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50 Years of Gender Partnership in the Federation of Egalitarian Communities

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Abstract

Gender-equal partnership of women and men is the cultural ideal that has helped to inspire the creation and growth of the communal societies comprising the Federation of Egalitarian Communities (FEC). 2026 is the 50th anniversary of the founding of the FEC, providing an occasion for reviewing the origins of the two largest groups in the Federation, Twin Oaks Community (TO) and East Wind Community (EW), with mentions of related groups, and for understanding their challenges and development.

The details of the origins of TO and EW have become obscure with time, inviting a review of their history, lest it all be forgotten. Along with that is presented discussions of the three primary building blocks of any culture, as related to egalitarian community: governance, economics, and religion or spirituality. The first two of these three cultural aspects have been oriented in the Federation communities to the support of the movement's primary value of equality among people, while the third cultural aspect of religion or spirituality has been much less evident, which is soon likely to become a new challenge for the movement.

This paper warns that a threat to the member communities of the FEC is developing as the network begins its second half-century, requiring that the communities begin to focus upon relating its egalitarian values to an expression of gender-partnership religion and spirituality.

The U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has challenged or destroyed many communal societies in the past, including a challenge which Twin Oaks defeated in 1981. Now in the mid-2020s the IRS has given warning that it is revising and making problematic its requirements for certain communal groups, and Twin Oaks is very likely to be challenged again, this time with regard to the IRS' requirement of evidencing "religious or apostolic" characteristics.

Communal members often adopt the name of their community for their last name, as being a communitarian is a new identity. I was: Allen East Wind 1975-83; Allen Twin Oaks 1985-89

Similar to this history of the Federation of Egalitarian Communities (FEC), I have also written histories of the Foundation for Intentional Community (FIC) titled: *History of the Fellowship-to-Foundation for Intentional Community*, and for the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) titled: *Riding-Out the Storm in the Ecovillage*. Find them at: www.Intentioneers.net

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Introduction to Egalitarian Culture

Founded in 1976 the Federation of Egalitarian Communities (FEC) has for a half-century shown how people in the First World can construct and enjoy lifestyles of economic, political, and cultural equality.

While egalitarian culture exists elsewhere besides in communal society, it is in the Federation communities that the ideal of the equality of women and men is most developed today in economics, governance, and society, providing models for how people can co-create gender-equal culture. This is not a new idea.

Some pre-historic, pre-literate tribal cultures believed in both a Mother Earth and a Father Sky. This mythological archetype developed in many parts of the world, including in the Ancient Greek pantheon, the Hindu Vedic texts, the Mongol tribes of Asia, the Maori of New Zealand, among the Polynesians, and among Native Americans such as the Navajo, certain Pueblo peoples, Plains tribes, the Cherokee, and among many of the Algonquian tribes. These may be considered to be examples of different forms of partnership cultures, with neither female nor male dominating the other. For an example of an explicitly matriarchal culture the Iroquois tribes may be considered more matriarchal than partnership oriented.

It seems that when women have significant rights or power in society that culture is said to be "matriarchal," with the idea of "gender-partnership culture" implied while not explicitly stated. For examples, two of the most prolific writers about matriarchal culture, the Lithuanian-American, UCLA anthropologist, Marija Gimbutas (1921-1994), and the German philosopher of Modern Matriarchal Studies, Heide Goettner-Abendroth (1941-present) who organized two World Congresses on Matriarchal Studies in 2003 and 2005, never seem to use the term "partnership" as does Riane Eisler in several of her writings. Eisler describes contemporary gender-equal partnership in her 2002 book *The Power of Partnership*, coining the term "partnerism" in her 2007 book *The Real Wealth of Nations*, which she describes as a "caring economics." (Eisler, 2007, p. 148)

In her 2012 book *Matriarchal Societies* Heide Goettner-Abendroth surveys matriarchal cultures in India, Nepal, Tibet, China, Korea, Japan, Indonesia, Melanesia, Polynesia, Africa, and the Americas, stating that, "Matriarchies are true gender-egalitarian societies … as they have never needed patriarchy's hierarchical structures." (Goettner-Abendroth, p. XV)

The loss of equality among and of mutual respect between women and men, that anthropologists explain was characteristic of many of our ancestral tribal cultures, seems to have been a consequence of various influences. The Indo-European influence coming from the east is said to have imposed patriarchy upon European matriarchal culture, while the rise of private property and of the evolution of exchange systems begun with the advent of civilization in Mesopotamia seems to have coincided with the change from goddess worship to the imposition of belief in usurping male gods. The implication of the latter is that in order to return to and live in egalitarian or partnership culture, we need to co-create and maintain social systems based upon gender-equality through practicing gifting and sharing rather than taking and exchanging things. Essentially, the process is to recreate primitive gifting and sharing in ways appropriate to our contemporary world, including time or labor as well as material things, along with the reclaiming of partnership religion and spirituality.

While early human culture was typically matriarchal or matristic, with extended families organized around elder women, men in matristic cultures often did not know which children were their own. Men's roles in matriarchal clans were, and are today in those matriarchal cultures still in existence, to support their sister's children as uncles, and their clans' other children as "godfathers." With the advent of property and of exchange economies in our ancient past, everything soon had a price, and it was not long before women, children, and slaves became the property of men.

While women gathered and gardened, raised children and domesticated animals, and invented the domestic arts of spinning, weaving, sewing, pottery, food preparation, and healthcare, the gender-roles for men in matriarchal clans included the construction of buildings, making tools and weapons, and managing businesses for trade with other clans. One may logically suppose that it was especially the engagement in trade, requiring a lot of travel typically by men, while women stayed home with the children and other growing things, that led to private property economics, and eventually the patriarchal culture that has come down to us today, accompanied by patriarchal religion.

Matristic culture was and is generally egalitarian, or partnership-oriented, since women's culture does not seek to dominate men as men learned to dominate women. The shift from egalitarian partnership cultures to domineering patriarchy, involving the rise of property and exchange systems, happened about the same time as the shift from goddess worship to the worship of male gods. An example of that shift is the history of the Oracle of Delphi, originally dedicated to the Greek mother goddess Gaia about 1,600 B.C.E., then rededicated to the god Apollo in the 9th century B.C.E. (Broad, pp. 19, 21)

Trade was done by barter and indirect barter, using commodities like bushels of grain, cattle-on-the-hoof, and precious metals and jewels, with their value measured by weight and purity. Later in the Western world coins were invented in Lydia in western Asia Minor in the latter half of the 7th century B.C.E. between 630 and 600 B.C.E. Coins made trade much more efficient, enabling faster accumulation of wealth by men, and the subsequent over-shadowing of matristic cultures.

Our roots in prehistoric European matristic or matrifocal tribal and village culture, is described by Marija Gimbutas in what she named the "Old Europe" civilization, before its disruption by patriarchal, Indo-European mounted nomads from the eastern steppes or grasslands. Women-centric, matristic culture was probably the dominant way-of-life throughout our prehistory, surviving into ancient Minoan, Basque, Pictish, Finnic, Spartan, Etruscan, and other cultures on the peripheries of Europe. Among these, the Basque and Finnic cultures maintain their traditional gender-equality today, along with the matristic cultures of the Tibetan-Burmese Mosuo now in China, the Minangkabau of Indonesia, and some if not most Native American tribes, providing for us a history of and contemporary examples of egalitarian culture. (Gimbutas, pp. xvi, 3, 121-25, 131-2; Goettner-Abendroth, pp. 107-115, 163-74)

The use of non-monetary, time-based economics in place of money within some contemporary First World communal societies, particularly those of the Federation of Egalitarian Communities, provides an accessible opportunity for experiencing full emersion in gender-equal society, and is available to practically anyone to experience how our ancestors lived before the advent of property, money, and patriarchal civilization. While secularism ignores the important influence of spiritual belief and religious faith upon culture, the development of a partnership religion and spirituality to replace the

patriarchal forms results in making governance, economics, and religion all consistent and mutually reinforcing in partnership culture, as an expression of the art of culture change.

Practicing Equality

Egalitarian communal society provides an experience of total immersion in gender-equal culture, as it pushes the monetary economy out of the lives of those inside the bubble of communal-society. The membrane of the communal-economy bubble is primarily the agreements kept by members of the communal society to not use money internally, instead to maintain systems of production and consumption using a time-based economy of labor-sharing, which values equally all labor that benefits the community, both the work generally done by women and that by men, which enables or facilitates people taking on cross-gender roles.

Since there is no or minimal private property in communal society there is no exchange system within the communal group, relegating money only for exchange between the communal society and the "Outside World" dominant culture.

Typically, fifty-percent of community labor goes into communal businesses generating income for exchange with the Outside. The other fifty-percent of community labor then goes into domestic "reproduction," including food production and processing, construction and maintenance, transportation, recreation, healthcare, eldercare, and childcare.

The second most important aspect of the membrane between the debt-based economy of the dominant culture and the time-based economy of the alternative or parallel culture, is the community businesses, organizing labor and skills for income-generating work. Generally, the more money the community businesses make the more people can be members of the community, although in budgeting the use of money there is a trade-off between population size and standard-of-living.

Income-sharing in communal society involves budgeting the community's earned income toward providing goods and services to members, shared by all in the community through a range of different distribution systems. The irony is that to escape monetary economics, people must co-create and work in community-owned businesses. That is not what people imagine when they think of living in communal society, yet it is necessary.

The classic description of communal economics was written my Etienne-Gabriel Morelly in France in his 1755 book *The Code of Nature* stating, "from each according to ability; too each according to need." When Karl Marx was writing his idea of communist theory the best description he could come up with was to use Morelly's Maxim. In 2018 I thought to update and change this aphorism from an individual focus to a collective orientation in the wording of Allen's Axiom, "from all according to intent; to all according to fairness."

In time-based, labor-credit economies the community sets a weekly quota for the number of hours each member must contribute to the community in order to keep their labor contribution agreement and therefore their membership, usually around forty hours per week. Each hour of work for the community is valued at one "labor credit," regardless of the type of work or the person doing it, and the community decides what is and is not "creditable labor."

When people talk about labor-credit systems the tendency is to think that they are used like money. In early experiments with time-based economics, and in Time Dollar exchange systems today, done-labor hours were and are exchanged for goods and services much like money. In Federation communities, however, labor credits are generally non-transferrable, with a few exceptions called "personal-service credits." In Federation communities, earning labor credits is essential to maintaining membership in the communal society, while earning more then the minimum required accumulates in vacation accounts, drawn down for trips off-premises or for "staycations."

In their fictional utopias, Edward Bellamy and B. F. Skinner both suggested that onerous work should earn more labor credits than a standard one-credit-per-hour. Walden House, Twin Oaks, and East Wind all experimented with variable labor credits for about ten years, before TO and EW both ended those experiments about 1975. At TO, members gradually decided to not participate in the variable credit system, preferring that all labor benefiting the community should be recorded equally, at one-credit-per-hour. The variable-credit system was complicated, since if the variable-credit value of what some people were doing went up, the labor-credit value of something other people were doing had to go down in order to avoid inflating the system, or so it was said. Remember that at that time labor accounting was done almost entirely via paper and pencil since desk-top, personal computers were not yet invented. It is a wonder that the variable-credit experiments lasted as long as they did.

Early on, the members of Twin Oaks explained the motivation for working in communal society with no wage or salaries paid. One of the co-founders, Rudy TO, wrote in an article co-authored by Steven TO titled, "So You Think Twin Oaks is a Behaviorist Community" that, …

> Some people think that if a society doesn't have a competitive system, where each person determines [their] own reinforcement, then "initiative" will be lost and no one will work. This is obviously not the case. We have not removed the reinforcers; we have merely made them contingent on cooperating rather than on competition. This contingency, teamed with an accounting system that maintains equality of labor (the labor credit system) makes for a society in which the cut-throat tactics of competition and the "every [person] for [themself]" attitudes are no longer reinforced and thus become extinguished. (Steven & Rudy, co-authors, Kat editor. Found in Kinkade 1987, p. 39. Originally published December 1972, *Communities, no. 1, p. 28)*

In 1969 Rudy began a series of psychology classes at TO, for which members were able to claim labor credit, assuring a good attendance. Rudy asked, “Do you understand classical conditioning? Then you should be able to: remove a child’s fear of the dark; remember things at the appropriate time; eliminate stage fright; cure stuttering; … break or make habits that seem involuntary; reduce pain that is related to tense muscles, such as childbirth; …. Next week: Operant Conditioning, or How to Rule the World.” Kat and her daughter were in attendance; they “looked at each other with wonder and awe and said, “We can do anything, anything.”” Such was the assumed promise of behavioral psychology. (Kinkade, 1973, pp. 261-2)

There are many forms of time-based economies, with the most developed being the labor-credit system invented by Kathleen Kinkade at Twin Oaks Community, given a more descriptive name by the current author of “time-based, vacation-credit, labor-sharing system.” This name emphasizes what makes the labor system used by at least Twin Oaks and East Wind communities successful, which is the reinforcement for or encouragement for working more than the minimum number of required hours, and the resulting accumulation of vacation time.

Time-based, labor-credit economies requiring a labor quota or minimum contribution of time working in areas that benefit the community, provide for members a method for earning vacation time by extra or “over-quota” work. A benefit of labor-credit systems is the solution for the classic “free rider problem,” since the recording of done-labor quantifies each member’s contributions of time. A member’s labor reporting is generally done on an honor system, with monitoring by work-area managers depending upon how tightly the work needs to be scheduled. Such labor systems give each member reasonable assurance that everyone is contributing a fair amount of work to the common good, and that all types of contributions, from cleaning to making money, is equally needed and appreciated.

Motivations for Labor Sharing

Work is love made visible. ~ Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet*, 1923

Work is appreciated, and good work is appreciated a lot! … Work opens doors to friendship and mutual confidence that no amount of conversation will accomplish.
~ Kat Kinkade, Twin Oaks Community

The labor-sharing economy requires creative methods for expressing group affirmation and appreciation for the time and skills contributed by members. Since there is no monetary motivation for work in the time economy, positive reinforcement for work may include:

- personal satisfaction for doing work that contributes to the common good;
- recognition by members of others’ work, offered publicly or personally;
- many hands making for light work results in a feeling of group spirit or esprit dé corps;
- knowing that other members are doing a similar amount of work due to the labor-quota, and the best quality work they can, decreases resentment and burnout, the latter being a loss of the intention originally inspiring the individual, due to the daily effort required to maintain commitment and participation.

Money is not required to buy one necessity of the soul.
~ Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*, 1854, Chapter 18

Lifestyle and Philosophical Travails of a Cultural Creative

Kathleen Kinkade was of a generation before the Baby Boom, yet her intention to build egalitarian culture attracted to her vision mostly people of the Baby Boom generation, decades younger than herself. Kat was from a working-class family near Seattle, Washington that broke up, causing for her a difficult childhood. Her later marriage also broke up, making Kat and her daughter a single-parent family. (Grimes, n. p.)

In 1964 Kat Kinkade was inspired by reading the story of a fictional utopia called "Walden Two" while living in Los Angeles, California, and she began to think about her ideal culture. The communal model in the book *Walden Two*, however, was not her primary consideration. In the *Walden House Newsletter* of August 1966 Kat wrote, "The holding of property in common at Walden House is not an article of dogma. We don't do it because it was recommended by Jesus or Marx. We do it because it saves money and makes sense. Where it ceases to have these functions, we cease to practice it." (Kinkade, 1972, p. 8)

In a similar way, it could also be said that holding property in common at Twin Oaks Community is not done because it is recommended by B. F. Skinner, instead because it serves the function of gender-equality. Twin Oaks and related communities gave up their "Walden Two Community" identity as Skinner's theories of behavioral analysis and engineering written into *Walden Two* were never a priority and rarely practiced in any form. After the founding of the Federation of Egalitarian Communities the groups began calling themselves "egalitarian communities," then later adopted the more descriptive name of "income-sharing communities," since equality in some form can be found in different types of intentional communities, while income-sharing states clearly the egalitarian intent.

