Raphy (Xoaker, daughter of Ira) in November. This included putting a flowering cherry and garden statue near the pond, and sprinkling ashes there and at the burial ground. Folks shared memories, poetry, and songs and walked up to the burial ground together.

**Arts and Entertainment:** We performed *Cabaret* in March 2005, co-directed by Kate and Thea. The production was quite elaborate and included a stageful of Cabaret dancers as well as creative sets. Twin Oaks hosted it's first rave, organized by Sky, at the conference site in June of 2005. This December, ex-member and rising singer-songwriter star Danny Schmidt gave a concert in the Tupelo dining room. In May 2006, The Gene Kelly Chapter of the Wednesday Night Musical Watchers Club screened its 150<sup>th</sup> Wednesday evening

musical. Recent cultural trends sweeping the commune include: mohawks, (including reverse mohawks, double mohawks, and family mohawks), and hula hooping with hoops that are handcrafted of black plastic water pipe with colorful tape decoration. Poi, fire Poi, fire hoops, and spitting fire have all been popular latenight bonfire activities. The Cult book of early 2006 was *The Timetraveler's Wife* (at one point there were 4 different copies in circulation). Dumpster Diving seems to be more popular than ever. Exciting scores of the year included a washing machine which we are hoping to fix up and use as a spare. Twin Oaks band *Super Daughter* was on WTJU. The Circus Rukus, a group of talented performers, has been gracing the Charlottesville Mall with their spectacle of hooping, body contortionists, poi, and other visual delights. The Vulgar Bulgars are continuing their exciting career as central Virginia's hottest Klezmer Band. They are gigging regularly and making a name for themselves on the Eastern Seaboard: highlights include opening for the New Orleans Klezmer All-Stars at the DC Jewish Music Festival and a brief mention and photo in the New York Times Sunday Wedding Section. Preparations are under way for their upcoming east-midwest-southern tour this summer and fall, coming to a commune near you! Tour info and dates available at [www.vulgarbulgars.com](http://www.vulgarbulgars.com).



"Ultimate" continued from page 1

just hasn't had the 'critical mass' of committed disk-heads necessary to start a regular game (you need *at least* six people for a game, eight or ten is much better). So what changed? Earlier this spring, a group of Oakers made a LEX trip to Dancing Rabbit, where Ultimate Frisbee is an established part of the culture. They returned to Twin Oaks determined to make it happen here, and their spark of inspiration fell upon fertile timber—a group of enthusiastic Oakers who were just waiting for that initial push to "get the disk flying." Thanks, DR! Our primary obstacle was location, location, location—although 450 acres sounds like a lot of land, most of our property is either wooded, hilly, or earmarked for agricultural purposes. We've made the best of it in a field known as 'Wellhouse West,' one of our lesser-used pasture areas. You wouldn't quite call it manicured, with it's gently rolling hills and slightly asymmetrical shape, but we've got our herd of four-footed friends who pass through every so often to keep the grass short (leaving behind neat little organic 'land mines' to enliven the game), and it's free of poison ivy, mud-pits, and navigable bodies of water..

For the past few months, we've managed to



put together at least one game (and sometimes two) nearly every week. Our first, well-publicized, outing drew over two dozen participants, and from that group, about 8 people have become 'regulars,' playing as often as they can. Other Twin Oakers drop in once in a while, along with a rotating cast of



visitors, guests, and folks from Acorn. Our first few games were marred by injuries, causing some lasting skepticism among non-players of our claims that it's a "non-contact" sport. But, at the time of this writing, it's been at least two weeks since anyone has broken, torn, mangled, or lacerated any part of their anatomy, and over a month since anyone has been carried semi-conscious to a hospital for stitches. And for those of us who have escaped injury, the regular exercise has begun to pay off, with a noticeable decrease

in the amount of hacking, wheezing and dry-heaving exhibited after each point!

