



Table of Contents:

News of the Oaks	by Valerie
Featured Community Art	
Visiting Our Visions	by Stephan and Claire
You Are Invited!	by Brittany and Telos

News of the Oaks Issue #122

by Valerie

The big news is that for the first time in some years, we have immediate openings for membership! We've had a number of members leave, our Waiting List has disappeared and we're actively looking for new members.

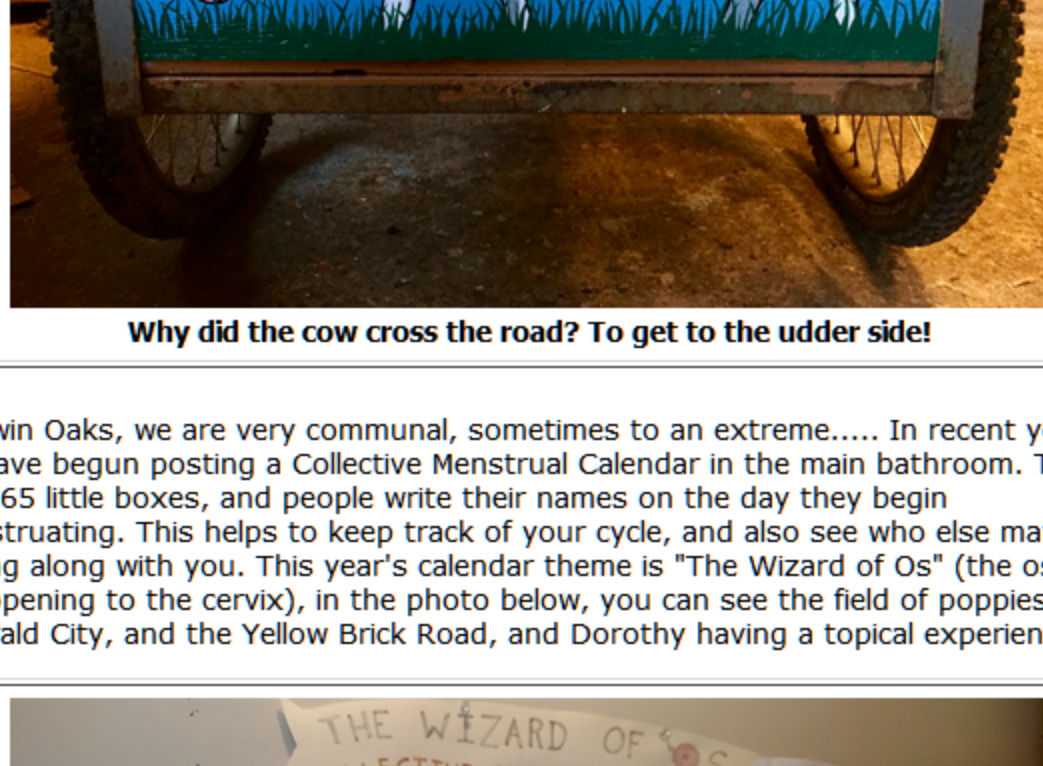
Please click here to [learn about us](#) and our [Visitor Program](#). Also, we invite you to read this article on the Commune Life Blog about Twin Oaks. Let us know if you're interested in considering a visit.

Random Newsy Tidbits: The cows and the vegetables are calling! Our Garden Manager Pam is "hanging up her hoe" and retiring after years of coordinating delicious and healthy vegetable harvests, and our Dairy Manager will be taking care of his own human baby instead of cow babies, so we are especially looking for new people in these areas. * The Zine Discussion Group continues, most recently reading about mansplaining. * Sky spent a week in Mexico in his role as Executive Director of the Fellowship for Intentional Community. * Our mini-baby-boom is continuing, with the birth of baby Colin. * The community is looking at the role the Black Lives Matter movement plays within our own community and in our relationship with our surrounding larger community. * Our 2 Interns, Julia and Telos, arrived! They're here for the summer to work on the Women's Gathering and Communities Conference. (more information on those below).