In 1967 Kat co-created along with seven others, Twin Oaks Community; moving from Walden House in Washington D.C. to Louisa County, Virginia. Kat left Twin Oaks in 1973 to co-found East Wind Community, landing in the Missouri Ozark Mountains in 1974, then eleven years into her egalitarian experiments, Kat explained that she had "lost her faith" in egalitarianism. Leaving her second communal society, East Wind in 1978, she lived in Boston, Massachusetts four years, returning to Twin Oaks in 1982 with a renewed appreciation for living in community. In 1993 Kat co-founded her third communal society, Acorn Community, near Twin Oaks in central Virginia, with about 40 members in 2000. I do not profile Acorn Community in this writing as I was never a member of the community. Acorn has been an important member of the Federation of Egalitarian Communities yet dropped membership about 2024 due to a conflict originating at Acorn becoming a conflict between Twin Oaks and Acorn, when several Acorn members moved to Twin Oaks. (Kinkade, 1973, p. 25; Kinkade, 1994, pp. 90, 104, 304)

Kat wrote two books about Twin Oaks, publishing in 1973 *A Walden Two Experiment: The First Five Years of Twin Oaks Community*, and in 1994 *Is It Utopia Yet?* In the latter, Kat explains, "People used to ask me to list the basic requirements for community success, and I would answer, "One fanatic." I would say, "You have to want to do community more than you want anything else in the world." She also once told us in Community Meeting, "If you think I'm hard to live with now, just wait until I'm senile." Kat was probably never senile. (Kinkade, 1994, p. 84; see: "In Memoriam: Kat Kinkade 1930-2008," *Communities* magazine, pp. 80, 78-79, 77)

Kat explained in a 1995 interview that, “it was just this glittering; shining idea that everybody had a shot at the good life. … but I have changed my mind, very seriously changed my mind about the desirability of equality in any rigid sense. … because the aim is to make everybody feel equally served by the establishment, and that’s impossible. Equal time, equal money, equal whatever. … I think at this point equality will take you just so far … Nowadays, I think you need some personal incentive in order to put out your best in the work scene. … Cooperation will get you eighty percent of what you would otherwise get [in competition].” (Khulmann, pp. 192-3, 203)

In *Is It Utopia Yet?* Kat explains, “Most people value small liberties more than they value small equalities, and therefore society works better if the rules aren’t too rigid. Equality is a means, not an end. … These days I believe that secular communal economies must, to be successful, be full of holes. I think that if they are too tight, too "equal," they will fail, because people would not be able to stand the constraints. Give people a little chance to serve themselves on the side, and they will give heartily out of their core efforts for the group. We do, anyway.” (Kinkade, 1994, pp. 47, 50)

In 1998 Kat stated to a reporter about Twin Oaks Community, “I think I’m the only one left who remembers it was an experiment. I don’t think egalitarian communities are a good idea, and this one is too close to suit me.” (Jones, p. W12) “[Twin Oaks] never did love me. It respected me and it feared me, but it never loved me.” (Grimes, n. p.)

Kat left Twin Oaks a second time around the year 2000 to live in a near-by cottage, then was invited back when her health was failing. In her last year Kat told her daughter, “These people really seem to love me. I don’t know why.” (Grimes, n. p.)

A Gender-Partnership Utopia

It is egalitarian culture, imperfect as it is, that has sustained Twin Oaks and the other Federation communities for now over a half-century, particularly the expressions of gender equality practiced in the partnership of women and men, developed and encouraged by Kathleen Kinkade.

One aspect of that preferred egalitarian culture is the community’s adoption of non-sexist language. In 1970 a New York feminist writer named Mary Orovan developed the gender-neutral pronoun “co” and its variations “cos”, and “coself,” and put them in a pamphlet titled *Humanizing English* for sharing among feminist circles. A copy, or at least the idea, found its way to Twin Oaks Community, where it was soon adopted in Twin Oaks’ vernacular speech and in writings about the community.

The question has often been asked about why the Federation communities, the largest ones co-founded by Kat, have survived and grown over a half-century, however slowly, while most communal groups fail and dissolve within a few months or years. Kat offers an explanation in a 1972 article titled “On Being a Woman at Twin Oaks,” for the community’s newsletter, *Leaves of Twin Oaks*.

> Our lives here are so very different from what they were on the outside, and these differences are particularly striking for the women. Many of us have discovered independent and creative spirits beneath the layer of socialization that was forced on us while we were growing up.
>
> We live with secure men who do not need to prove their worth by putting us down. Our labor credit system is designed to distribute work without regard to sex and there are no limits on what we can try. Women learn carpentry and auto mechanics, drive tractors, shovel manure and dig ditches and contribute their ideas to policy making. Men learn cooking, knitting, sewing and wash dishes as frequently as the women. The men feel no pressure to live up to an artificial image of "virility;' the women know that we are "feminine" whether embroidering a shirt or stringing a barbed wire fence.
>
> In this noncompetitive society that rejects jealousy and possessiveness, we discover former antagonisms between women crumbling. We are not possessive of the men we care for, so we cease to see other women as a threat. So-called standards of beauty are ignored. We do not wear makeup, nor do we keep up with "fashions." Because there is no sense of competition based on looks, we know that we are all beautiful.
>
> Visitors often comment that the women here are so "together." No longer living in a society where women are expected to mistrust each other, we discover the joys of sisterhood and develop loving friendships with each other. No longer living in a society where women are expected to be docile, fragile and timid, we discover strengths and talents we never knew we had, and we develop new respect for ourselves and each other. (Kinkade, 1987, p. 12)

Jon Wagner, author of the 1982 book *Sex Roles in Contemporary American Communes*, quotes a letter from Kathleen Kinkade about 1981 explaining about Twin Oaks and East Wind that, "these two communities take a strong point of absolute sexual equality and … attempt to do away entirely with roles based arbitrarily on sex. This idea is fundamental to our idea of "equality," and equality is fundamental to our approach to changing society. There is no platform of our ideology that is more central." Wagner goes on to state, "These communities may be among the most nonsexist social systems in human history." (Wagner, pp. 37-8)

Another important factor in the success of at least Twin Oaks and East Wind communities is their management of the time-based economy in place of monetary economics. Mala Twin Oaks said it most succinctly to a magazine reporter in 2003 that, "Our labor credit system is the glue that keeps this community together." (Mala, quoted in Rems, 2003)

The kibbutz movement in Israel, a large network of communal societies, some with over a thousand members in the late 20th century, never managed to get to the kind of gender-equality that Kat describes about Twin Oaks. For a history of the demise of communalism in the Israeli kibbutz see the paper on the current author's website, *Too Much of a Good Thing.* Few communal societies have focused upon gender equality as have Federation communities. The reason that Twin Oaks and the other Federation Communities have done so is that many people agreed with and wanted to share Kat's vision of gender-equality, in all aspects of culture, not just economics and governance. This lifestyle quality is probably the most important aspect of the Federation communities that has enabled

their survival and growth, with the vacation-credit labor-sharing system being an important part of the egalitarian lifestyle.

The longest-lasting communal societies in the West are the Catholic monasteries and convents, in existence nearly 2,000 years. Hindu ashrams and Buddhist temples in the East have an even longer history. Catholic monasticism went through many changes over time, with a reoccurring pattern of new religious Orders being founded on frontiers in many different countries, with family members settling nearby forming new towns. To escape the worldliness that settled around them, monastic Orders then created new missions and monasteries further out on the frontier.

The collective labor of monks and nuns invariably leads to the accumulation of wealth, which tended to subvert the original intent of monastic life, resulting in the development of "monastic rules" by reformers. The most famous of such monastic rules is the Rule of Benedict, which along with setting times for meals and for prayer, included times for work in monastic fields and workshops. There is a direct correlation between the systemization of labor in monastic rules, and the labor-credit systems of egalitarian communalism, for which Kathleen Kinkade may be considered to be the most important communal reformer of non-monastic communal societies.

There were many experiments with communal labor systems throughout the history of Western Civilization, often inspired by the communalism of the Jerusalem Church as described in the Acts of the Apostles in the Bible. Since the Industrial Revolution began in England in the 18th century, secular communalism's work organization may be characterized as "fair share labor systems," relying upon the individual to decide their commitment level to group efforts. The 19th century Welsh industrialist Robert Owen is credited with supporting various non-monetary economies using "labor notes" and labor-exchange systems, brought to America with his New Harmony, Indiana community experiments. Each new communal society had a social reformer leading them, with Kathleen Kinkade being particularly influential in the 20th century.

It is a communitarian irony that among the 19th century historic American communal societies that used labor-notes, specifically Kaweah and Altruria both in California, as well as New Harmony in Indiana, when those communal societies began to disband the first thing they gave up was their time-based economy, while at Twin Oaks and East Wind, as Mala said, the more developed labor-credit system is the glue that keeps the communities together.

The labor-quota system has evolved into an economic system for the production and consumption of goods and services, with sufficient logic and coherence to replace the monetary system and its value-structure of possessiveness and competition, in effectiveness if not yet in scale, with a system based upon the core value of labor-sharing. To help explain the difference between less organized and more complicated labor systems it is taught in the School of Intentioneering that, "Fair-Share Labor Systems are to Labor-Quota Systems as Barter is to Monetary Systems." The emphasis is on the efficacy of systems for supporting, advocating, and advancing the core values of the particular economic system. In the case of the Federation of Egalitarian Communities, the core value of equality is the foundation for gender-partnership utopia.

Origins of Twin Oaks Community

You may never have heard of the novel *Walden Two* published in 1948 and its author B. F. Skinner, yet in the 1960s the book was selling up to a quarter-million copies per year! Skinner had read about historic American communal societies, including the Shakers and the Oneida Community. He was particularly impressed with the fictional non-monetary economic system that Edward Bellamy had written into his 1888 utopian novel *Looking Backward: 2000-1887*, and he thought about the dissatisfactions that people experienced in the dominant American culture. (Altus & Morris, pp. 268, 286)

Both *Looking Backward* and *Walden Two* were hugely influential in their respective days, largely because they theorized about non-monetary economics. In the 19th century in both England and America there had been various experiments in non-monetary, time-based economies as means for workers and communities to keep all of the wealth they produced rather than have private business owners take as much of that wealth as they could. These involved paper "labor-notes" recording how much time a person worked, redeemable for goods in a labor-exchange store. In *Looking Backward* Bellamy used what he called a "credit card" system, although it worked more like a debit card funded by a universal basic income (UBI). Bellamy's cashless system involved the government giving to each citizen an equal amount of credit based on the previous year's annual national product, redeemable for goods and services. From that, Skinner got the idea that neither a labor-note nor a credit card was needed; instead, a community could use ledger accounts for recording and managing individual labor contributions with no form of exchange of anything. In *Walden Two* Skinner wrote, "Bellamy suggested the principle in *Looking Backward*." (Skinner, 2005, p. 46)

People have written that labor-credits are used like money, or that labor-credits are exchanged for goods and services, even Skinner, who never lived communally, wrote in *Walden Two* that "Labor-credits are a sort of money." Yet that is not correct. "Exchange" assumes private property, and in an economic system with only common property and no private property, there is no exchange. One's labor is required for membership, and it is membership that grants for the member access to all the community wealth, according to how the community distributes its goods and services. The question is then how to organize production and consumption without the use of an exchange system. For consumption the answer is a range of procedures including: equal apportionment or rationing; as-needed (such as health care); first-come-first-served; chance (rolling dice or drawing straws); and the more complicated double-blind preferences matrix used primarily when several people have to choose among a limited number of available private rooms. For production of goods and services the answer is "time-based economics." (Skinner, p. 45)

There are various forms of time-based economies. The most common is the labor-exchange, in which people essentially trade services, sometimes on an hour-for-hour basis as in service-credit or Time

Dollar systems. This form of time-based economy is not how communal societies work. Communal societies use one of two other forms of time-based economy, called in the School of Intentioneering "gifting and sharing economies," involving either labor-gifting or labor-sharing.

The most common form of time-based economy in communal society is called in the School of Intentioneering the "labor-gifting" or "fair-share labor" system in which no minimum amount of work that benefits the community is required, and so no accounting of "done time" or labor contribution is recorded. Labor-gifting is pure altruism. The main problem with fair-share or labor-gifting systems is the "free-rider," or the person who does not work and therefore takes advantage of those who do.

Israeli kibbutzim, involving around 125,000 people, used the fair-share labor system for three or four generations, in both small and large communities, with some kibbutzim having over a thousand people. If there was social pressure involved in getting compliance with their fair-share, time-based economy it is said that it was their common intent or agreement to build a model of socialist culture, rather than a religious imperative. Yet by the year 2000 most of the 270 Israeli kibbutzim were far along on the slippery-slope of privatization, gradually giving up communalism by building nuclear-family apartments. The number of kibbutzim that are still communal may be fewer than twenty percent of the rural kibbutzim, although some children of the rural kibbutzim have been creating new communal groups in urban locations.

Daniel Gavron states that of all the changes that led to the privatization of their time-based economies, the thing that most clearly and quickly destroyed their communalism was when they began paying members differential salaries for different types of work. In Daniel Gavron's book, *Kibbutz: Awakening from Utopia*, the author describes the impacts of the various changes upon the kibbutz, saying that, …

> whereas previous changes in the kibbutz way of life, such as increasing personal budgets and having the children sleep in their parent's homes, did not alter the fundamental character of the institution, the introduction of differential salaries indicated a sea change. (Gavron, 2008, p. 9)

The kibbutzim's "sea change" was from the communalism of the movements' first decades to forms of cooperative community, many of them now looking more like cohousing communities on government land trusts. Since they still call those transformed communities "kibbutzim" the term has become synonymous with "intentional community." A similar change happened with the cohousing community movement in at least the U.S., as people began calling any kind of intentional community "cohousing." To avoid confusion, in the School of Intentioneering the terms "classic kibbutz" and "classic cohousing" are used to refer to the original forms of community developed by these movements.

To avoid the free-rider problem in the egalitarian communities in North America, labor-sharing systems were devised requiring a labor contribution in order for a person to maintain their membership, and therefore access to community goods and services. The labor accounting involved in labor-credit systems enables flexible scheduling, so that people can work in several different areas during the day, rather than whole days, weeks, months, years, or a life-long career in one work area. In this way, women and men can both share domestic labor, income, agriculture, construction, maintenance and other work. With no gender-specific work roles as found in mainstream society,

while training and supporting people in learning cross-gender skills in egalitarian community, the result is a feminist, egalitarian, or partnership culture. Although that was a goal of the kibbutz movement, the kibbutzim were never able to create such a culture, which is a big part of the success of Twin Oaks and the Federation of Egalitarian Communities, thanks in large part to their labor-sharing, time-based economies.

In his list of three main reasons why the kibbutz movement largely gave up communalism and privatized, along with the lack of freedom for individual self-expression, and intrusive influences from the Outside World (such as the economic disaster of 1985 when inflation reached 400 percent, escalating the combined kibbutzim debt to an unpayable $5 or $6 billion, requiring restructuring), Daniel Gavron cites a "lack of success in achieving genuine equality for women." In contrast, through the processes of egalitarian labor-sharing, Federation communities encourage training for cross-gender roles, while valuing domestic labor or reproduction equally with industrial and other forms of production. This is a cultural design and an economic innovation unique to time-based economies valuing all labor equally that benefits the community. LIVE • FREE! Labor Is Valued Equally • For Realizing Economic Equality! (Gavron, 2000, p. 8; Gavron, 2008, p. 9)

With the demographic wave of the Baby Boom came a generation that questioned the culture they were born into, with boundless energy for experimenting with alternative cultures. Richard Fairfield visited a selection of the new wave of communal groups, writing about them in his magazine *The Modern Utopian*, begun in 1966 and becoming a book published in 1971 titled *Communes USA: A Personal Tour*, reprinted and expanded in 2010 with the title, *The Modern Utopian: Alternative Communities of the '60s and '70s.* Fairfield earned a Bachelor of Divinity degree at the Unitarian Universalist Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley, California. (Fairfield, 1971)

Richard Fairfield found Walden House by chance, discovering a small classified advertisement in *Fact* magazine, placed by Gerald Baker in Cresco, Iowa who was looking for people interested in creating Walden II communities. While Baker was compiling his own list of *Walden Two* enthusiasts, another person by the name of Jim Breiling was comprising a similar list from those who were continually contacting Professor Skinner, who forwarded their names and information to the, "fellow behaviorist Jim Breiling." (Kuhlmann, 2005, p. 48)

Fairfield provides a good profile of Walden House, an aged, 19th century, four-story, seven-bedroom, soot-covered brick building wedged narrowly between similar run-down houses in the poor section of the U.S. capital city. The house had been purchased in 1965 by Bill [in many cases last names are withheld by Fairfield] and a friend who soon sold out to Bill. A graduate of Meadville Theological School in Chicago producing Unitarian Universalist ministers, Bill had decided against going into the ministry to instead experiment with his idea of merging *Walden Two* with group marriage to create his version of utopia. (Fairfield, 1971, pp. 56-7; Fairfield, 2010, pp. 168, 288; Miller, 199, p. 57)

Group-marriage communities became a '60s cultural fad due largely to the fictional stories encouraging the lifestyle popularized in the books *Stranger in a Strange Land* by Robert Heinlein (1961) and *The Harrad Experiment* by Robert Rimmer (1966). Heinlein's *Stranger* inspired the founding of the Church of All Worlds (CAW) in 1962 by a couple students at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri. David Barrett writes in his 2011 book *Secret Religions* that Morning Glory Zell of CAW coined the term "polyamory," confirmed by Deborah Anapol in her 2011 paperback edition of *Polyamory in the 21st Century*, stating that Morning Glory invented the term in 1990. Kerista

Commune (1971-1991) in San Francisco may have been the most successful group-marriage community, developing what they called "polyfidelity," and coining the term "compersion" to mean the opposite of jealousy, or the joy of seeing a partner happy in another relationship. Polyamory and compersion became common relationship patterns in Federation communities. (Anapol, p. 51; Barrett, p. 314; Fairfield, 1971, pp. 56-7; Fairfield, 2010, pp. 168, 288; Miller, 1999, p. 57)

The community called United & Individual Ranch (U&I, 1974-1984) near Lake-of-the-Ozarks in Central Missouri, was connected with CAW's center in St. Louis. The owner of the land took the name "Jubal" from *Stranger*, selling his 1,040 acres of land to the resident group, which was over 100 people by 1976. U&I had only one ranch-style brick house used for an office and visitor center, with many tents, tipis, buses, and other invented shelters scattered around the land. When the U&I residents were unable to make the 1984 balloon payment on the mortgage Jubal got his land back, ended the community, and sold the land. Jubal then moved to Deep Run Farm in Pennsylvania, a land trust education center of the School of Living in the Mid-Atlantic States. (See: *Communities* no. 30, Jan-Feb 1978, pp. 53-4; *Communities* no. 39, Aug 1979, pp. 12-17)

Members of U&I were active in the Rainbow Family of Living Light. The local network took on the publishing of one issue of the annual Rainbow Family journal coinciding with the Annual Rainbow Gatherings, naming the journal *All Ways Free*, and that name has continued since. U&I held a "Homesteading & Communities" conference in 1975 attended by members of Twin Oaks and East Wind, with a few individuals from that area later joining East Wind Community. That was the beginning of East Wind's connections with the Rainbow Family. Since then, groups of East Wind members have attended many regional and annual Rainbow Gatherings, taking buckets of nutbutters for an East Wind Nutbutter Kitchen and to donate to other kitchens. (See the "The U&I Conference" article in the July/August 1976 issue of *Communities* no. 21, pages 29-31.)