Having soared into the hearts of many Twin Oakers, it seems that Ultimate Frisbee has 'caught on,' and will (hopefully) become a lasting part of Twin Oaks culture. Who knows, maybe someday we'll even be able to challenge Dancing Rabbit to a tournament (non-competitive, of course)!



# We'll miss you, Ione!

interview by Ezra

Just before Ione left Twin Oaks, I sat down with her for an interview. Here are the highlights:

Ezra: How long have you lived at Twin Oaks?

Ione: I came in February of '81... and that's 1981, not 1881 (laughs)

Ez: 24 years that you've been here. That's longer than most of the people living here...

I: That's a third of my life—the first third was with my parents, basically. We moved all the time, every place, with the military. All the time, all the time. Then, when I was divorced, I moved around all the time. Then, I came here, and I'm still here. Oh, I've moved around from room to room a lot... Basically I came here so I wouldn't have to live with my parents... I already knew about [Twin Oaks] because [I was involved in] the counterculture. My husband wasn't in it but he supported it. If I went to jail, he got me. He paid the \$50 fine and he got me out.

E: So you were doing civil disobedience—what sort of issues?

I: Civil rights, counter-recruitment, anti-nuclear. We were in Camden, a town on the railway south of Philadelphia that was very depressed, a republican-controlled black community. So, they recruited very heavily there... [during the] Vietnam era. We had a little committee, and we went under a name, and we would go to the bus send off to wish them well, gave them some paper in case something happened...

E: So coming to Twin Oaks in the 80's came out of that political activism?

I: Yeah, and the rootlessness, not really having one place. It would give me a home between Florida, where my parents were in the wintertime, and Pennsylvania where they were in the summer.

E: Do you think that when you first moved to Twin Oaks, there was more political activism back then, or has it pretty much always been—

I: No, the political activism then was only in "here we are, we are providing an example of a way to live that shows that you can be a caring community, and you don't have to be a consumerism-based community." There was, however, a very strong anti-power plant [sentiment]. Good old Gerry Rosenthal, who's been at it all this time... When I came, they were doing this effort to keep the nuclear waste from the power plant on the coast from being brought up to South Anna. And they went to every church, and they went to every railway crossing, and they went to every school, to every place. And they said "here's where the danger points, where an accident could happen. Look what

would happen." And they did an incredible amount of work. And the nuclear waste had to be kept down at the coast.

E: I'm curious, in 25 years at Twin Oaks, to hear how you feel like the community has changed.

I: I've been thinking about this. The biggest change is computers... It seems as though people are more engaged with themselves. There they are, looking at the screen, and who knows whether they are doing community business, personal business, research on something, or what they're doing? I just don't know, but it seems as though a lot of time is spent "checking my e-mail... Oh, I'll just check my email!" and they come back twenty minutes later.

E: So do you think there is less 'face-to-face' spending time together?

I: Well that seems to persist, luckily, happily. There's a lot of hanging out time... I know that the key person to getting computers here said "I won't do the accounting unless I have a computer." He worked up in DC, worked for a computer company,



Ione with the melting ice goddess  
(carved by Woody).

and he said "I'm going to bring one to my room and do my accounting, no matter what. I have to have it—this is the dark ages you're running down here!" (laughs). So he brought his in, and pretty soon his was brought into the office in downstairs Llano...

E: Were you here when ZK wasn't around, and people were still eating in Llano?

I: Are you kidding? ZK wasn't built until 1987, and that's another big big change... Oneida used to be the center, the lounge, the today board, the mail cubbies, everything happened in the

Oneida living room. We didn't have individual message slots. That's made a lot of difference in Twin Oaks culture, message slots in ZK. I was here when there were no phones hardly to speak of, with one phone in Llano, under the stairway. There were only about three phones. I was there when someone took it upon themselves to go up to some town in New England and bring back this huge telephone system that filled up the Owl office, banks and banks and banks of phone equipment.

Dinner was in Llano. Upstairs was for people with kids, downstairs on the right was for adults. The smokers' room had at least five hundred if not more records, and if you were on the K-shift, you got to choose the record.

