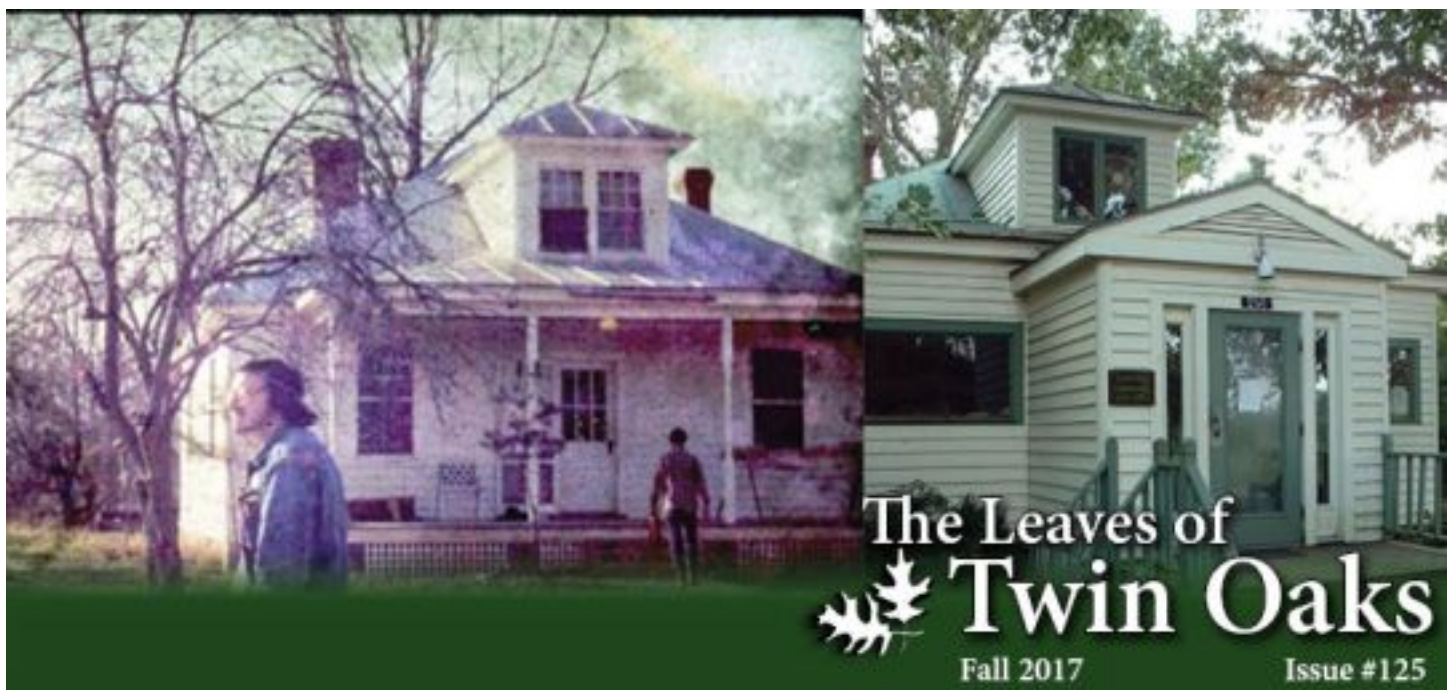




Twin Oaks: Celebrating 50 Years Of Communal Living!

Special 50th Anniversary Edition of the Leaves of Twin Oaks
This is the 125th Issue of the Leaves of Twin Oaks

Twin Oaks Community is celebrating our 50th Anniversary this year! We were founded in The Summer Of Love, 1967, based on the principles of BF Skinner's behaviorism. Fast-forward fifty years: although we've left behaviorism behind, we are thriving.

Our big 50th Anniversary celebration in June was enjoyed by 350 ex-members who came from far and wide to reconnect and reminisce. One of our founders returned for the event and the group sat, rapt, listening to the story of how we came to be. And we danced late into the evening with our in-house ("in-commune") dance band, who performed one song originally released in each year of our existence, for an epic 50-song set!