The one community related to the Rainbow Family that joined the Federation for some years was Mettanokit, also called Another Place Conference Center, in New Hampshire. Mettanokit/Another Place was founded around 1980 by a network of people in New England, and it joined the FEC in 1988, although rarely attending FEC Assemblies. It is unclear when the community ended. One of the original organizers was Manitonquat (1929-2018) of the Wamponoag tribe, known as Medicine Story in the Rainbow Family. Medicine Story was a writer and teacher, and a story-teller at many Rainbow Gatherings and elsewhere.

A community with an influential leader connected with both the Rainbow Family and Twin Oaks is Gesundheit! Institute at a community sometimes called "Zany Ramorsky Ranch" and sometimes called "The Rocks," on the Shanandoah River in West Virginia. They also had a house in Northern Virginia. This is Patch Adams' communitarian-oriented hospital, using humor as a healing modality in wholistic health care. Patch visited Twin Oaks occasionally, and the January, 1979 Federation Assembly VI minutes recorded at TO shows that Gary attended representing The Rocks. The community mostly shares income, with the general attitude toward rules being, "if you don't want a rule abused, don't make it."

By the time that Richard Fairfield visited Walden House there were about a half-dozen members. George had been one of the first to join. Soon after was Kathleen Griebe, a divorcée with her teenage daughter Susan. Richard Fairfield says of Kathleen that she was, "Well aware of the pitfalls and disadvantages of the isolated monogamous family structure, Kathleen enthusiastically embraced the

ideas of *Walden Two*. … She and George were an essential team to make a project like this work: she the congenial organizer and taskmaster, he the efficient handyman." At the time, Fairfield writes, Kathleen was the only adult female member of Walden House, and she was not interested in group marriage. George and Kathleen got married the summer of 1966. Soon after, the two of them travelled to near Ann Arbor, Michigan to attend a behaviorist conference. Bill eventually sold his interest in Walden House to the group and left for California, joining a group-marriage community called Harrad West in Berkeley, founded in 1969. (Fairfield, 1971, pp. 56-9; Fairfield, 2010, pp. 48, 168-70, 288, for a discussion of the 1970s group marriage communities see pp. 280-293; Miller, 2015, p. 10)

While polyamory became common in much of the later communities movement, including among Federation groups, sexual freedom became much more prevalent on the Left Coast than elsewhere on the continent. Stories about Morning Star Ranch in California emphasize free love. Some of that influence was to be brought back East by a person from California to a community formed at the 1974 Twin Oaks Communities Conference named Aloe in North Carolina. Aloe Community was formed by a group of families with children who were frustrated with communities refusing children.

Tim Miller quotes a friend of Aloe explaining how the community minimized privacy, a concern inspired by the idea that privacy is incompatible with collectivity. Aloe "deliberately put its bathtub in the heavily used main room … They were supposed to take their baths out there where anybody could walk in and see them at any time. They decided that personal privacy of this kind was un-communitarian." (Miller, 1999, p. 194)

The present author visited Aloe the summer of 1976, helping with the community's business of recycling different sizes of discarded tin cans into useful items like pencil holders, lamp shades, and hanging planters. Small-orifice cutting torches were used to make designs in the tin, and for cutting vertical ribs in the large no. 10 cans, which ballooned out when squashed. The cans were then dipped in polyurethane, with macramé hangers for the planters. The first community to develop the tinnery business was Springtree in Virginia, formed at the first TO Communities Conference in 1971. Springtree attended Assembly VI yet never applied for membership. Aloe copied the tinnery business from Springtree, and Dandelion Community in Ontario copied Aloe's tinnery business, encouraging member exchanges between the latter two groups. (See FEC Assembly VI minutes, Jan 1979, p. 20)

I saw the bathtub in the Aloe living room, and was shown the upstairs of the building, which was a large attic where most if not all the members slept on simple cots. There was just enough room for someone to sit on the floor between each cot, with members' few personal possessions stowed beneath. The cots were in two rows, one end under the sloping roof on either side of the attic, and the other end toward the center of the attic, with a walkway down the middle between the two rows, under the peak of the attic roof. Aloe had a maximum population of 15 people, and ended by 1980. Contrary to the view that privacy destroys community, Aloe and similar communities instead evidence that the denial of privacy does not create community. (Fairfield, 1971, pp. 21, 56-9; Fairfield, 2010, pp. 168-70; Miller, 2015, p. 10)

Jim Brieling's list of people who had contacted Skinner's office about creating a Walden II community had grown to 250 names by 1965. As Hilke Kuhlmann explains, the academicians were to use this list in the way that academics best know how: organizing study groups; writing proposals; searching for funding; and calling conferences. A Walden II convention was scheduled for the

summer of 1966 at Waldenwoods conference center in Michigan. Fairfield reports that, "It was staged by a few behavioral psychologists who hoped to found a full-blown Walden II community based on Skinnerian principles, with the aid (they fondly hoped) of a huge foundation grant and the cooperation of some pliable utopian people." Kat Kinkade reported that the academic participants in the Waldenwoods conference about starting a Walden II community envisioned "a psychologist-king role for themselves." (Fairfield, 1971, p. 59; Fairfield, 2010, p. 170; Komar, p. 11; Kuhlmann, 2005, pp. 48)

There were three general types of people attending the Walden II convention, first was the behaviorists, most of them being academicians, the second being the "pliable" Walden II enthusiasts, and the third being observers, such as Griscom Morgan of The Vale and Community Service, Inc. at Yellow Springs, Ohio, who had co-founded the Fellowship of Intentional Communities in 1949. (Fairfield, 1971, pp. 21, 59; Kuhlmann, 2005, p. 48)

Kuhlmann provides good details from the *Modern Utopian* newsletter on the 1966 behaviorist conference, explaining that the participants agreed that 500 people would be the ideal population level. A questionnaire completed by forty people at the conference identified only fifteen people among them who would be willing to join a community of at least fifty people. (Kuhlmann, 2005, pp. 48-9)

B. F. Skinner did not attend the conference, sending in his stead a recorded, inspirational message … [In] many ways, the successful design of an intentional community might be the most exciting and encouraging achievement of the latter half of the twentieth century. … I don't know whether the pattern I drew up in *Walden Two* is the right one, of course. The book is fiction—I had to assume that I knew the results of a ten-year experiment and, of course, I didn't. But perhaps you will try the experiment and come up with the real results. If *Walden Two* helps to suggest some way to start, I shall be very happy. … My very warmest regards to you all and good luck. (B. F. Skinner, quoted in Kuhlmann, 2005, pp. 48-9; see also Kinkade, 1972 June, p. 8)

There are two reports on the 1966 behaviorist conference printed in a book written and edited by Kathleen Kinkade, having changed her name from Kathleen Griebe, later to shorten it to Kat Kinkade by 1972. This is titled, *Journal of a Walden Two Commune: The Collected Leaves of Twin Oaks*, in which Kat included edited versions of conference reports. One was by a study-group in Atlanta, Georgia involving Dusty, Rudy, and a woman who Kat named Carry in her book, *A Walden Two Experiment*, which printed the *Walden Pool* newsletter, and the second was the *Walden House Newsletter* written by Kat. The *Walden Pool* newsletter excerpt states that eighty-three people attended the conference, and provides a longer transcription of Skinner's "good luck" message, while Kat points out in her newsletter a difference between the academic versus activist behaviorists. (Kinkade, 1972 June, pp. 8, 10)

> The main source of discontent with the pre-conference plans was the inescapable fact that they involve a great deal of time—an estimated 3 1/2 to 5 years before we can actually set foot on community grounds and begin to call it home. Many of us are impatient to begin. There was evidence that the majority of the group at the Conference wanted to begin sometime in 1967. Grant money cannot be obtained in such a short time, nor can much careful, detailed planning be done. But there were some who thought that planning was less necessary than hard work … (Kinkade, 1972 June, pp. 10-1)

No grant funding came out of the 1966 behaviorist conference, however, several intentional communities, or Walden II experiments, did. The principal people behind these were: Roger Ulrich, Keith Miller, Matt Israel, and Kathleen and George.

In 1965 Roger Ulrich had become the head of the psychology department at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, and turned the entire department into a "widely known center for behavioral research." Ulrich first started a preschool using behavioral modification called Learning Village, "complete with funding, progress reports, and the collection and interpretation of scientific data." With that success, Ulrich then decided to start a behaviorist community that would take in abandoned or other children in need of support. Lake Village was started in 1971, yet despite their plan, the Lake Village project failed to attract funding, and no child welfare agency would place children with them. However, Ulrich's fame in behaviorist circles had attracted many enthusiastic students to his department, and those who wanted a Walden II community joined Lake Village, which as of Kuhlmann's 1999 article in *Communities* magazine, was still in existence with six or seven members. (Kuhlmann, 1999, p. 38; Kuhlmann, 2005, pp. 55)

Keith Miller was a behaviorist professor at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kansas. He discovered that the university was still holding funds left over from the dissolution of student housing co-ops decades earlier, and through the UK Student Housing Association he used them to purchase Sunflower House. (Kuhlmann, 2005, pp. 51-4)

Sunflower House was founded in 1969 with thirty students, and continues to use behavioral modification to coordinate its high-turnover, and its student residents' labor requirements for cleaning, maintenance, and other necessary work. One of the activities for which co-op members can earn labor credits is by engaging in a member education program for learning the history and current procedures of their co-op house. In their *Communities* magazine article about Sunflower House Deborah Altus, Tom Welch, and Keith Miller explain that, …

> When members were given labor credits for participating in the education program, 90 to 100% of them did so. When no labor credits were given, at most 10% of the members participated … The education program at Sunflower House has gradually evolved from a book of rules to a full-fledged curriculum consisting of eight weeks of written lessons with study guides, hands-on skill training, and discussions with experienced members who act as mentors. Members learn everything from operating the food processor to the rationales for the co-op's system of rebates [of rent payments]. This curriculum passes on the cooperative culture and the skills required to maintain it, quickly and effectively, to each new generation of members. (Altus, Welch, & Miller, pp. 40-1)

Matt Israel had been a student of Skinner's at Harvard, and wrote about his behavior modification experiments in two successive collective households from 1967 to '69, both of which lasted about a year. Those experiments are the topic of his chapter on "Walden Two" printed in the 2010 version of *The Modern Utopian*. Israel's interest was in creating urban behaviorist community rather than rural. Kuhlmann has a chapter in her 2005 book titled "Walden Three" about Israel's third behaviorist community attempt started in 1970. (Fairfield, 2010, pp. 171-7; Kuhlmann, pp. 69-77)

Information about the Walden Three community is sparse. Tim Miller reports that Walden Three had two bases, one group living for a while on a dairy farm, which was Herman Patt's farm in West

Brookfield, Massachusetts, which is where East Wind Community was formed. The Patt's farm was later named Coy Brook Farm. The urban Walden Three group was formed by Matt Israel in Rhode Island in 1970, taking out a loan from the Homer Morris Fund managed by the Fellowship of Intentional Communities, later incorporated with the name Community Educational Service Council, Inc. (CESCI), which it never paid back. The present author was a CESCI board member and noted that Walden Three was one of the groups listed as being in default. Walden Three probably took out the loan for its typesetting business, with which they produced the first volume of Twin Oaks' *Collected Leaves*, also called *Journal of a Walden Two Commune*, as noted in the journal's credits, and their own newsletter, *Communitarian.* Stated in the *Collected Leaves* is that at the time Walden Three's population was eight members, with an intent to grow, "to a community of five hundred to a thousand members on a rural location." When Walden Three ended is unknown to the present writer. (Kuhlmann, 2005, pp. 69-77; Kinkade, 1972 June, pp. 101-2; Miller, 2015, pp. 467-8)

With the failure of Matt Israel's communitarian experiments he turned to creating a school and treatment center for children with autism, brain damage, and other behavioral problems. In this setting behavioral modification techniques can be quite effective, except that instead of focusing entirely upon positive reinforcement for desired behaviors, Israel also used "aversive therapy," a euphemism for physical punishment. Consequently, the New York State Department of Education "initiat[ed] a long series of complaints and lawsuits against Israel." (Kuhlmann, 2005, pp. 75-6)

Matt Israel visited Twin Oaks Community after it was started by Kathleen, George, and friends. In an interview with Kat conducted by Hilke Kuhlmann in 1995, Kat relates a discussion that she had with Matt Israel.

> "Look, we're all equals. What are we going to use for reinforcers? Who is 'we,' who is 'they?' Who reinforces whom for what?" He said, "Well, you could not let them eat. You have a cafeteria line here, you could say you can't have your meal unless you have performed up to standard on certain vital community behaviors, whatever they are." And I thought, "God, why does behaviorism attract control freaks?" (Kathleen Kinkade, quoted in Kuhlmann, 2005, pp. 75, 189)

Kathleen and George became frustrated with the conflict between the academicians and the activists at the 1966 Waldenwoods behaviorist conference, yet were able to make connections there which made it possible for the community now called Twin Oaks to be formed. At the conference they met the two university students from Atlanta, Georgia named Rudy and Dusty, who along with Gerald Baker had begun the *Walden Pool* newsletter. Another conference participant, who became the benefactor for the group that was to start Twin Oaks Community, is represented by different names. In *Communes USA* Fairfield gives him the name "Kurt" (p. 59), and Kat in her book, *A Walden Two Experiment*, gives him the name "Hal" (p. 27), while Kuhlmann calls him "Bud." (pp. 88, 97).

Kurt/Hal/Bud was a businessman from the Carolinas who offered the combined Walden House and Walden Pool group a low-interest, long-term personal loan to purchase a farm in central Virginia. June 16, 1967, Kat, her daughter, George and two others from D. C., and three from Atlanta: Dusty, Rudy and his partner arrived at their Virginia farm. In *A Walden Two Experiment* Kat gives the three Atlanta people the pseudonyms Sandy, Brian, and Carrie. Kurt/Hal/Bud did not move in until October after his wife divorced him due to his interest in communalism, for a total of eight (including child) co-founders of the as yet unnamed community. Kurt/Hal/Bud cashed-in one of his insurance policies to fund the first new building at Twin Oaks called, "Harmony." Kurt/Hal/Bud successfully got the group to start a business making hammocks, using the design of a Carolina handcraft, which became

the financial foundation for not only Twin Oaks yet also East Wind, Dandelion and other communities for decades thereafter. (Fairfield, 1971, pp. 59-60; Fairfield, 2010, p. 170; Kinkade, 1973, pp. 25-8)

Around the end of the 20th century East Asian countries started underselling the Twin Oaks hammock design, reducing the business's profit margin. Then in 2024 a fire starting on a neighbor's property swept through part of Twin Oaks' forests, burning to the ground the community's large industrial buildings housing the community's wood shop, sawmill, wood storage buildings, its hammock rope-making machines, several vehicles, and all of its materials and finished product inventory, plus inventory for their seed and tofu businesses. The loss to Twin Oaks was stated as around a million dollars. While the community did not have any of its business assets insured, avoiding paying insurance for a half-century may have resulted in a savings over the years of around a million dollars. It is unknown to the present author whether the neighbor's insurance will or has paid anything to compensate Twin Oaks for its losses.