E: That space in Llano, when it was cold or rainy, it must have been very crowded in there.

I: Well you've got fifty people, yes yes yes! There were less people but it was still pretty crowded. But of course the enclosed porch place was also a place to eat. It still was crowded. And that's why a lot of people got their food, particularly people with children, and took it to Degania and ate there. It was pretty hectic. So I remember vividly living in Llano, austerity years... I remember the difference in people's reaction... some people would say [muttering] "potatoes and cabbage... carrots and potatoes... potatoes and cabbage... cabbage and carrots... can't we ever get anything else to eat?!" Where some people were just enthusiastic about whatever was cooked... That's what we could grow and that's what we could buy. We didn't have such a prolific, such a marvelous garden as we have now. We didn't have that many potatoes that we grew, we had to buy potatoes.

E: I'm wondering about the whole experience of living in community at Twin Oaks, do you get the sense that it's progressing? Or regressing?

I: I feel as though it's a big organism, and it's reached its middle age point. I don't know if it will stabilize at that point, or regress into being more individualistic, or consumerist. Do you remember Scott? He was always ranting and raving, always thinlmg that things were becoming... privatiz[ed]... I don't know, I feel as though I have no axe to grind because I've been so well treated and given such consideration.

E: What do you think you'll miss?

I: Miss about Twin Oaks? I will miss all the people and help. I will miss Friday night when there's a new visitor group, and I will miss hearing birds, I wonder if there will be that variety living in

*Continued on next page...*

# Walden Index

by Valerie (aka Ultra Violet Waterfall)



**Number of Twin Oaks vans that were stolen during the summer of 2005 and subsequently returned to us: 1**  
**Months between theft and return: 6**  
**Miles it had been driven while missing: 1500**  
**Number of art galleries that are showing Sean's art: 9**  
**Number of different states those galleries are in: 7**  
**Amount, in dollars, Sean's work for a benefit "Absolute" vodka ad sold for: 1000**  
**Number of CD's the Vulgar Bulgars, TO's resident Klezmer band, had made (in Canada) for sale at their gigs: 1000**  
**Gallons of spinach from our garden that were processed for freezing on a single Food Processing shift: 200**  
**Number of apparent virgin births by cows (ones we hadn't inseminated): 2**  
**Amount, in dollars, a member paid from co's allowance to install a bidet on the toilet in their SLG: 100**  
**Number of months' allowance that represents: 1-1/2**  
**Number of Twin Oakers with cell phones: 7**  
**Number of Twin Oakers who have individual subscriptions to Netflix: 3**  
**Number of Twin Oakers who have lived at JPUSA (Jesus People USA), an 800-person christian commune in Chicago: 1**  
**Number of Twin Oakers who have performed on stage at the Grand Ole Opry: 1**  
**Number of participants at Bri and Alex's handfasting in late April: 60**  
**Number of hours it took Ted to body-paint much of Mary's skin with black flames: 6-1/2**

*Continued from previous page*

the woods here. I'll miss things like Hildegard planted a butterfly bush just outside of the window, it's huge! And the entertainment value of that, is just tremendous.

E: The place where you're going, is it in the country?

I: Yes, very much so, although it is getting surrounded by McMansions.

E: Not unlike Louisa County...

I: I still can't believe... what that man [TO neighbor] did... he told me, 'well I can't promise that I won't go in there and take a few trees down and build a house for my mother.' And now what's left? The earth is just going to wash away, what tiny little bit of earth was there, what the forest holds. Wait until their wells go dry, and then they'll be sorry... I feel a rant coming on, let me say some nice things. [showing off planters] Stella makes these funny things, and Madge put these plants in them for me, and so I'm going to take them. I had some plants, but I gave them to Shakti and said "I'm not bothering with any plants," but then when people go ahead and do that, well... you change your mind.