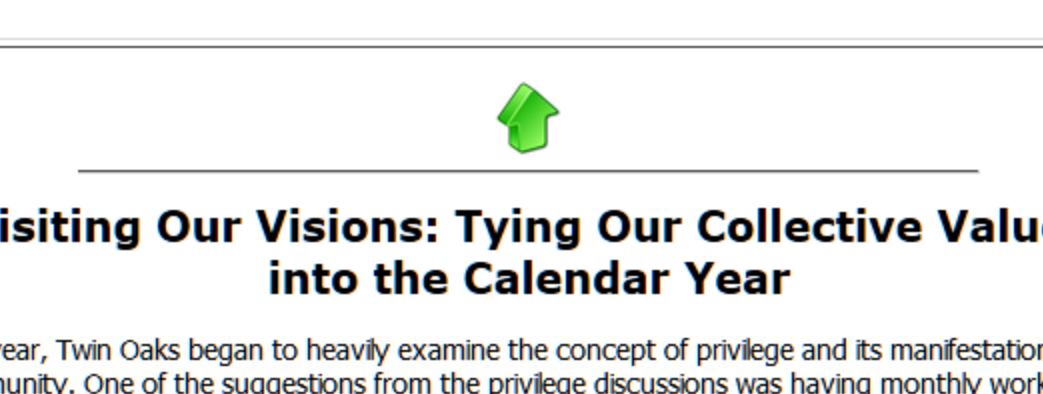
Featured Community Art

Visitor Ava lent us her artistic skills while she was here, re-painting the cart that the Dairy Crew uses to bring full milk-cans from the barn to the kitchen. Different work areas have their own carts, which we label for both utilitarian (to keep track of which cart belongs to which area) and beautification purposes. Here is Ava's work:



Why did the cow cross the road? To get to the udder side!

At Twin Oaks, we are very communal, sometimes to an extreme..... In recent years, we have begun posting a Collective Menstrual Calendar in the main bathroom. There are 365 little boxes, and people write their names on the day they begin menstruating. This helps to keep track of your cycle, and also see who else may be cycling along with you. This year's calendar theme is "The Wizard of Os" (the os is the opening to the cervix), in the photo below, you can see the field of poppies, Emerald City, and the Yellow Brick Road, and Dorothy having a topical experience....



We're off to see the menstrual wizard



Visiting Our Visions: Tying Our Collective Values into the Calendar Year

Last year, Twin Oaks began to heavily examine the concept of privilege and its manifestations in community. One of the suggestions from the privilege discussions was having monthly workshops surrounding different forms of oppression. We liked the idea of broadening this to include things mentioned in our community Bylaws, since they should theoretically be things we are already working on and are committed to as a community. Starting this past January, we began focusing on a different social justice topic each month, with several events to get a variety of people involved. We've dubbed this effort "Visiting Our Visions" and while participation has varied thus far, it's a good start!

Monthly topics include:

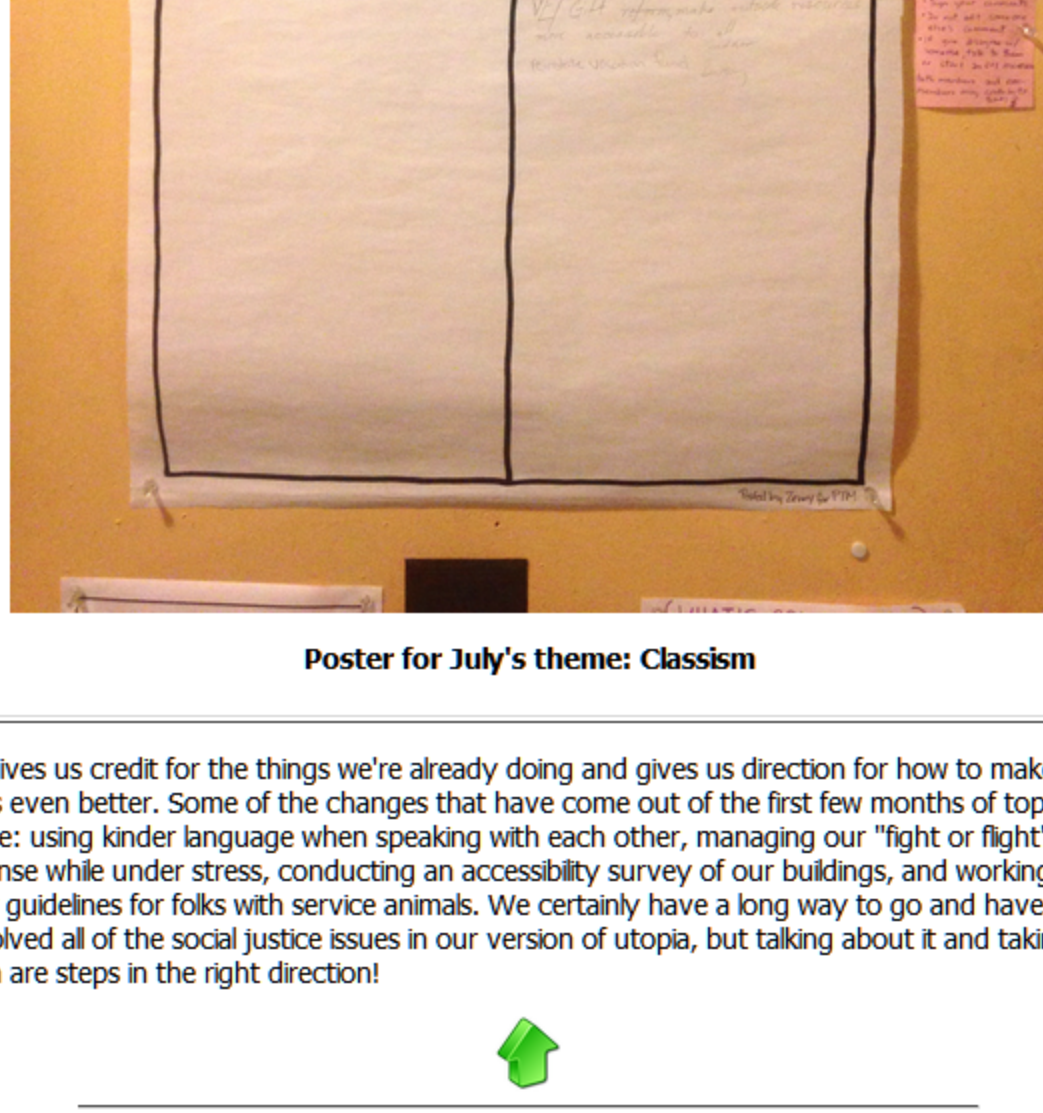
January	non-violence ("Satyagraha"-from Statement of Religious Beliefs)/compassion/kindness
February	ableism/neurodiversity/making space for mental and physical differences
March	racial justice/racism/cultural diversity
April	environmentalism
May	sexism/patriarchy/equality of all genders/feminism
June	ageism/generational sensitivity/respect and inclusiveness of all ages
July	classism/class awareness/access to resources
August	competitiveness/positive reinforcement/sharing
September	anthrocentrism/specism/respect for all life
October	heterosexism/cissexism/re-thinking gender and sexuality norms
November	sizeism/lookism/social and work acceptance for all body types
December	consent

What about egalitarianism? In coming up with the list, we realized that it was applicable to almost every other topic - so we'd like to hold it as an overarching theme to think about as we move throughout the year.

The monthly activities/events include:

- Start-It-Off Sunday: Open each month with a sharing circle-type meeting to get initial thoughts/opinions on topic
- Weekly Wednesdays: hammock shop discussions to get more in-depth about parts of the main topic
- Activist Activity Night(s): A chance to look at policy/structural changes that can occur to help support the monthly topic and hands-on actions that we can do during the session (petitions, letter-writing, guest workshop, etc)
- Final Friday: monthly showcase featuring people's artistic responses to the topics (art gallery, theatrical skits, songs, spoken word, dj/dance, etc)

In addition to these activities, we have a big poster on the wall each month where anyone can write things we're doing well and/or things we could improve on for each topic.



Poster for July's theme: Classism

This gives us credit for the things we're already doing and gives us direction for how to make things even better. Some of the changes that have come out of the first few months of topics include: using kinder language when speaking with each other, managing our "fight or flight" response while under stress, conducting an accessibility survey of our buildings, and working on policy guidelines for folks with service animals. We certainly have a long way to go and have not yet solved all of the social justice issues in our version of utopia, but talking about it and taking action are steps in the right direction!



You Are Invited!