Fire is the bane of intentional community. Besides Twin Oaks, East Wind lost one of its largest common buildings to fire, and Acorn has had at least two destructive fires, one in its auto and mechanical shop and another burning part of its kitchen-dining building. Findhorn Community in Scotland lost its large community building to fire in 2021. Historically, several intentional communities have suffered devastating fires in the 20th century, including: Ananda Village in California, and Lama Foundation and Hummingbird Ranch, both in New Mexico. All three of those communities survived and rebuilt their homes and common buildings. In the 19th century the two largest communities in the Associationist movement did not survive their fires. The famous Brook Farm near Boston lost its nearly-finished kitchen-dining-residential building to an 1846 fire. The less well-known North American Phalanx in New Jersey lost its grain mill and other business-income buildings and machinery in an 1854 fire, resulting in dissolution of not just the community, yet also the Associationist movement. (Fogarty, pp. 132, 155)

The Associationist communities had used the joint-stock method of financing, in which each member and non-member-investor accumulated a personal capital share of the collective wealth. The two Associationist Community fires mostly ended the movement of shared-private-property community in the U.S.A., until the advent of the cohousing community design in the late 1980s, and the beginning of the land cooperative design after 2010. The land co-op, also called real estate investment cooperative (REIC), form of intentional community includes investor-members who may or may not be resident-members in a community organization that invests in both residential and/or commercial buildings, unlike cohousing which is usually only a residential community with no or limited on-premises income activities.

Once on the land, members named their community after an oak tree with two trunks behind the original farm house: Twin Oaks. They set about making the fictional *Walden Two* into a living, breathing utopia, except that they found out that what Skinner had envisioned was only an outline, which they had to make workable by adding practical details. Some parts of *Walden Two* were adopted as though it were a blueprint, until the community decided to do something different. The first challenge was devising a communal labor system, in which no one would be paid wages or salaries. (Kinkade, 1972, pp. 19-20)

Kat Kinkade's communal labor-system innovation at Twin Oaks late summer of 1967 was a breakthrough that finally identified the missing element that would make secular communalism viable in the dominant, competitive culture, called in the School of Intentioneering the "vacation-credit system," short for "time-based, vacation-credit, labor-sharing economy." (Kinkade, 1/10/07, TwinOaksNet)

For at least 142 years in America, since the beginning of the historic New Harmony community in Indiana (1825-27), Americans tried to find a solution for the problem of how best to structure a communal labor system. The success and significance of Kinkade's innovation is evidenced by the fact that unlike the short-lived communities that utilized Owen's "labor notes" or "labor check" systems such as Kaweah (1885-1892) and Altruria (1894-1895), both existing only a few years, and unlike Josiah Warren's labor-exchange systems such as at Modern Times (1851-63), Twin Oaks has now existed nearly 60 years! That is unprecedented for multi-faith or secular communal societies. Additionally, several other communal intentional communities have also been using the Twin Oaks innovation for their own labor-sharing, time-based economies. (Fogarty, 1980, pp. 127, 148-9, 196)

Kat Kinkade explains how the community developed what is usually called the Twin Oaks labor-credit system in her writings.

> [W]e did not invent a labor system until we had been on the land for three weeks. … Finally, it was settled that the group would divide that work which the members did not enjoy doing but leave creative work off the system. … The line between creative and unpleasant moved steadily toward the unpleasant. … At first there was nothing on the system but housework. Then hoeing the garden lost its savor and was added. … Within a month we were going by the concept that every kind of work that was useful to the group … belonged on the labor credit system. (Kinkade, 1972, p. 40-1)

Along with the beginnings of a labor system Twin Oaks also needed to create its governmental system.

> On the first day of our communal lives, we called a meeting to discuss decision-making. … [Dusty] proposed that we should meet each week as a group and make decisions by consensus. … I thought the idea absurd, but I did not want to break the harmony of the first afternoon by saying so. … By consensus that first day we made decisions to have community of property and to open a group bank account. … The more we talked … the angrier we got. I found myself shouting and shaking … and [Dusty] just talked slower … and got stubborner. … It was clear to me that consensus was operating as a one-person veto. … The decision-making group became defined as simply those people who were willing to put up with the slowness of consensus procedure. Arguments could go on for hours, and there were other things to do. We needed managers—people who would take responsibility for one area of work or another … [Rudy] had already begun to invent labor systems, and that was the issue that caused the conflict that precipitated our getting a formal government after five weeks without one. … [Dusty] was disappointed to see consensus procedure abandoned after such a short trial, but he recognized that our particular group was not really interested in making it work, and he gave his consent to the election. [Rudy], [Scott], and [Kat] were elected planners. (Kinkade, 1972, pp. 51-4)
>
> Our first task was to organize the community work into managerships. … Our bylaws leave us free to change our form of government any time two-thirds of the group wants it different. I personally think Twin Oaks would survive under a variety of governmental systems, including

> consensus or even democracy, as long as the managerial system was left intact. (Kinkade, 1972, pp. 54-5)

Kat Kinkade explains Twin Oaks' adherence to the model of governance presented in *Walden Two*, which has similarities to sociocracy and to democratic centralism, in writing that, …

> We did not want *equal* government; we wanted *good* government. I knew there were increasing numbers of people joining Twin Oaks who did not share the vision of excellence in government, preferring a broad franchise. … When they began to seek a full share in leadership, I felt not only threatened but betrayed. (Kinkade, 1994, p. 24, emphasis in the original)

Some have said that the *Walden Two* form of government, involving a self-selecting Board of Planners, is similar to Marxism/Leninism. However, this does not make Twin Oaks' form of government Marxist-Leninist, because the planner-manager system is much more participatory. The TO Planners are not an elite revolutionary vanguard, as they must provide for extensive input on issues before they make decisions, to avoid having their decisions be appealed by the membership. This is affirmed in Twin Oaks' use of the term "egalitarian."

In communist theory, the elite central committee is all powerful and does not seek direction or participation from the masses, while in egalitarian communalism the planners and managers are much more like facilitators determining the desires of the membership, and like coordinators responsible for seeing that those desires are translated into action plans and carried out.

As explained above, early on at TO consensus process was refused in favor of Skinner's planner-manager form of government. Yet many members appreciated the group-process format developed by the Movement for a New Society (MNS) which involved consensus process. This resulted in a divergence of opinion at both TO and EW, in which some members thought that MNS process could help our communities' governments become more participatory, while others were of the opinion that there was no need to fix something that was not broken. MNS process did have good suggestions about meeting facilitation, and so the FEC Assembly decided to help members of our communities learn MNS process. The FEC Assembly VI at TO in the spring of 1979 (pages 18 & 25 in the minutes) budgeted $100 and 40 hours to bring MNS trainers to one of our communities. Assembly VII at Dandelion in the autumn of 1979 (pages 7 & 9) noted a difficulty in getting MNS trainers to our communities, so the MNS process training budget was doubled to $200.

I attended the series of MNS trainings that happened at East Wind sometime around 1980, and I assume that MNS trainers made it to Twin Oaks. Caroline Estes of Alpha Farm presented a facilitation training that I attended while she was at TO for the Child Program Process. East Wind's MNS trainer was Karen Brandow and a friend from Vocations for Social Change. Karen was co-author of *No Bosses Here! A Manual on Working Collectively and Cooperatively*. None of the people in the EW power structure attended the MNS trainings, probably as they felt that the Planner-Manager form of governance worked just fine, and so there were no discernable-term long benefits to EW as a result of the MNS process training.

On the other side of the equation, the MNS Life Center in Philadelphia was conflicted about whether egalitarian residential community was a legitimate form of social-change activism. The argument was made that residential communities served as base camps for revolution, and served as prefigurative models for lifestyle change, yet political action is considered to be the priority while sitting at home

in community is “not more important than non-violent direct action, or radical caucuses, or alternative institutions.” (Cornell, pp. 40-1)

Andrew Cornell writes in his 2011 book, *Oppose and Propose! Lessons from Movement for a New Society*, that the Federation of Egalitarian Communities was a “formative influence in the 1970s … and many people flowed through them and were influenced by them.” Yet “living the revolution now” simply does not serve to organize “people to strategically press their demands against bosses, state officials, and other targets in order to win real, if limited, changes.” (Cornell, pp. 66, 162-3)

MNS was founded in 1971 as a radical political organization, grew to over 300 members plus supporters around the country, with their largest center being a network of collective houses in West Philadelphia, and disbanded in 1988. MNS taught the spokes council method of organizing many small affinity groups for mutual support in large protest actions such as those against nuclear power, yet the organization itself suffered from over-structuring, and from over-reliance upon a consensus process that tended to result in organizational inertia. (Cornell, pp. 14, 36, 38, 52)

By September 1967 the Twin Oaks Board-of-Planners identified over twenty managerial areas, and appointed managers to be responsible for the specific work areas, with two or three managerships per member. (Kinkade, 1972 June, p. 24)

> Appointed to one of the first managerial areas was Rudy as the Labor Manager. As far as I remember, it was Rudy, not I, who did the original work on the labor system. It was he who got us all sitting in a circle passing around cards with jobs printed on them, first dealing out the deck, then passing to the right the ones we didn’t care for. When it started repeating itself, the game was over, and you accepted as assigned those jobs on the cards that you were unable to get rid of. Too clumsy, we said at the time, “I can’t see a thousand people sitting in a circle passing cards around.” (Kinkade, 1/12/07, TwinOaksNet; see also Kinkade, 1972 June, p. 24)

Decades later, in an email-group post, Kat wrote,

> The part of the system that was certainly mine was the notion of a fixed quota and the accommodation to people who worked more than their share in a given time period. I simply couldn’t swallow the idea of an equality that began and ended all in the same week. I wanted to be able to save up the labor and use it later for leisure. I persuaded the fledgling group about this, and, and this is what is done to this day. All the refinements, … came about much later, little by little, usually invented by one board of planners or another.” (Kinkade, 1/10/07, TwinOaksNet)

In 1969 the old Davidson offset printing press brought to Twin Oaks by Rudy and Dusty from Atlanta produced a booklet titled, *The Revolution is Over: We Won! The Radical Commune Approach to Revolution,* written by Rudy Nesmith, one of TO's co-founders. Besides Rudy’s writing it includes two pamphlets, *What is Twin Oaks* and *The Provisional Member Booklet*, both probably written largely by Kat. On page 8, beginning the topic "Facilities," the author writes that "Twin Oaks is only a few months old...." (Kinkade, 1972, p. 37; Kinkade,1973, p. 27; Nesmith, p. 9)

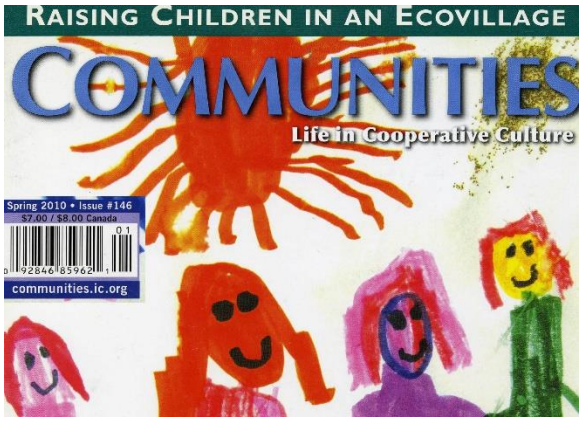
The Provisional Member Booklet includes the Twin Oaks Behavioral Code which lists ten social norms of the community, many of which are still practiced, although the existence of the Code itself is long forgotten. Each of the ten norms has a paragraph explanation, yet I’ll present only the titles.

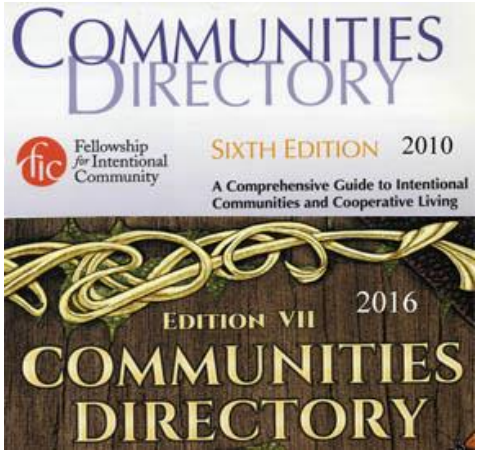
1. We will not use titles or any kind among us.
2. All members are required to explain their wok to any other member who desires to learn it.
3. We will not discuss the personal affairs of other members, nor speak negatively of other members when they are not present or in the presence of a third party.
4. We do not publicly grumble or gripe about things we think wrong within the community.
5. Members who may have unconventional or unorthodox views on politics, religion, or national policies are requested to stay clear of such topics when talking to non-members.
6. Seniority is never discussed among us.
7. We will try to exercise both consideration and tolerance of each others' individual habits.
8. We will not boast of individual accomplishments.
9. We will clean up after ourselves after any private or individual project. We will not keep articles longer than our need for them but will return them to their proper places so that they can be enjoyed by other members.
10. Individual rooms are inviolate. No member will enter another's room without his invitation. (Nesmith, appendix, n. p.; see also Kinkade, 1972, appendix, p. iii)

Rudy TO writes, …

> The revolution is over. It went relatively well as revolutions go; that is, we won. Perhaps you haven't heard; perhaps you are still involved in planning for the revolution to take place. Well, sorry that you missed it. … Experiment with social structures and find the ones that produce those things that we value. You are willing to have your head bashed in by the cops in the name of the revolution, are you willing to commit your life to building the post-revolutionary society. Think about it. … If positive steps are to be taken to create a good society, we must accept the idea of active planning, active control of the institutions of that society, active manipulation of the environment to produce the kind of life we really want. This is an acceptance of the scientific-experimental attitude as applied to the entire society. (Nesmith, pp. 1, 4)

The primary message of Rudy's *We Won!* is that the best way to change the world is to live the desired changes. The author uses the phrase "propaganda by example," which is the strategy of affirming preferred cultural values by putting them into practice, also called "prefigurative politics." This is essentially the message expressed by the intentional communities movement as a whole. The message of *We Won!* is just as relevant today as it was in the late 1960s. (Nesmith, p. 4)





Communities Conferences, Communities Magazine, and PEACH

In 1971 Twin Oaks began hosting an annual summer "Communities Conference." These have always involved people camping, with most of the meetings being held outdoors, often including swimming in the South Anna River. The Twin Oaks Communities Conferences (TOCC) were intended to both attract new members to TO, and to inspire the creation of new communities. Today the TOCCs attract people from many different types of communities to meet each other, share the stories of their communities, and attract new members. Springtree community started at the 1971 conference, North Mountain at the 1972 conference, Shannon Farm at the 1973 conference, and both Tupelo and Aloe at the 1974 conference. Tupelo rented a rundown house next to Twin Oaks, and eventually TO built a large adult-child building on its land into which the Tupelo group moved, merging with Twin Oaks. There are likely many other communities which were formed at other TOCCs. (Kinkade, 1978, p. 38; see *Journal of a Walden Two Commune: The Collected Leaves of Twin Oaks*, vol. 1, pages 105-8)

At the 1972 TOCC representatives from three different magazines agreed to merge into one bi-monthly publication to create *Communities* magazine. These included: *Communitas; Communitarian;* and *Alternatives!* We can read of the excitement and anticipation many people had of this merger in what Kat wrote at the time: "*Communities* will be a giant step toward the formation of an intercommunal communications network, the first step in real cooperation among the various groups." (Kinkade, 1978, p. 22)

Communitas was being produced in Yellow Springs Ohio from people associated with The Vale community, Community Service, Inc., Antioch College, and the Fellowship of Intentional Communities. *Communitas* is the title of the 1947 book by Paul and Percival Goodman on progressive city planning. The first and only two *Communitas* issues are available on the GEN-US.net *Communities* magazine webpage.