E: Well I know that people here are really going to miss you, you're very beloved in the community. Do you think that, down the line, Twin Oaks will be able to set itself up well enough for our older members so that they can provide-

I: [TO] probably can, it's just that I've been here too long. I'm ready to try something different, even though I'm leery of it's being too cush... you know, really, here I'm rich. I don't have to pay rent.

I don't have to buy food...

E: I know a lot of people, when they leave TO, are very excited to have their own space, their own kitchen and all that. Is that something you're looking forward to?

I: Not terribly... because we always have had... Twin Oaks gives you a room, and I've mostly lived in very very small rooms, the smallest rooms. I lived in the furnace room for a long time, I lived in the chicken room a long long long long time.

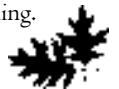
E: Tell me a little bit about the place you're going to... Is it a Quaker thing?

I: Talk about committees... committees, committees. Like Twin Oaks, it started in '67, however it took them twenty years of committee meetings to get it started, because what they realized is that there's a lot of Friends who have done nice Quakerly work without adequate pay, without adequate pension plan, and they were going to be up a creek when they got old. So they built this place, which has not only 100 HUD units, but also some other units [shows Ezra the floor plan], and I feel so... "all this for me?!" I'm so used to sharing a kitchen with 10 people, so to me, *this* is consumerism. But what a bargain for me...

E: Before I go, I want to open it up and... well... is there any other reflection that you want to share about 25 years in community? Do you think Twin Oaks is going to make it?

I: Oh definitely! I think that with the labor credit system and hard workers and people that play music [laughs], and are enthusiastic about the arts, all kinds of art we have. I think that those things

will, no matter how many vans they steal, or how many cash drawers they break into... Those are setbacks, and certainly heart-wrenching.



## Highly Offensive FEC Light Bulb Jokes

by Snarky McCo

How many Twin Oakers does it take to change a light bulb?

"I don't know, is it labor creditable?"

—or—

"One to fill out the land-use-change planning request form, three to serve on the Illumination Replacement Alternatives committee (to deny the request), one more to appeal the decision to the planning council, and a majority of full members to sign the override"

How many East Winders does it take to change a light bulb?

"Ten—one to hold the light bulb and nine to drink until the room starts spinning."

How many Acorners does it take to change a light bulb?

"Only one, but they have to go over to Twin Oaks to get the bulb"

How many Ganas members does it take to change a light bulb?

"Before you ask the light bulb to change, why don't you examine your own issues?"



# Sweet and Savory

## A stroll through the Twin Oaks Herb Garden

by Hildegard

The herb garden produces medicinal and culinary herbs for the community. It is also an income area. People pay to see interesting and innovative methods of using space and cultivating herbs. I strive to put the principles of permaculture into use while providing the community and the customer a full array of healthful and tasty herbs.

Most herbs fall into multiple categories. Fruiting plants also yield flowers and leaves to herbal preparations; for example: raspberry, blackberry and strawberry. Many flowers are used for both food and medicine as well making arrangements to enjoy for their beauty and fragrance. Culinary herbs share their medicinal qualities that help aid in digestion while also imparting delicious flavors to the foods we eat. Thyme, winter savory, mints, licorice, fennel, angelica and oregano are used in many medicines as antibacterial and antifungal.

The living fence grown is an economical, low labor, long lasting and bountiful way to protect the garden from roving cows. (Electric fences are only so reliable.) They also create a vertical growing space, thus making the best use of the land.

Due to scarcity of compost, and the need for help ridding certain areas of the dreaded weed sedge nut; I came upon the idea of ducks. They eat the barely visible sedge nuts that infest an area and fertilize spaces for which I have no compost or fertilizer. I am now able to incorporate masses of leaves to raise the filth and fertility of the soil. Those two little ducks have done more than a tractor load of work, without compressing the land. As an added bonus they eat bugs and produce many eggs.

The cutting bed (which is also an evolving artemesia bed) is in the herb garden for ease of cultivation, economy of water, work and food and because many of the flowers are also used as herbs. It is a pleasant and accessible location for folks to be able to stroll into the garden to gather flowers and other herbs they might want. Its flowers are also well used for community functions and the surplus is sold. I am always searching

for new ways to have more plants and plant parts to sell, as it seems we need the money.