Read on for information about the conferences we are hosting this summer...

Women's Gathering

August 19-21, 2016

www.womensgathering.org

by Brittany

Sisterhood. Renewal. Revolution!

Come join us for the 32nd annual Twin Oaks Women's Gathering! The Gathering is a three day celebration with 100 women gathering to learn, explore and play together. Workshop will include DIY music, art, movement, sexuality, gender justice, positive relationship building, and more. In addition to scheduled performance spaces and workshops, there will also be lots of free time to network, drum, dance, meditate, strategize, roll around in the mud-pit and generally live it up with new and old friends.

The best part of the Gathering is that it is a community-a sisterhood-by and for all of us. You can offer to lead morning yoga, set up a collaborative art project, host a spiritual retreat space, share a zine on political organizing-whatever you can imagine, you can create and share! Together, we refuel our collective spirit in preparation for the next task: changing the world.

Whether you are a seasoned feminist looking for a break from the patriarchy with your sisters or a star child looking for a drum circle and a dip in the river, there is a place for you here. Cooperative childcare is available, and registration fees are on a sliding scale. Find out more, including how to register, at www.womensgathering.org.



Laughter at the Women's Gathering

Communities Conference

Labor Day weekend, September 2-5, 2016

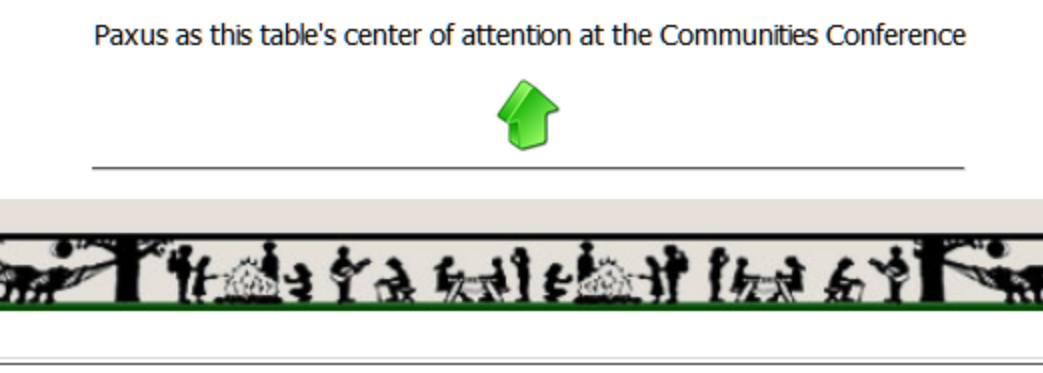
www.communitiesconference.org

by Telos

Last fall, during a period of conflict at my housing co-op, I attended the Communities Conference, seeking inspiration and wisdom to bring back home. I went to workshops about conflict resolution, emotional processing, and consensus, shared stories of our troubles with the other attendees, and listened closely to their stories about conflict in community. In the span of just three days, I gathered several tools, like a structured format for discussing difficult emotions I was excited to introduce. I also returned reconsidering our co-op's consensus process, wondering if consensus was what we were really accomplishing. Most importantly, I now knew that countless others before us had experienced conflicts in their communities, that rough patches were a normal occurrence. I wasn't able to magically solve our house's problems with what I learned, but I was better able to understand the dynamics of conflicts as they played out, and I knew other communarians were rooting for us.

We hope you'll join us for this year's Twin Oaks Communities Conference. We'll feature Beth Raps, presenting community organizing principles for intentional communities; Anton Marks of the Intentional Communities Desk will share the history of the urban kibbutz movement, and the School of Living will give a workshop on forming Community Land Trusts. Also: sociocracy and mutual credit systems, consensus decision making, personal boundaries and emotional health in community, "culture hacking," and the role of intentional communities within the larger cooperative movement. And you can present your own workshops during our Open Space sessions.

Discounted tickets are available for work exchange, for groups of 3 or more people and for people who have previously attended our Communities Conference. Visit communitiesconference.org or register at communitiesconference2016.eventbrite.com. If you're interested in work exchange, indoor accommodations, a discount code, or just have questions about the conference, you can reach us by emailing conference@twin Oaks.org.



Paxus as this table's center of attention at the Communities Conference