The journal *Alternatives!* was one of the similar-named journals produced by Richard Fairfield, along with *Alternatives Newsmagazine*, *Alternatives Communal Living*, etc. that Timothy Miller states was the "short-lived successor" to Richard Fairfield's *Modern Utopian* newsletter. The *Alternatives!* production collective that merged with the other two journals moved from the SF Bay Area to Limesaddle Earth Collective in Northern California, ending their collaboration and becoming a women-only community by 1976 or '77. Limesaddle had different names at different times, including Rattlesnake Gulch, Third World Warriors Earth Collective, and La Luz de la Lucha or The Light of the Struggle. (Cheney, pp. 66-72; Tim Miller email to the author 1-29-2026)

Communitarian was a short-term project of the Walden Three community in Providence, Rhode Island. (Kinkade, 1978, p. 22)

A nation-wide collective formed with the name, Communities Publications Cooperative (CPC), meeting annually at the Twin Oaks conferences, maintaining the magazine as a voice of the new wave communities movement. For a report on the joys and challenges CPC experienced with decentralized magazine production see the article "About Us" in *Communities* magazine. (July/August 1976 issue no. 21 pp. 2-3; digital versions of back and current issues of *Communities* are available on the Global Ecovillage Network–U.S. website: www.GEN-US.net)

After several years Twin Oaks stopped hosting communities conferences (note: annual TOCCs have since resumed), while gradually the community took on more and more work for and financing of the magazine. The other *Communities* magazine production collectives gave it up, because, of course, the magazine was entirely produced by volunteer labor. By the early 1980s Twin Oaks community also wanted to give up *Communities* magazine, finally transferring the journal to Charles Betterton at Stelle Community in Illinois in 1984. Later that decade the Fellowship for Intentional Community took on management of *Communities* magazine.

For the twelve years that *Communities* magazine was at Twin Oaks, and due to Twin Oaks hosting the communities conferences, the community was at the center of the intentional communities movement in North America. Caroline Estes of Alpha Farm commented when she consulted with Twin Oaks about the community's communal childcare program that she considered Twin Oaks to be the "flagship of the communities movement." The annual directory issue was the best listing of communities available. The *Communities Directories* issues of the magazine became best sellers, and after the Fellowship took on the magazine the directories continually grew in size and demand.

Laird Sandhill proposed and the Federation communities signed on to the PEACH Participation Agreement, which became active January of 1990. PEACH was named by Laird, as an acronym for: Preservation of Equity Accessible for Community Health. In a bulletin board post dated April 11, 1989 Kat explained that, "PEACH is not an insurance policy. It is a combined-community savings account that we agree to contribute to every month and withdraw from only under certain specific conditions. … PEACH does not cover individuals. No individual can make a claim. … Each community pays into PEACH $10/mo. for each member it wants to cover. Twin Oaks by this means pays something over $9,000 each year. Before PEACH pays anything, the community must satisfy a deductible of $5,000 per member per year per illness or accident." There have been claims honored by PEACH. As the PEACH fund grew it also became a revolving loan fund for the Federation communities. PEACH has its own governing body separate from the Federation Delegate Assembly, and is likely still functioning today.

East Wind Community

Income-sharing, egalitarian community in the rural Ozarks

Origins of East Wind Community

In early 1972 Kat finished writing a book on the first five years of Twin Oaks titled *A Walden Two Experiment*, which was soon excerpted and serialized in two issues of the magazine *Psychology Today*. The present writer, a senior in high school in 1972-73, was handed a copy of one of the *Psyc. Today* issues on Twin Oaks by a fellow civics class student, inspiring my life-long interest in Utopian Studies.

Kat's book and magazine articles got a lot of attention, as by this time the commune movement was a media sensation, and Twin Oaks soon became famous. Now the community had hordes of people wanting to join, while the community's low standard-of-living made it impossible for the group to

accept them. As Kat wrote in her 1994 book, *Is It Utopia Yet?* with a 1972 membership of forty-five, "Twin Oaks closed its doors." While Kat was an advocate of fast growth of Twin Oaks and the communal movement, the membership wanted a more controlled growth, and so Kat began to plan to start her second community. (Kinkade, 1993, pp. 86-7)

People often say that it was a group of people from Twin Oaks that moved into East Wind Community when it settled in Tecumseh Township, Ozark County, Missouri on May 1, 1974, when actually, Kat was the only former Twin Oaks member remaining in the group. The crew that left Twin Oaks on March 1st 1973 included six people, the TO members Kat, Gerri, Jesse, and Velveteen (her given name was Velma, according to Ian Murray of Headlands Community on Amherst Island, Ontario, in Kuhlmann, p. 210), plus two visitors.

McCune TO wrote an article in *The Leaves of Twin Oaks* about how it happened. Earlier that year, "we had a visitor from Rockbottom Farm in Vermont. Woody Ransom came to observe us as well as some other communities in this part of the country. After a week or so here, he invited us to discuss with him the possibility of organizing Rockbottom Farm as a Walden II-type community. Woody returned to Rockbottom to seek discussion and tentative approval of the idea from the folks there while several folks here began making plans. Jesse and Kat visited Rockbottom Farm. Joshua came down to visit us. … on the first of March [1973, the group] left for Rockbottom Farm." Woody drove to Twin Oaks to pick up the crew, and on the return trip took a detour to visit The Farm in Tennessee. McCune continues, "A few days after … we got a call from Vermont. The plan had fallen through. … along comes another call. This time it's from Massachusetts." The group of community founders had moved from Rockbottom Farm to a dairy farm owned by Herman Patt in West Brookfield, MA. (Kinkade, 1978, pp. 35-6)

The best source of information about Woody Ransom and his community efforts is in Robert Houriet's 1971 book titled *Getting Back Together*, providing fourteen pages of mostly anecdotal stories. Woody Ransom owned a 350-acre farm with a ten-room house in Strafford, Vermont. Woody was a young heir to the corporate wealth of his family's Midwestern paper company. After graduating from Harvard, he refused to enter the family business, and in 1967, after his marriage broke up, he started a community called "Bryn Athyn," translated from the Welsh meaning "hill of unity." The Vermont Bryn Athyn is not to be confused with the religious Bryn Athyn community in Pennsylvania.

In his book, Robert Houriet provides a list of wealthy benefactors who, like Woody, served as patrons of various communes. Bryn Athyn was very anarchistic, and while the fifteen to twenty people gardened, raised farm animals, and took menial jobs, Woody wanted the group to be more self-reliant and less dependent upon him. He started a large potato crop, and maple sugar production, farming with horse-drawn implements, yet was unsatisfied with the lack of community involvement. November 1969 Woody closed Bryn Athyn due to a hepatitis outbreak and death. Disillusioned with anarchism, and after discovering *Walden Two*, Woody started a new community a mile from Bryn Athyn, with a more disciplined intention and a new name: Rockbottom Farm. This was over three years before Woody brought Kat and company to his land. Since they only stayed one day, taking with them four Rockbottom members to Herman Patt's farm in Massachusetts, the question is why did Kat and company leave so quickly? Houriet may have answered that question in his writing that, "[Woody] now talked of behavioral science: of conditioning a generation to work together. In the future, Rockbottom might become a *Walden Two* community. But until it became economically

viable, it was under his provisional dictatorship." (Houriet, pp. 39-53; Miller, 1999, p. 62; Miller, 2015, p. 378)

It was at Herman Patt's dairy farm, March 3rd, 1973, that the group formally organized, choosing the name "East Wind Community," which had originally been proposed yet rejected for Twin Oaks in 1967. East Wind's Membership Book lists Herman Patt as EW's first member, then Kat, Gerri, Jesse, Velveteen and the others. Herman's wife, however, did not join. Years later Herman Patt drove out to Missouri to visit East Wind a couple times where I was able to meet him. He seemed to be just like us, only much older.

While at the West Brookfield property Jesse and Gerri returned to Twin Oaks, and Velveteen also left, leaving Kat the last remaining former TO member. Other people soon joined the group, which then decided that it needed to buy its own land, and so they left West Brookfield November 1, 1973 to rent a house on Sunnyside Street in Boston where members got jobs to save money for a land purchase.

The East Wind Membership Book states that there was a "Boston Exodus" which reduced membership, yet the group that made the trip to Missouri numbered eleven: four women (Kat, Minnette, Kathy, Deborah) and seven men (Tony, Robbie, Will, Trip, Keith, Chuck, Billy).

The name "East Wind" was originally taken in 1967 from the saying popularized by Mao Zedong of Communist China, originating in an 18th century Chinese novel titled *Dream of the Red Chamber*, saying "The East wind shall prevail over the West wind." The phrase also references the 1965 song by Bob Dylan "Subterranean Homesick Blues" where he sings, "You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows."

Interestingly, maybe predictably with a name like "East Wind," a woman from the Weather Underground offshoot of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) visited East Wind Community while I was visiting during the summer of 1975. We left together, hitchhiking north, because she wanted a partner while hitching the back roads through the Ozarks. When we got to Interstate 44 she wanted us to split up because a woman hitching alone on the Interstate can travel faster than a couple together. She told me before we parted that she was connected with the Weather Underground. I suggested that visiting Twin Oaks would have given her a better view of our communal structures, since East Wind was only a little over a year old and there was not much to it, and she replied that she had wanted to meet and talk with Kat, presumably to report back to others in the Weather Underground. I told her I was headed for San Francisco and she gave to me her address, which turned out to be a very nice, large urban community building with rooms on two floors, all opening onto or overlooking a central indoor, atrium-like common area. She gave me a tour of the Bay Area, and I seriously considered joining the Kerista Commune (1971-1991) in San Francisco, which practiced a form of group marriage called "polyfidelity." Instead, I returned to join East Wind autumn of '75, as I decided that I'd rather support a communal society founded and led by a woman than one founded and led by a man.

The Kerista co-founder, Brother Jud (John Presmont), a New York City beatnik in decades past, had devised a rather harsh, confrontational communication process they called "Gestalt-O-Rama" for his community. About 1986 I and a woman, Elka, were sent from Twin Oaks as emissaries from the Federation of Egalitarian Communities to Ganas Community on Staten Island, New York, to report back to the Federation Assembly on whether we would recommend accepting their proposal to join

the Federation. Ganas' co-founder, Mildred Gordon, had developed a supportive group communication process called "feedback learning," which Timothy Miller describes as "involving sessions in which participants identify one person's strengths and weaknesses and suggest ways the person can improve." When I visited, these sessions typically took place in the dining room after the evening meal, with the involvement of any member desiring to observe or participate. Mildred told me that she and Jud had met before the Kerista Commune relocated from NYC to San Francisco. They compared their respective group communication processes, and Mildred told me that she considered Jud to be crazy. I visited Kerista in 1987 and very nearly joined them then, partly since they were building a computer services business with the new Apple personal computers, yet I could not accept their internal communication process. Some of the reports about the 1991 demise of Kerista published in *Communities* magazine and elsewhere explain the overbearing aspects of Jud's leadership. (Miller, 2019, p. 105)

About hitchhiking … During my first year at Ohio State University (OSU), besides my philosophy and science classes, I took many recreational classes like camping, backpacking, technical rock climbing, canoeing, and sailing. From that I got the idea that I could combine backpacking and hitchhiking for traveling around the country. My trip from Ohio to Virginia (via NYC) summer of 1974 to visit Twin Oaks was my first long-distance hitchhiking trip. At TO I subscribed to the newsletter *The Leaves of Twin Oaks* and to *Communities* magazine, and returned to OSU. Reading those periodicals over the next year I decided to attend the 1975 Twin Oaks Communities Conference, left when it was over to visit East Wind, left EW headed for San Francisco via Seattle, hitched south along the coast to Los Angeles, then east to Georgia, up to New England, and back to Ohio where I had classes waiting, and decided then to drop out of college and join a rural commune. That ten-thousand-mile hitchhiking trip took me two-and-a-half months, living on about $20 per week, although I had contacts around the country to visit and stay with. Most of my community networking during my 20s involved hitchhiking. I used to stand by the side of the road soliciting rides, watching hundreds of cars pass by me, asking myself, "Why can't I have one of those?"

The SDS was formed at a 1962 conference in Port Huron, MI, with its founding document called the "Port Huron Statement." In 1969 the Weatherman faction was formed at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, taking the name "Weather Underground Organization" (WUO). As a far-left, Marxist militant organization, the FBI considered WUO to be a domestic terrorist organization for its bombing campaign against "American Imperialism." In 1969 the SDS was splintering, collapsing in 1970. The Weatherman faction carried on activities until it dissolved in 1977, including the 1970 jailbreak of Timothy Leary, the psychologist who was an early advocate of the use of psychedelic drugs, called "the most dangerous man in America" by President Richard Nixon.

Given its associations, we can understand why early 1967 Twin Oaks would refuse the name "East Wind." That Kat's second community project used it suggests that it was a more radical, less uptight, less strait-laced group sitting around Herman Patt's kitchen table in 1973. I always thought that the name "East Wind" could refer to, rather than Chinese communism, the idea of egalitarian communalism blowing westward across the country from the East Coast, yet we never actually had any discussions about what the East Wind name meant to us. Despite a general liberal-left orientation, none of our communities ever developed much of a political action focus, with participation in anti-nuclear power campaigns being our primary form of activism, since the North Anna Nuclear Power Station was proposed and built near Twin Oaks in Louisa County. For years Twin Oaks donated small

amounts of money to various causes, and some members, like myself, attended various demonstrations in Washington, D.C.

It has often been wondered why East Wind chose to buy land in the Ozark Mountains rather than near Twin Oaks on the East Coast. Being a thousand miles apart the distance made cooperation between the communities expensive and therefore infrequent. However, there is value in having a model of egalitarian communalism west of the Mississippi River, and Northern Missouri's good farmland has spawned a number of different types of intentional communities over the decades. Being on the hilly Ozark Plateau of Southern Missouri, however, with few job opportunities and poor soil of flakey rock called "chert," East Wind has not yet spawned any satellite communities in its own county as has Twin Oaks.

While the Black Hills of the Dakotas are considered to be the oldest mountains in North America, the Ozark Plateau's weathered-down remains is considered to be the second oldest, and the Appalachians the third oldest. The Ozarks is unique as it boarders at least four different ecological regions, bringing flora and fauna from each to blend together: eastern deciduous forest, western grassland plains, southwestern desert, and southeastern Mississippi Delta. While the original purchase was for only 160 acres, East Wind now has over a thousand acres of mostly wooded land, and being remote it has only distant neighbors. East Wind Community settled in a wondrous region!

Back at Sunnyside Street, East Wind Community had saved $20k and wanted to get landed out of the city. A member named Jack left the group in Boston January 7, 1974 with a plan to become a homesteader with his partner in the Missouri Ozarks. Jack commented in a November 2025 text message interview with the present author that just before he left Boston the doorbell rang and he commented, "Well, here's my replacement." It was Chuck arriving to visit, and he returned to join the Boston EW group about two months later on March 3, 1974, long after Jack left. Chuck was soon tasked with finding land for the group and he connected with Jack in Southern Missouri. They very quickly found land that matched their criteria, and East Wind moved to Tecumseh Township, Ozark County, Missouri May 1st, 1974.

Notice that it was only two months from when Chuck joined East Wind to when the group moved to its new land. That is a short amount of time for someone to gain the confidence of the group, travel a thousand miles, search for and choose a plot of land, get the group back in Boston to agree, arrange the financing and other paper work for the land purchase, and for the group to then wrap-up in Boston and make the move to the Ozarks. Remember, it was not a group of former Twin Oaks members who moved to the Ozarks; Kat was the only former TO member remaining in the group that included four women and seven men.

As Chuck was from Rifle, Colorado, it is understandable that he would not have an attachment to the East Coast. And being from the Western Slope of the Rocky Mountains could explain his interest in the Ozark Mountains. The Arkansas and Missouri Ozarks at the time were experiencing an in-migration of young, back-to-the-land homesteaders and land trust community (CLT) organizers, U&I Ranch being one of many such groups, so it is reasonable that a Twin Oaks sister-community would settle in that part of the country at that time. The Ozarks has always been a region where people go to escape civilization, being a poor region with few good roads into it until the 21st century. Major highways all go around the Ozarks. While being predominantly White, the population has a "you mind your business and I'll mind mine" type of cultural ethos. Since East Wind members tend to stay

to themselves rather than try to radicalize the local youth, only being seen in town when we are spending money at local stores, always paying our bills and taxes, and always voting for the friendly local sheriff, the community has always had good public relations in the otherwise very conservative region. Our friendly relations with the local government were also due to our saving of the Tecumseh Post Office, since the USPS was planning to close the Tecumseh P.O. until we brought enough mail volume to keep it going, and also because East Wind soon became the largest "employer" in Ozark County, although of course EW members are all co-owners, not employees.