To stay connected: <https://www.facebook.com/TwinOaksCommunity/>



Photo of Kat Kinkade

“The central idea of the Community has not changed. We are still after the big dream—a better world, here and now, for as many people as we can manage to support. More, a new kind of human to live in that world: happy, productive, open-minded people who understand that in the long run, human good is a cooperative and not a competitive sort of thing.”

--Kat Kinkade, one of Twin Oaks primary founders

Twin Oaks Over Time

by Valerie

Fifty years is a long time, and we know life is change.
Here are some aspects of life at TO that have not-changed and changed;
how we've remained “True To Our Roots”
and how we've “Embraced Change”.

“True To Our Roots” What's Stayed Essentially The Same Over 50 Years

Egalitarianism and Income-Sharing We have stayed true to these original values. This (combined with our size of 100 people) sets us apart from most intentional communities. We continue to have a communal economy and non-hierarchical decision-making and access to community financial and other resources. We still share the profits from our businesses, as well as our houses, cars, bathrooms, a checkbook and the joys and challenges of living so closely together.

The Planner-Manager System Taken straight out of B.F. Skinner's book "Walden Two", this model of self-government has served us well over our 50 years. Each work area (Garden, Kitchen, Office, etc.) has a Manager who organizes and keeps that area functioning smoothly, while issues that affect the community as a whole are facilitated by a rotating group of 3 Planners.

The Labor System Although we've tweaked it a few times over the years, the Labor System is still at the core of our self-organizing. Every Tuesday, each member hands in a Labor Sheet for the coming week. The Labor Assigner essentially has a list of all the jobs that need to be done that week, and they work their magic to match up the open jobs with the people who sign up to do that type of work. At once flexible enough to allow members to do only the work they want to do, and structured enough to fill several hundred workshifts a week, the Labor System is a thing of administrative beauty. In a significant way, it is the backbone of the community and some people believe what kept us from folding like so many other 60's communes.

"Embracing Change" What's Changed Over 50 Years

Technology Like the rest of the planet, this is more present here than ever before. Along with much of humanity, we have cell-phones, social media, websites, and our long-term ban of commercial television is somewhat moot in the age of online streaming video. However we do have some communal limitations on when, where and how much members can use some technology.

Child-Care We long ago abandoned the 100% communal child-raising that Skinner favored and we practiced for a time, although we do still do some group childcare shifts.

Community Income Streams During the "Pier 1 decades" (roughly the 70's - 90's), making hammocks comprised up to 80% of our communal income. When Pier 1 dropped us in the early 2000's, we had already begun to diversify our businesses. Today, Hammocks makes up about 20% of our income, Tofu/Soyfoods about 30%, with the remaining 50% divided among various smaller collective businesses including Book Indexing, growing and packaging seeds for our sister-community Acorn's Southern Exposure Seed Exchange company, doing administrative work for the Fellowship for Intentional Community, and more.

"No community is an island" For many years, Twin Oaks was the sole intentional community in Louisa County where we are located. Beginning in the early 90's when we helped start Acorn Community 8 miles from us (to accommodate our Waiting List of 25 people), every few years another new community has sprouted up, with appropriate tree-themed names to boot—first Acorn, then Sapling, and now Cambia (as in tree bark cambium) and Living Energy Farm (shortened to LEF, pronounced "leaf"). There is a high degree of interconnectedness among the Louisa communities, from Labor Exchange agreements to cross-community friendships and romances.

Twin Oaks Across The Decades



Group Photo from 50th Anniversary



Swimming in the Pond



Jake Having Fun at Halloween



Oakers at the Richmond Vegetarian Festival



Group Photo from 20th Anniversary

Twin Oaks Capital Campaign

We have an opportunity to acquire 100 adjoining acres, and are working with local ex-members to possibly share that land with them.

The neighboring land has recently been clear cut and we are in discussions with the owner about buying it. Our crowd-funding appeal is at <https://www.generosity.com/community-fundraising/let-s-help-twin-oaks-grow>

Twin Oaks has also been exploring with ex-members and friends of community the possibility of sharing parts of the land and dividing the parcel. There is broad agreement among these interested parties that this land will have an ecological covenant which is stronger than the one Twin Oaks itself has and may well include a requirement for renewable energy.

There are more activities planned for the capital campaign, including a benefit auction. If you have items you would like to donate to this effort to acquire the adjacent land, please contact donate@twinoaks.org