The boxwood surround the beds with an ever-green delineation, providing wind protection for the

plants; thus insuring a longer harvest season. They also help hold the soil in the garden, keeping it from washing away during our downpours. I sell the extras and use them for landscaping in the yard.

The herb beds are created gradually, once all the perennial weeds have been eradicated. I use neither tiller nor tractor but generate useable soil gently with a succession of organic matter gleaned from whatever plant gives me the most

bio-mass from the seed. For example: hyacinth beans give terrific growth on the vertical along the fencing; they also produce edible flowers to eat and to sell.

The hardy fiber banana creates an island of shade for processing basil and an incredible amount of organic material to use as mulch. My intention is to have all growth in the garden contribute in more than one or two ways to the well being and fertility of the soil; as well as producing the primary benefit from harvesting the plant for its intended use.

Virtually nothing leaves the garden at this stage, all is composted.

With the help of the ducks and coffee grounds I am able to keep most of the central part of the garden fed, but I do need compost for the intensively used and harvested culinary beds on the west side and the far east end. This equals about 2000 sq. feet. The herb garden needs four tractor scoops of compost to keep

the beds healthy.

Many herbs do not suffer poor drainage gladly, therefore it is necessary to raise the planting level and lower the paths significantly before the space will allow for the cultivation of many herbs that we use. The garden is divided into rooms rather than rows. This allows me to grow a variety of plants in a mini culture that suits that particular group of plants cultural needs. I use the divisions as vertical spaces and these allow me to keep the leaves in place while the ducks work them into the soil.

**Bounty:** Fresh culinary herbs are available and harvested daily for the cooks or as requested. Many are also dried, frozen or processed into pesto. There is a culinary cutting bed in the garden and outside of Isano kitchen for folks to use. I have plants available in the spring for those who would like to plant a few herbs at their SKSs for easy access.

~ Parsley(s) ~ Sage ~ Rosemary ~ Thyme(s) ~ Basil(s) ~ Oregano ~ Winter Savory ~ Dill ~ Fennel ~ Cutting celery ~ Lovage ~ Sweet Marjoram ~ Cilantro ~ Tarragon ~ Chervil ~ Garlic Chives ~ Onion Chives and Garlic greens ~ Lemon Grass ~ Peppermint ~ Spearmint ~ Lemon Balm ~ Licorice Mint ~ Bee Balm ~ Chamomile (and all the edible flowers for salads) Day Lily ~ Johnny Jump Ups ~ Violets ~ Rose petals ~ Rose geranium ~ Chives ~ Lavender ~ Glads and Calendulas.

I dry as many herbs as the season allows in the passive solar dryers in the herb garden but encourage cooks to use them fresh, the flavor is so much better and much less labor intensive.

The medicinal herbs are used primarily in syrups and tinctures: Echinacea ~ Goldenseal ~ Angelica ~ Shorehound ~ Elecampane ~ Motherwort ~ Saint Johnswort ~ Strawberry leaf ~ Raspberry leaf ~ Lady's Mantle ~ Burdock ~ Dandelion ~ Eucalyptus ~ Wormwood ~

Elderberry and many others.

My "focus" is entirely on herbs in the herb garden and all it takes to grow them for an ecologically sound, prosperous, and complete herb garden for Twin Oaks.