Jack's partner, Nancy, was only a member of East Wind for two months in Boston in late 1973. Jack rejoined East Wind in Missouri from summer of 1975 to early 1982, with a year away in the middle of that time period. Chuck left East Wind the summer of 1977. Both were construction managers, Chuck being involved in at least the foundations of the first five wooden buildings (i.e., Sunnyside, Fanshen, Rockbottom, Enterprise, Anarres), and Jack serving as the construction manager for part of one residence and for East Wind's first steel industrial building called the "Nuthouse." I worked on the crews for both Chuck and Jack, learning construction work, which served me well when I bought property much later to begin a small, class-harmony, urban community in Denver, Colorado.

In the late 1970s East Wind decided to begin a nut-butter industry, proposed by Malon, to sell to food cooperatives and whole foods stores. I found our nut-butter project's first major financing source, the Southern Cooperative Development Fund (SCDF) through my work with the regional food cooperative warehouse in Fayetteville, Arkansas and its New Destiny Food Cooperative (NDFC) federation, as a board member representing all of the Missouri member co-ops. East Wind Nutbutters began production in 1981. Being a huge project, every member of the community had some involvement in the creation and start-up of our communal nutbutter business. Will was the second most involved person, given his focus upon finance, business management, and his electrical engineering degree, put to work managing EW's cash flow, management systems, and the wiring of 3-phase power in the nutbutter production facility, the "Nuthouse." Will once commented to me that he felt like he was always having to figure out how to implement Malon's ideas.

While the nutbutter business has not enabled the growth of the community to the size we dreamed of, it has enabled the development of EW's agricultural and forestry programs for greater self-reliance, keeping the community alive and kicking through the decades of economic booms and busts, and political rightward trends, as a liberal island in a sea of Ozark conservatism.

Kat's Kibbutz Connection, the Federation, and the Fellowship

Kat Kinkade's book *A Walden Two Experiment* made its way to Mordecai Bentov (1900-1985), an Israeli journalist and politician who was a member of Kibbutz Mishmar HaEmek. Bentov was a signatory on the Israeli declaration of independence, and founder in 1927 and long-time leader of the

kibbutz federation, Kibbutz Artzi. For many years the Kibbutz Artzi office had been networking with communal societies and other intentional communities around the world, publishing a newsletter called "C.A.L.L." for Communes At Large Letter. Learning of a kibbutz-like communal society in the USA, Mordecai contacted Kat at East Wind and invited her to a six-week, all-expenses-paid visit to kibbutz in the late autumn and early winter of 1975.

Upon her return to East Wind, Kat and Malon discussed how the networking of kibbutzim in Israel via their various movement organizations aided individual kibbutzim. They also discussed the possibility that a similar movement organization of communal societies in North America may be able to attract significant financial aid from the comparatively rich kibbutzim, for our severely under-capitalized communities. That intention was never talked about much. Instead, the selling points for attracting communities to join a North American communal movement was the services that a movement organization could provide to each other and to small, new, forming communal groups.

Malon explained to me that he and Kat could not come up with a better term to use in the name other than "egalitarian." Today I think that the term "partnership" has advantages, as it has half as many syllables and is more easily understood.

I had already proposed and created for myself at East Wind a Networking Manager position for connections with other area communities and cooperatives. I thought, along with others I talked and corresponded with, that what was needed was a cross-movement networking organization engaging all sorts of intentional community movements, not just communal. That was not what Kat and Malon wanted, so I was side-lined.

In 1986, ten years after the FEC was formed, an initiative was begun to rejuvenate the Fellowship of Intentional Communities (FIC), begun in 1949 by Arthur Morgan and friends of Community Service, Inc. at The Vale community near Yellow Springs, Ohio. The FIC had been meeting annually those 37 years, managing a revolving loan fund for communities called the Homer Morris Fund, later called the Community Educational Service Council, Inc. (CESCI). Twin Oaks, East Wind, and Walden Three all took out CESCI loans, which were limited to $3,000 per application.

In the early 1980s Charles Betterton of Stelle Community in Illinois wanted to create a robust and influential community-advocacy foundation, and began a project to develop the existing Fellowship of Intentional Communities into a networking organization. Charles presented his idea at a National Historic Communal Societies Association conference (NHCSA, later the Communal Societies Assoc. or CSA), at the historic New Harmony community site in Indiana, which I attended. I soon encouraged Laird of Sandhill Farm, who was then the most active person in the Federation, to help the FIC's all-inclusive continental-community-networking organization to grow and succeed. The fall of 1986 at Stelle Community, Charles, Laird, Dan of Shannon Farm, Donald Pitzer of CSA, and myself, then a member of Twin Oaks, were the five incorporators of the second iteration of the FIC, changing its name to the Fellowship for Intentional Community to be inclusive of organizers and networkers who did not live in community.

It turned out that a network exclusively focused upon our closely-aligned communal societies was what was needed to help expand the FIC into a more effective cross-movement networking organization, as the FEC supported the FIC in many ways, including with individual Federation community members contributing labor, and with the FEC paying $500 annual dues for many years.

When the FIC planned a large conference for August, 1993 in Olympia, Washington the Federation offered $400 for Federation community members to attend, and another $800 for general scholarships. After the Olympia Gathering the minutes for the December, 1993 Federation Assembly at East Wind reports that the FEC donated $1,000 to support FIC administration. Similar donations were likely made in other years. (See: FEC Executive Committee Meeting III Notes, June 1993, Tekiah Community, pp. 18-19).

Laird Sandhill became just as effective an organizer for the FIC as he had been for the FEC. In 2019 the FIC changed its name a second time to the Foundation for Intentional Community. For a history of the FIC see the Wikipedia.org listing, also posted to the Intentioneers.net website.

Preamble to the Constitution of the Federation of Egalitarian Communities

We, the Federation, intend to promote happiness among all people through the establishment of equality among all people. Our function is to assure this equality.

The responsibility of each community is to offer equal access to scarce resources, provide for the needs of its members, receive the products of every member's labor, and distribute these products according to need. Each community is further responsible for maintaining the availability of natural resources for both present and future generations through ecologically sound production and consumption. We strive to do this by forming and maintaining intentional communities which uphold and practice these basic principles.

For these reasons we commit ourselves to the goals of equality within communities, equality among communities, and equality for all people through the establishment of more communities.

A version of this preamble was printed in Sierra's "Linking Up: Federation for Communities?" article in *Communities* no. 25, March-April, 1977, p. 42.

Autumn of 1976, delegates from Twin Oaks, VA, Dandelion, ONT, North Mountain VA, and Aloe, NC joined the East Wind delegates Kat and Malon at East Wind Community to found the Federation of Egalitarian Communities (FEC), representing about 150 adults in our five communities. Mordechai Bentov sent a kibbutz representative, Avraham Yassour and his son who were visiting New York City, to observe the founding meeting of the FEC. Sierra Aloe's article about the first FEC meeting at East Wind states that the kibbutz representative's name was Michael Frishberg, so there is some mistake. I met Avraham yet not Michael, so either there were two kibbutzniks in attendance, or else Michael attended the second FEC Assembly at TO rather than the first one at EW. (See: *Communities* no. 25, March-April 1977, pp. 27-31)

Besides money for Kat's visit to kibbutzim, the only other funding that ever came to us from the kibbutzim was Bentov's offer to pay for six people from our Federation communities to visit Kibbutz Artzi's member kibbutzim, and attend a conference in October, 1981. The FEC representatives were: Malon, Andrew, and Steve/Ché East Wind (I could have yet did not apply), Joanie TO, and Brian and Ira Dandelion. The conference was called "The First International Conference on Communal Living,"

although there had been other international gatherings in Europe prior to the Kibbutz Artzi conference. In 1982 a book of the conference proceedings with photos was published by the International Communes Desk (ICD) of Kibbutz Artzi, titled *The Alternative Way of Life*. 47 delegates from 15 countries attended, with 30 members from Israeli kibbutzim. Among the conference resolutions was the recommendation for "establishment of committees or federations within each region to facilitate intercommunity contact and communication, to help facilitate labor exchanges, as well as to initiate periodic assemblies and join projects and to publish bulletins, newsletters, and periodicals." While not much came of those ideas out of the 1981 conference, it could be said that the Global Ecovillage Network begun in 1995 at Findhorn Community in Scotland has succeeded in building an international organization with regional offices. For a history of the ecovillage movement see the paper by the present author on Intentioneers.net titled: *Riding-Out the Storm in the Ecovillage.* (International Communes Desk, pp. B, 101, 138)

The Communes Network gatherings in England grew into the First International Communes Festival at Laurieston Hall in Scotland in 1979. This event formed the International Communes Network (ICN), which continued through 1985, meeting in Denmark, Belgium, Holland, and France. These were less-structured and smaller events than the more academic-oriented conferences organized in the following years by Kibbutz Artzi.

The International Communal Studies Association (ICSA) was formed in 1985 by Yaacov Oved of Kibbutz Palmachim and Donald Pitzer of Southern Indiana University and the academic organization now called the Communal Studies Association (CSA). The ICSA holds tri-annual conferences mostly in Europe, North America, and Israel. The Federation of Egalitarian Communities regularly sends representatives to these and other conferences. It was proposed that I represent the Federation Assembly at the 1988 ICSA conference focused upon the work of the early 19th century reformer, Robert Owen, in Edinburgh and New Lanark, Scotland, where I made a presentation on our communal community Federation, and visited several communities, including Laurieston Hall and Findhorn in Scotland.

The second FEC Delegate Assembly took place at Twin Oaks, the spring of 1977. The East Wind delegates traveled by bus or car the thousand miles to TO, yet I had no funding to travel and so I hitchhiked. During the Delegate Assembly, when the Delegates were deciding on who would be the organizations' officers, no one wanted to be the secretary. Henry TO referred to me asking, "Why did you bring him?" Malon EW answered "We didn't, he came on his own." I was then offered and accepted the position of FEC secretary, which I held for a few Assemblies, resigning when I decided to put my energy into a more inclusive intentional community networking organization. Returning home to EW by hitchhiking, Stephanie said to me with her beautiful smile, "I don't know how you guys do it!" She had traveled back and forth several times between EW and TO, although not by hitchhiking. I simply responded with a shrug saying, "Two days of adversity and you're there."

Alpha Farm in Oregon expressed interest in joining the Federation, and sent two observers, Glen and Muffy, to the FEC Assembly IV in January 1978 at East Wind. At that time Alpha had 15 members, with a gender ratio similar to East Wind's of twice as many men as women. Twin Oaks usually had an even gender ratio. Soon after, Malon wrote a letter to Glen, printed in the FEC newsletter, *Communication* (p. 12), prior to the July 1978 Assembly V scheduled for North Mountain, inviting Alpha to join the FEC, explaining that the "core of our ideology" was non-exploitation, requiring participatory governance. Malon also explained the need for a homogeneous federation of similar

communities, citing the experience of the Fellowship of Intentional Communities (FIC) founded in 1949, and the Inter-Communities of Virginia (ICV) network which had only lasted a few years. Because both of these groups welcomed the whole diversity of types of communities, neither the FIC nor ICV, Malon stated, were able to create a "sound and prosperous Community Movement. … They just could not agree on doing anything substantially beneficial for anyone." So, Malon and others insisted that the FEC was to be a selective, exclusive network of communities.

Also, in the 1978 *Communication* newsletter of the FEC, Malon wrote to Glen Alpha, "I envision a day when there will be many federations comprised of communities and groups of all different kinds. … We will develop a federation of federations. This is in fact the structure of the Kibbutz movement, whereby they have three federations of differently structured Kibbutzim, which on a federation level carry on tremendous amounts of cooperation."

Malon is a very capable organizer, explaining that "The earliest thing I can remember is feeling confident." Malon conceived the idea for East Wind to start a nutbutter manufacturing business, beginning production in 1980. This huge project involved every member of the community, requiring financing from a couple different cooperative loan organizations, which in turn required that East Wind change its *Walden Two*-inspired Planner-Manager form of government to the democratic management of worker cooperatives, a project that Will managed using a community-wide discussion and decision-making process called the "Work Improvement Project" or WIMP.

Malon left EW at the end of 1982, and founded in 1986 what became a publicly traded, private equity investment firm named American Capital, Ltd. His firm grew into a global asset management company specializing in middle-market investments, including leveraged finance, structured products, and real estate; which is to say, Malon became a take-over artist or corporate raider.

Malon is quoted in a *Forbes* magazine article dated April 23, 2007 explaining: "I thought I could create a better society, but common ownership didn't work, so I became a capitalist." My view is that common ownership works when people want it to work, and fails when people think and act only about themselves and not the group. (See: http://www.forbes.com/forbes/2007/0423/096.html)

Malon was the founder, chairman, and CEO of AGNC Investment Corp, a real estate investment trust (REIT) which he sold in 2016. It is unclear just how many companies Malon created and sold over the years. Malon sold his American Capital business in 2017 for $4.1 billion, making him a multi-billionaire.

Whatever opportunities exist in the finance-industrial-complex, Malon will probably continue moving up. He is now the founder, chairman, and CEO of a private investment, venture capital firm called Adasel Global Partners, LLC, investing in advanced information technology, among other things. (See: https://share.google/mW5FP2nJCNdojY437)

True to his pragmatic nature, Malon married an accountant.

In a sense, Malon was correct about the "federation of federations," although better terms are probably "movement" or "network." The cohousing movement is essentially a "federation." There is a community land trust movement, the housing cooperative movement, a student housing cooperative movement, mutual housing, land cooperative movement, disability-care (e.g., Camphill, L'Arche),

communal societies (e.g., FEC), resident-owned communities (i.e., trailer parks), coliving businesses, class-harmony communities (i.e., owner + renters), shared-equity or shared-housing cohouseholds, tiny-house communities, agrihoods, activist communities, gay men's and lesbian separatist communities, homesteading communities, artist colonies, indigenous communities, survivalist or "prepper" communities, polyamorous communities (e.g., The Family), mobile RV or "van life" communities, and the temporary autonomous zones (TAZ) of short-term communities like Rainbow and Burners. Of course there are the many religious communities including: Catholic Worker, Shalom Mission, Sword of the Spirit, Mennonite, Amish, Bruderhof, Hutterite Colonies, Jewish, Neo-Pagan, Islamic (e.g., Sufi), Hindu ashrams, Buddhist temples, Sikh, and practically any other religious group, as well as the many Catholic religious orders of men in monasteries and women in convents. Although their numbers are diminishing, there are nearly as many people in Catholic groups as there are in all other movements combined. Then there are the over-all, umbrella community associations of the Global Ecovillage Network, and the regional networks of communities including the Foundation for Intentional Community in North America, and whatever exists in Europe, Israel (e.g., kibbutz, moshavim, Zionist, MAKOM), Australia, Japan (e.g., Yamagishi-kai), Asia (e.g., Anastasia), and intentional community movements in other parts of the world.

Malon EW, Allen EW, Sierra Aloe at the 2nd FEC Delegate Assembly at Twin Oaks, spring 1977, in *Communities: Journal of Cooperative Living*, no. 25, March-April 1977, p. 27. Photographer was Mikki Twin Oaks, who was not present at the 1st Assembly at EW.

The article title, "The First Constitutional Assembly" refers to the first FEC meeting at East Wind the previous autumn, although this photograph is from the 2nd Assembly at TO. I am in the background as I was not a delegate, only an observer, and so did not have a seat at the Delegates' conference table.

The Failed Theory of the "Communal Child"

Some of the most controversial parts of Skinner's *Walden Two* are his description of the lollipop ordeal and the soup-bowl-temptation test intended to teach young children self-control and the virtues of delayed gratification. Then there are the "baby-cubicles" in the "children's building." The reasons for these communal childcare processes are probably partly due to Skinner applying some of his theories of behavioral modification to child rearing, and partly to Skinner having taken ideas about children's houses from historic and contemporary communal societies. (Skinner, pp. 86-102)

Twin Oaks experimented with their "aircrib" design of Skinner's baby-cubicle the first few years in their children's building named "Degania." The name was taken from the name of the first Israeli kibbutz, Degania Alef, founded in 1910, which Kat discovered when she visited kibbutzim never had a children's building.

Early on, Twin Oaks Community declared a moratorium on accepting children until they could build a building designed specifically for children, with low windows about a foot above the floor, low tables and chairs, and other furniture and processes designed for children. For example, there was a low shelf with a bus pan by the kitchen sink for each child to place into it their plate or bowl and cup when they got up from the child-level table, instilling the habit of cleaning up after oneself.

When I attended the 1975 Twin Oaks Communities Conference they gave tours of different parts of Twin Oaks. Of those, the hammocks business tour was the most popular, offered several times as the tour size was limited. They also offered a tour, only one, of Degania which I was most interested in seeing, since for the past year I had been reading whatever I could find about their childcare program. I arrived at the front door of Degania at the correct time, wondering why there was no one else there for the tour. The Degania tour guide who answered the door was Freddie Ann. (There are pictures of Freddie Ann with other parents and children on pages 11 and 20 of *Communities* magazine no. 9, July-August 1974.)

I had to assume from that experience of my being the only person interested enough to take the Degania tour that most people were and are put off by the idea of *Walden Two* style communal childcare. More than that, those people who are interested in communal childcare do not know the history or the lessons of communal childcare learned by those communities that have experimented with the ideal, so I am doing what I can with my paper *Too Much of a Good Thing* on the Intentioneers.net website.

As I had read articles in *The Leaves* and in *Communities* about TO's communal childcare theories and intentions, I was particularly interested when Freddie Ann pointed out to me their aircrib mounted on a wall, which looked like a terrarium or fish tank with its Plexiglas front window, yet she immediately walked into the next room as if she did not want to talk about it. I was aware that aircrib childcare was a controversial subject, taking a minute to inspect the one I saw attached to a wall, yet I could not tell whether it was still in use at that time.

Freddie Ann was the first woman to give birth to a child intended for TO's communal childcare program. Two others followed to complete their first Degania cohort. A year or two later, Freddie Ann, along with father and child, left TO. It was said by others that Freddie Ann had been just as committed to communal childcare as anyone else, before she gave birth. Afterwards, Freddie Ann evidently began to feel that she wanted to raise her child in ways different than what the TO Child Program intended. The *Communities* magazine (no. 9, July-August 1974, pp. 10-12) article by an anonymous author or co-authors titled "Twin Oaks & Little Folks" was the first and last *Communities* article by TO about their intentions for their communal childcare program, unless I missed something. The *Communities* magazine (no. 28, 1977) article titled "Leaving Twin Oaks: A Conversation with Former Members" quotes Freddie Ann explaining,

> When I left Twin Oaks it was really because of [my child] … I had felt that Twin Oaks was strongly committed to a secular view of the world rather than a spiritual one. … My feelings for this got stronger real fast, and I just knew I wanted to be able to teach my kids more what I believed, and wanted to stop pretending it wasn't important to me. (Freddie Ann, p. 20)

Dakini East Wind in Missouri had a similar story, leaving EW just as the child program wanted her to have her child sleep with the other children in a separate building, as all EW children did, soon after

they were weaned. Like Freddie Ann TO, Dakini EW was also seriously into Paramahansa Yogananda.

Yogananda had inspired the founding of several intentional communities, including Ananda Village in California in 1968 by Swami Kriyananda, who wrote the book, *Cooperative Communities: How to Start them and Why*, first published in 1968. A quote by Paramahansa Yogananda about buying land in the country, living in harmony with nature, and spreading the idea of community through the world by collective unity is included in Twin Oaks' Statement of Religious Belief. (See Appendix B)

Through much of the history of alternative societies, communal and otherwise, the ideal of raising children in community to be more angelic and less devilish than those in the dominant culture has always been a motivation for cultural creativity. For one example, Robert Owen's New Lanark, Scotland industrial community included one of the first early childhood education programs he called the "Institute for the Formation of Character" in 1816.

In *Too Much of a Good Thing* I point out that large-group communal childcare in children's houses was practiced for generations in Hutterite Colonies in Europe, then as Yaacov Ovid reports, when they immigrated to North America the Hutterites created extended-family suites of rooms in large-group residences, giving up their children's houses for small-group childcare. Israeli Kibbutzim also eventually gave up their children's houses for childcare in favor of nuclear-family apartments. Daniel Gavron writes about kibbutznics that, "For the most part, it was the children who themselves grew up in children's houses who demanded the change." (Gavron, 2000, p. 7; for a discussion of the theory and experience of communal childcare in the kibbutz, called "Society of Children," see pp. 163-7; and for childcare in Hutterite Colonies see Oved, p. 347)

Large-group communal childcare can work well when there are competent, early-childcare-educated people to manage it. At least once at Twin Oaks we had an Early Childhood Education instructor from the local community college give our childcare providers an abbreviated course on the subject, including myself. Yet at TO and EW there was always tension between the ideal of all parents collectively managing their children's program, and that of professional childcare with parents less-involved or un-involved as in the classic kibbutzim.

When the controversies resulted in parents and children leaving, making room for new children born to members or new families accepted into the community, it became tedious and even onerous for those remaining to have to again revisit all the issues that had been earlier resolved now questioned by the new parents. It was also recognized that the larger the number of children and parents that were involved, the more the child program meetings were distracted by debates about theories and preferences on everything from immunizations to appropriate toys, such that the most important topic of sharing information on each child's development never seemed to get presented and discussed. I was on the TO Child Board for one term, and thought about proposing a separate meeting specifically for talking about each individual child, yet as important as was the topic, I could not bring myself to propose yet another regular meeting.

Ingrid Komar wrote about the issue of the long and difficult Monday morning Child Program meetings in her 1989 book, *Living the Dream*, relating conversations during the summer of 1979. …

> "We're supposed to be getting together to exchange ideas and share impressions about the kids, their problems and potentials for furthering their development," Kelsey reminded

> everybody one sunny morning. “But we never seem to get around to that. I have a really hard time getting up the energy to keep coming.” …
>
> One morning there was a lengthy discussion regarding children’s vitamins. …
>
> A visiting mother from East Wind asked, “Don’t you ever get tired of having so many people involved with small decisions about your child? Don’t you ever get tired of raising kids this way?” (Komar, pp. 239-41)
>
> [Note: This was Stephanie EW on a visit to Twin Oaks. The previous year, 1978, she was the second woman permitted to have a child born at EW. The first woman given permission left EW before giving birth as she did not want her child growing up in EW’s culture of alcohol users and abusers, as her family had a history of alcohol abuse.]

At one TO Child Program Monday morning meeting that I attended Sarah said, “The children are doing fine; it is the adults that are stressed out.” We generally agreed with Sarah’s statement.

The communal childcare process at both TO and EW was that a new-born and mother would stay together through the weaning period, and then the child would begin sleeping with the other children in the children’s house, and be cared for by the “professional” childcare teams, with the children divided into three main cohorts by age. Freddie Ann at Twin Oaks and Dakini at East Wind both left the community when their respective Child Boards wanted them to begin leaving their children to sleep in the children’s building at night. Some mothers did so, many did not, and nearly all of them eventually left community.

Kat Kinkade wrote about her frustration with TO’s failure to create and maintain a large-group communal childcare program over the long term. In *Is It Utopia Yet?* Kat writes, “The fact is that the communal child rearing experiment, as originally conceived, has failed, and we are in the process of figuring out what to put in its place.” Notice that term: “communal child.”

The theory of the Communal Child was also the foundation of East Wind’s childcare program, and it failed at EW as surely as it did at TO. The situations were different, yet generally what happened was, the parents disregarded Child Program agreements whenever they disagreed with them. The problem in the communal childcare program at EW was new members not keeping Child Program agreements, and at TO it was long-term members ignoring agreements. With regard to children at TO, for twenty years the community was essentially doing one thing while it talked about doing something else, and at EW it may have been about ten years. This was a form of dissent or protest against our own “agreements” that was tolerated because addressing it would mean questioning our assumptions about what communal childcare meant, and no one wanted us all to devolve into nuclear families. We were aware that the Israeli kibbutz movements were privatizing partly as a result of giving up communal childcare in favor of family apartments, and we did not want to follow the kibbutzim down that slippery-slope of privatization.

The child program controversy at Twin Oaks became so difficult that in 1988 the community invited the group-process consultant Caroline Estes of Alpha Farm to help guide the community toward resolution. For about a month she held large-group, small-group, and one-on-one meetings of TO members. As a result of the Child Program Process upholding the agreements or rules about children

sleeping together in the children's building a majority of nights per week, rather than always in the adult's group residences, the community failed to accurately assess the situation and to responsibly evolve the community's fundamental ideals, since within about seven more years of unresolved controversy Twin Oaks finally ended its large-group communal childcare program in favor of parents arranging care for their own children in small groups. I call these small groups of unrelated people sharing childcare "cofamilies," in this case being small communities nested within a larger community.

The communities could not have come up with the cofamily, small-group childcare idea itself because no one could see any alternative to large-group communal childcare other than nuclear families. As the Child Program Process did not resolve the essential issue, things had to get to a breaking point or melt-down, with the communities finally giving up on large-group communal childcare and letting the parents sort out on their own what to do instead; the result being what I call "nested cofamilies."

Both communities gave up their large-group communal childcare programs at about the same time, soon after *Is It Utopia Yet?* was printed. (Kinkade, 1994, p. 146)

East Wind copied Twin Oaks' plan of refusing children until it could build a suitable childcare facility. I believe this resulted in a greater problem for EW than the problem that Kat talked about in *Is It Utopia Yet?* Kat wrote about East Wind that, …

> it had to accept many people of dubious quality, people who, as their numbers increased, made the community unpleasant for the more idealistic and productive members, many of whom left. … I saw a larger and larger part of the community sitting around on the front steps of the dining hall … and heard them ridicule as "workaholics" the people who made the money and kept the organization together. … There was gross exploitation, but in reverse. The proletariat was exploiting the managers. … I saw a direct connection between the communal system and the poverty and shiftlessness. This was exactly the kind of result that skeptics had predicted from the first. … the mess that East Wind had become was my doing. I had removed the incentive of personal gain through work, and behold, the people chose not to work! … I knew that this phenomenon was not happening at Twin Oaks, and the difference seemed to be that Twin Oaks selected its members with some care. East Wind was wide open. That, too, was my doing. (Kinkade, 1994, pp. 88-9)

Having been an East Wind member at the time that Kat wrote about in the preceding paragraph, my view is a little different. First thing to consider is that one problem at East Wind was that the community rarely provided sufficient new-member orientation meetings.

The second thing to consider is that what may have been the greater problem was the commitment to the Communal Child theory on the part of EW's leadership of mostly early members, and their willingness to make EW refugees of women who did not follow the program.

I think it started when East Wind forced out the first woman member who got pregnant, Jai, February 1976. Jai was a bright and cheery, well liked full member, so it took some doing to revoke her membership. We were told that Jai was "in the labor hole," meaning that she had not kept up with the work requirement. In other cases, we helped members with that problem through counseling and job

placement, and Jai may have responded to that, or maybe the Labor Manager tried and she did not increase her work contribution to the standard minimum.

We had just moved into our new kitchen-dining building, named "Rockbottom," vacating the small, two-bedroom original farm house, named Re'im after an Israeli kibbutz that one of our early members, Robbie, had visited for a year. (Note: Re'im is one of the kibbutzim destroyed in the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack.) We could have given those two bedrooms to two women with children and let Re'im become our first adult-child residence. Instead, we turned the nicest room in the community, the Re'im living room with its glorious south-facing windows and fireplace, into the Music Room, because of course TO had a Music Room and EW thought it had to have one as well.

The Re'im Music Room became the alcohol and smoking room, avoided by most of the "more idealistic and productive members" as Kat described the more committed members. I thought that the partiers, including myself, would drink and smoke just as well outdoors around a campfire; we did not need to give up the best indoor space we had. The point is, East Wind could have accommodated two mothers and their children the spring of 1976 had our leaders wanted to.

When Robbie began displaying a serious psychiatric problem, wasting food in the kitchen, our medical team had two men stay with him day and night until we could get an appointment with a psychiatrist to give him appropriate medications for his bi-polar disorder. I thought that was great; how we took care of a member. Yet we failed to give a pregnant woman any support.

Forcing Jai to leave meant that her partner, our only plumber at the time, also left. Worse; refusing one pregnant woman set a precedent, with several women over at least the next several years also being served what I call the EW "Child Board Ultimatum," which was, get an abortion or leave. Some women did both; got an abortion then left East Wind. No other New Age community would treat its pregnant women like that; only East Wind.

It was absurdly counterproductive for our leaders to argue that 36 working adults could not support a couple pregnant women and their children, even though the community was less than two years old, especially given that we had a two-bedroom house available. It was a long-standing, repeated betrayal of the ideal of gender partnership, which ultimately prevented East Wind from maintaining the Communal Child vision.

My partner was given the Child Board Ultimatum in 1983 and we choose to leave. I walked away from eight years of work to help build East Wind with only $50, the usual leaving consolation. When we were forced out of EW, several other members also left in protest, including a man who had been a university professor, and a woman who was our only nurse. This kind of loss of EW's "more idealistic and productive members" were, I think, a bigger problem than Kat's concerns about having a poor new-member selection process, yet Kat and others committed to the Communal Child theory would never be able to see it, as they would seemingly sacrifice any member who challenged their theory. By about 1990 all of East Wind's power structure, the people who had shaped East Wind during its first decade, were gone.

It seemed to me that those who were most committed to the Communal Child theory felt that all the rest of the community, its businesses, agricultural programs, labor system, buildings, even our holidays, all existed to support the Communal Child theory; that great, shinning ideal of raising

children to adulthood in a non-competitive, peaceful, egalitarian culture. This ideal of creating a new human culture was not unique to our communities, as it had been suggested by Robert Owen and others in various historic communal societies.

The EW power structure never actually tried to sell members on the Communal Child theory as explanation for EW's large-group communal childcare program, and it was not even talked about outside of the childcare program, so most members knew nothing about it. I do not know what if any orientation to the Communal Child theory was given to new parents and child care-givers by the Child Board, yet in some way they had to explain their policy of young children sleeping away from their parents every night. When it became clear that new parents would not abide by program policies, those who had been committed to the Communal Child theory no longer had reason to stay at East Wind.

I knew why EW forced out Jai since I knew that EW was copying TO history and its Communal Child theory, and although I disapproved, I could not challenge the decision, for several reasons. First, I was a provisional member, and I assumed that if I challenged the community in Jai's case I probably would have been refused full membership by EW's power structure, the people who attended practically every Community Meeting, with opinions on nearly every issue. Of course, we wanted all members to engage in our self-governance, yet only a few did all the time.

Second, being only 20 years old, with Kat being at least two decades older and very articulate, I knew I had little chance of changing anybody's mind.

Third, I did not at that time have an alternative childcare plan to offer. Much later I thought of the idea of having two childcare programs in at least two different buildings. Re'im could be the less idealistic childcare space, and those who had childcare experience could consult with and advise those parents, while they waited to have their own children in a future Degania-like communal-child building. That, however, was impractical, since EW was seriously influenced by the *Walden Two* and the kibbutz models of one large centralized community with only one childcare program and one childcare building per community. Although the kibbutz movements were beginning to privatize and revert to nuclear family households when Kat visited, she did not talk about any of that when she returned.

The fourth reason I did not challenge East Wind's power structure's commitment to the Communal Child theory was because I agreed with all their other policies, and everything else we were doing, other than our Childcare Program. I admired our leaders and learned a lot from them. I felt that the best thing to do was to wait until they all left, then I would initiate a community process to decide with what to replace the Communal Child Theory.

Sometime in 1993 Twin Oaks children began sleeping each night with their parents in at least three different adult-child residences (EW only had one). In the fall '93 FEC Delegate Assembly meeting minutes (p. 20) Valerie TO reported that "Community [child] care now happens only from 12:00 to 6:00 pm." That short comment speaks volumes. It says that after twenty years of children sleeping away from their parents at night, there was no longer night-long childcare available to parents, nor morning childcare. It says that the theory of the Communal Child had been abandoned and now parents had full responsibility for how their children were raised. How long the community would continue to offer noon-to-supper childcare is not indicated, yet it says that parents had to now

organize childcare on their own, essentially replacing large-group communal childcare with small-group communal childcare arranged around each child by a cofamily of mostly unrelated people.

At Twin Oaks Degania was mostly abandoned, and for a while was actually made into a residence for a nuclear family with three children; a sad story of surrendering to practicality, and backsliding from large-group Communal Child idealism. Degania was later used for daycare and a pre-school as parents became responsible for organizing their own childcare, which is what East Wind could have begun doing with Re'im, which would have illustrated for all to see that people come first and ideology second. Instead, I think that forcing pregnant women out of EW resulted not only in the idealistic and productive members of the community leaving, yet also in much negativity among those who stayed. Eventually, all of the people dedicated to the Communal Child ideal also left. By driving out pregnant women, the result was that East Wind Community ended up driving out many of its productive members and idealistic leaders, Then, too, those children who were born in community tended to be taken out of community by their parents either when they were weaned or when they began school. It is no wonder that members questioned why they should support any children at all.