literature for Twin Oaks, Acorn, and East Wind (those were what we had most handy when packing up) and we made sure to bring plenty FEC pamphlets and other FEC literature. We also brought a Communities Directory and encouraged people to search for communities in their area or in their personal interest. We had a table that was literally in the corner of the conference, and while at first I was worried that people wouldn't notice us, that certainly was not the case. Our table was patronized very well by genuinely interested people. Some of them were friends of community and had visited several intentional communities or attended the Communities Conference, some lived at other communities, and some people were

empowering way to describe a workshop that was signed up for at the last minute. Leading the workshop was Anja, Bok Choy, Jess, and myself, all women and all from the same community. We were quite bummed that we didn't have anyone from a different community with us. We weren't planning on having a ton of structure either, so we just made a list of things we thought we should discuss such as high points and low points, balancing work and leisure when you live where you work, interpersonal struggles, conflict resolution, how to remain connected to mainstream culture if that's what you want, and whether or not we're just hiding in the woods. There were a lot of people at the workshop and we ended up just letting people ask questions, some of which started great discussions. We discussed everything on our list, and some things that weren't. We of course had to dispute the preconceived notions of wanton drug use and giant orgies that are generally associated with "hippy communes" and our time ran out before the workshop really felt finished.

I feel great about the work that was done for the FEC and the hours we earned. I ended up hosting a couple that I met at NCOR at Twin Oaks for two weeks. It felt good from a recruiting perspective, you know, "oh, all that work is getting somewhere", and while their stay turned out to be a pretty awful experience, it doesn't kill my hopes for the FEC using NCOR as a venue for growth and outreach. Also, Drew, a Communities Conference and NCOR attendee, came to Twin Oaks for a day or so early this spring and hopes to visit more/spread the word. Even though I have nothing to compare it to, I think that we did well at NCOR this year, and I while I was quite burnt out on the travel and lack of my own bed and favorite foods, I have every intention of attending next year and hope that we can take a more diverse group of FEC community members.



## Rachelle Sadiq reporting

Early, early, early (at what I would call "stupid o'clock"), on the morning of February 4, 2006, 6 Twin Oakers, including myself, Vermin, Anja, Catfish, Jess, and Bok Choy, piled our sleeping bags, subversive information, and food into the TO community minivan called Vandrogyny and endured a peaceful 2 hour drive to Washington, D.C. for this year's National Conference on Organized Resistance (aka NCOR), hosted by American University.

Though we all live at Twin Oaks, me and my friends were not there to represent only our community, but also the FEC. I enjoyed that aspect of being there, it allowed me to not just talk about my ultra personal experience of TO, but to speak in general about the communities movement, the FEC support network, and the affect that I feel that has on myself and my own activism. We distributed

totally unaware that there were any sort of intentional communities around other than anarchist punk houses and cell-phone laden college co-ops. We ended up distributing every bit of literature we could part with for free — no one paid for anything at our table, and that was something I felt very good about. Imagine my shock when I was asked to pay for a photocopied and stapled paper on the Zapatistas or when I saw people selling screen printed thongs with circle-A "anarchy" symbols on them for \$4. We also got many people to sign up for various email lists and a few teachers expressed interest in TOAST — Twin Oaks Academic Speaking Tours.

Another highlight of the conference for me was the guerilla workshop we facilitated about Twin Oaks and the Intentional Communities movement. At NCOR, a "guerilla" workshop is an

## Everything I needed to know about Living in Community I learned from Harry Potter...

If you're at all familiar with the Harry Potter books, you may already have made some connections between the community life of Hogwarts (the school attended by Harry and his wizarding friends) and intentional communities everywhere. Shared meals, shared housing, multi-dimensional interpersonal relationships, struggles about whether to close or remain open, and more. Here are some community lessons we can all glean from the series. We can learn:

- \* From Hermione — that sometimes the most effective and skilled communitarians come from Muggle (non-community) families.
- \* From Dumbledore — to make it a lifelong habit to believe the best of all of those around us.
- \* From Voldemort aka He Who Cannot Be Named — that not naming things only results in giving them more power, and increases our fear of them.
- \* From Hagrid — that those who appear superficially the least competent have other gifts to offer.
- \* From Fawkes, the Phoenix — that the presence of tears is sometimes what is needed for true healing to emerge.
- \* And from Harry himself - that being connected through loving each other is one of the strongest powers we can draw upon in our time of need.

by Ultra Violet Waterfall (aka Valerie)