The adult-to-child ratio at East Wind was ten-to-one, as reported in the spring 1996 East Wind newsletter *Windfall*, and fourteen-to-one (70 adults & 5 children) in the 2016 FIC Directory. (see graphic below). Twin Oaks maintains a limit of 5-to-1 adults-to-children, while nationally in the U.S. the ratio is about 4-to-1. Of course, two thousand years of Catholic monasticism proves that communal societies do not need to support children at all, as long as they can recruit young adults. With few or no children the party culture is unhindered, and that may be sufficient for attracting new recruits.

While I was a member, East Wind always had twice as many men as women. I thought that was precisely because of our unfriendly, misguided Child Program policies. Essentially, by accommodating partiers and refusing pregnant women we encouraged men to have affairs with alcohol rather than relationships with women, which can be problematic for any culture.

The East Wind Community Legislation Policy (LegisPol) document records the February 2011 Community Meeting decision called "Approval for Pregnancy," sponsored by a woman member. The legislation states, "All pregnancies … must be approved by the community by a simple majority vote … only Full Members may participate … Community will only budget money for approved pregnancies and only the amount approved by the community vote." (EWC LegisPol, Legislation Policy 85.0 Approval for Pregnancy)

No longer does East Wind serve pregnant women the Child Board Ultimatum of get an abortion or leave, now it leaves it up to a Community Meeting vote on whether or not to financially support a pregnancy and child. Although the process is different, refusing the unborn child rather than the pregnant woman, the result is basically the same. Presumably, the policy was changed because the EW Bylaws does not mention pregnancy as a valid reason for revoking a woman's membership.

With no official push to leave EWC, pregnant women sometimes stay as long as they can. Using their monthly allowances, which all members receive, a couple can cover some of their pregnancy costs, to delay their departure from East Wind. At least one couple birthed their child, with the aid of a midwife, in the rundown shack just up the gravel road from EWC, tacking cardboard to the walls and ceiling for insulation, scavenged from the large shipping boxes thrown out by EW's businesses.

Twin Oaks & East Wind Population Statistics from Communities Directories

Communities Directory	TO Adults	TO % Women	TO Children	TO % Children	* TO ratio of Child:Adults	EW Adults	EW % Women	EW Children	EW % Children	EW ratio of Child:Adults
ψ 2016	100		15	15%	1:6.7	70		5	7%	1:14.0
‡ 2007	85	50%	15	18%	1:5.7	60	40%	11	18%	1:5.5
2000	73	50%	17	23%	1:4.3	64	38%	11	17%	1:5.8
ψ 1995	85	55%	14	17%	1:6.1	55	36%	5	9%	1:11.0
‡ 1990	75		15	20%	1:5.0	40		8	20%	1:5.0
1979	TO population of 75 includes children					60	1st child born at EW in 1978			

Notes:

The 2010 Directory only recorded total populations.

East Wind has always had a lower percent of women in its population than Twin Oaks.

‡ The percent of children in the total populations were the same for TO and EW in 1990 and 2007.

ψ The Child:Adult Ratios were substantially different for TO and EW only in 1995 and 2016.

* The TO Child:Adult Ratio limit set by the community is 1:5.

The U.S. population Child:Adult Ratio is typically about 1:4.

We had done an amazing thing with creating a million-dollar nutbutter business at East Wind, and we might have continued to build and grow on that foundation. A lot of us were seriously committed to our ideals, and we were in it for the long haul. Yet the people with those skills left, and it could take years to replace them. Recently, Raven of CommuneLifeBlog has referred to East Wind as a "working-class community," while many of us have long considered Twin Oaks to be a more intellectual, middle-class community. Yet Kat herself had a working-class background, while the books she wrote qualifies her as an intellectual. There have been frictions between the two communities, yet they carry on.

EW members have managed to keep their nutbutter business producing and generating income, enabling the community to focus upon expanding its agricultural and forestry programs for increased self-reliance; which is certainly a good thing. It seems that the community could at some point decide to grow again whenever it wants to. It has one adult-child residence now and a focus on small-group childcare, so it would seem that a perfectly good communal-society design has been achieved, and may someday result in growth, although growth may no longer be an EW goal.

The demise of large-group communal childcare at Twin Oaks and East Wind ended both of their centralized, large-group communal childcare programs. What has developed in its place is the pattern of each parent or set of parents being responsible for coordinating childcare and education for their own child or children. Parents still get community resources of money and time, presumably giving labor credits to others to help with their child's or children's care, and it seems that all is well, as even after the change from childcare buildings to adult-child residences members still call their child care system "communal." Over the past thirty years it seems that the small-group, communal childcare processes have settled into what the present writer calls "communal parent-care" in which the community helps parents manage the issues involved in taking care of their children.

The ideal of the "Communal Child" was one of those "glittering; shining ideas" that Kat and others had to give up in frustration and disappointment, along with the ideals of radical equality and of

variable credits. That the communities carry on suggests the importance of gender-partnership, cofamilies, and the vacation-credit labor system as successes of our experimental communities.

We know that communitarian enthusiasm comes in waves, and that there will surely be another one. Having the Federation communities as living models for those inspired by the communal ideal today and in the future is and will be a great assist. I suspect that many people are considering our present time to be the calm before the storm, if we are not already in the gathering storm, and I know that many of us are working as best we can to be ready and available when people need to learn what we know about non-monetary, communal society.

Social Anarchy in Egalitarian Community: Non-Compliance versus Social Pressure

In 2013 I posted to the email lists of former members and friends of Twin Oaks (TO) and of East Wind (EW) communities a discussion topic on the informal methods of change within these egalitarian communities. The topic inspired several comments revealing a method of change sometimes practiced in our communities outside of the formal procedures of governance or "group process," as described in the community's bylaws and agreements on decision-making processes. This discussion addresses an important method of change in our communities, which I'll describe in the context of various community issues.

Non-compliance with the decisions made at Community Meeting, versus social pressure to honor community decisions, are informal, cultural processes that factor into the political processes of egalitarian governance.

Non-compliance is often practiced when people do not accept agreements made by community process. When such non-participation effectively nullifies a particular agreement, eventually the community gets around to creating a new agreement, and trying that, or else the dissenters leave.

Essentially, the degree to which non-compliance is practiced shows a lack of sufficient communication among people during the making of decisions, typically as a result of a subset of members refusing to attend meetings, which seem to them to be dominated by a minority-group power structure. However, where it is the case that it is not possible to know the consequences of a decision until it is put into effect, then assessing the degree of non-compliance with a decision after the fact becomes a realistic method for testing what people really want, after the fact of a formal vote at a regular Community Meeting. Setting sunset clauses or making temporary decisions is the accepted method for avoiding compliance issues, yet such provisions are not always included.

Setting a testing phase on a decision is an essential part of self-governance, during which people can further discuss the issues involved in the light of additional information or changed circumstances. For this reason, decision-making needs to be open and malleable, rather than written in stone, because in human society, especially those with continual membership turn-over, the primary constant is change.

In a society with any degree of anarchistic tendencies, in which people are free to avoid meetings, are free to decline to read and to respond with written personal-position papers, and are free to refuse to respond to surveys or to participate in interviews or other discussions, then monitoring the amount of

non-compliance with regard to any particular decision which has been made by those who do engage in the formal decision-making process, may be considered an essential method of community governance. Non-compliance therefore becomes an important aspect of self-governance, and the manner and degree to which it is practiced provides a measure of the community's practice of social anarchy in the design and maintenance of their society.

A point to be inserted is that what is being discussed here is essentially the procedures which have been used in tribal governance through tens-of-thousands of years of our pre-history, to today in tribal cultures around the world. From ancient Roman historians writing about the politics of Germanic tribes, to early commentaries by Europeans upon observing Native American tribal politics, we know that the informal processes of non-compliance and of social pressure are extra-political or informal-political procedures which people have always used. Today we can see these same informal processes very clearly at work in the decision-making processes of egalitarian communities, alongside the community's formal procedures for self-governance.

Jon Twin Oaks posted …

> Interesting issue, Allen. I think it depends on the issue in question. An example might be the change in media acceptance. TV watching was banned when I joined in 1988, but by '98/'99 video use in personal rooms was occasionally happening (i.e., non-compliance with video policy). I don't know what the policy or practice is now, yet I believe laptop computers in people's rooms are allowed for surfing the Internet and for viewing video content. So, non-compliance takes a long time to move the community, it seems. Times change, and norms are often arbitrary; you have to draw a line somewhere. Years later, that line may have changed with a changing membership.

In the case of members who wanted access to network broadcast television at East Wind, in a trailer in the woods where anti-TV members could avoid it, the issue was brought to Community Meeting once a year for three or four consecutive years until the support for the idea overcame the resistance.

A good example of non-compliance regards the "variable-credit labor system." For almost ten years our communities experimented with valuing different types of work at different amounts of labor credits, depending upon how desirable or onerous the work was considered to be. This labor policy started at Walden House in Washington, D.C., then was taken by Kat to Twin Oaks, and later to East Wind. At first, the labor system required that all members had to participate in the variable-credit system. When more and more people refused to have the value of their work manipulated by the variable-credit system, the system was changed so that people could opt out of variable credits, by declaring that they wanted all their labor assigned at one-credit-per-hour, with done-labor recorded the same way. Gradually, more and more members became willing to trade-off the supposed equality of variable-credits in favor of a simpler labor system. It was in early 1975 that variable credits were ended at EW, while at TO it was a gradual fading away from 1975 to '77. Rob TO explains that, "By '77, the labor assigners did not need to think about variable credits. … This change was mostly due to obsolescence and disinterest, I think." Disinterest, in particular, results in non-compliance.

Another example is our communal childcare policies. It was non-compliance with program policies that gradually ended the communal childcare systems at both Twin Oaks and East Wind. Both communities had separate childcare buildings, in which a "controlled environment" was created specifically for nurturing the growth and development of young children. It was the non-compliance

of parents who failed to fully support their communal childcare programs that eventually ended them, yet that took a very long time.

At Twin Oaks, Kat wrote that the successful communal childcare program really only lasted a few months after it began in 1973, due to forms of non-compliance with program policies and due to withdrawal from the program by women and their partners leaving the community with their children. It wasn't until 1979 when the community completed the Social Planning Process that the community decided upon child-adult residences to replace the childcare building.

Still, it was not until Degania, the childcare building at Twin Oaks, was abandoned sometime in the mid-1990s, after the third child-adult residence was built in accordance with the ideas that came out of Social Planning, that the practice of large-group communal childcare completely ended, having lasted in some form at Twin Oaks about 20 years. It was then that the large-group communal childcare theory was replaced with what I call “cofamily,” or small-group communal childcare organized by parents for their own children. At East Wind the theory and practice of communal childcare lasted about 14 years, culminating with the construction of the building now called Liliput, using the design of Twin Oaks 's child-adult residences. This residence was built over several years, and was finished in the early or mid-1990s.

Through the entire history of experimentation with large-group communal childcare at Twin Oaks and East Wind, there were different levels of compliance with the agreements made formally in Child Program meetings. People will typically not wait until they receive official sanction before doing what they want to do. While the resulting subversion of the formal decision-making process may take a long time before a change in policy is officially accepted by the community, the practice of non-compliance becomes the effective agent of change.

The primary example of non-compliance at Twin Oaks, eventually resulting in the end of one of the most important intentions of the founding of the community, was the lack of commitment on the part of parents to the large-group communal childcare program, despite the social pressure to preserve it.

Jon TO carries on the thought …

> The community will respond to non-compliance usually through social pressure, if the type of non-compliance is serious. If [the non-compliance] is no more than ‘standing aside’ in decision making, then [there would be no social pressure], in fact I'd say that [standing aside] is accepted. If [the non-compliance] is a violation of a social norm, such as stealing, not working, or violation of personal space/privacy, then yes [social pressure is applied to end the non-compliance].
>
> In the years before I became a member but was oft guesting at Twin Oaks I would ask, ‘why do people leave?’ And the answer I got repeatedly was, ‘the [communal] child care program.’ It was a bridge too far. And it was especially easy and desirable to non-comply with this system for parents, because it was their kid.
>
> A similar community to ours, Svanholm, in Denmark, practices a different form of decision making. They use a form of consensus, which I think, effectively reduces non-compliance in decision-making by arriving at a higher quality decision. The key to this is they require persons who would ‘block’ or veto a decision to work outside the community meeting with

> proponents, those of opposing points of view, to attempt to reach some sort of agreement. Persons are not allowed to 'block' without taking this step. Anyway, interesting subject.

Keenan TO responds to Jon's comment about consensus process as used in other intentional communities, by explaining the participatory nature of the decision-making process used at Twin Oaks, called the "planner-manager" form of self-governance, although he does not state this name for the process. Note that East Wind no longer uses the planner-manager form of governance, since the community changed to majority-rule, democratic process in 1983.

I'll leave it to Keenan to explain how the planner-manager system has worked at Twin Oaks. He also presents another example of non-compliance, which suggests comparisons with the COVID pandemic response, and concludes with thoughts about the legitimacy of governmental processes, suggesting that the integrity of the planner-manager system has sufficiently proven itself at Twin Oaks such that it could be applied on larger levels. Along with Keenan, I would also like to see this, yet it is hard for me to imagine it in my lifetime!

> Twin Oaks doesn't have any police nor any genuine punishment other than expulsion. Consequently, every rule and norm must be obeyed voluntarily. People who are in decision-making roles know that every decision must be compelling or people will not comply. There is minimal non-compliance because there are minimal very bad decisions made. The ever-present possibility of a rule being simply ignored keeps decision makers in check.
>
> Recently there was a (probable) outbreak of scabies, [and] the health team took a lot of power into their hands; they canceled a visitor group, forbid any new guests from arriving, mandated that all communal clothes be washed, and mandated a protocol where everyone treated twice for scabies. Many people felt this was excessive and there were a couple of people who were outspokenly non-compliant, but mainly people grumbled and complied. So, coordinated and extreme action can be taken by the community, but a strong rationale must be given. The non-compliers were given a different protocol that involved staying away from people and wearing plastic bags.
>
> Mainly, our decision-making works through being open and legitimate, and our systems function because people willingly abide by legitimate decisions, even when they are to an individual's detriment. I believe that this is the way government can and should operate. It works on a small community-wide level, possibly it could work on a much larger scale. It's certainly an experiment worth trying. With current technology making transparency and information distribution available, this sort of national experiment in governing is possible, but I'm not going to hold my breath.

Thank you, Keenan, for pointing out that the TO Planners (i.e., Twin Oaks Community's board-of-directors) and other decision-makers do consider the possibility that the rules being made may actually be ignored if they do not adequately respect peoples' needs and desires. Obviously, this can happen in any form of governance, although as Jon stated, a greater emphasis is provided in the group-process model called consensus decision-making process for the additional discussion and deliberation which can result in better-quality decisions which will be less likely to be ignored or subjected to non-compliance.

The trade-off, of course, is that the requirement for consensus procedures, including the necessity of providing for everyone's quality input, has the draw-back of the large amount of time required, which can have detrimental effects. An example would be the very involved, year-long Twin Oaks' Social Planning Process, after which some members commented that it was a case of group-process gone overboard. The very involved process of discussing the design of residences as semi-autonomous "small-living-groups" was felt by some to be a case of nearly talking a good idea to death.

In general, the planner-manager decision-making process delegates most decisions to individuals who are responsible for particular areas of the community, called Managers, while the Planners coordinate community-wide issues and appeals of managerial decisions. The Planners also carry on both short-term and long-range planning processes, designing methods for involving the members such as via the "Trade-Off Game" for economic planning and budgeting, and via periodic large-issue processes such as for Social Planning. The planner-manager governance processes can be more time-efficient than consensus process as long as the decisions made are accepted by the membership. It is only when decisions are not accepted after being instituted that the planner-manager system then needs to put more time into discussion and deliberation after the fact, which occasionally results in a successful appeal and reversal of a managerial or community decision.

Now, take the situation at East Wind where upon a member becoming pregnant, the community votes on whether to pay for and otherwise support the unborn child. If the unborn child loses the vote, then the mother's choice is to get an abortion or leave the community. This process takes place even though East Wind replaced its large-group communal childcare program with a Twin Oaks-like small-group childcare program or cofamily, and even though the community could provide for more children if it wanted to.

Although it may seem unlikely that a pregnant woman or an expecting couple would ever defy an East Wind Community Meeting decision refusing their child, it could happen if the woman or couple in question received a sufficient amount of support from other members for doing so, as a counter to the inevitable social pressure intending to maintain the status quo.

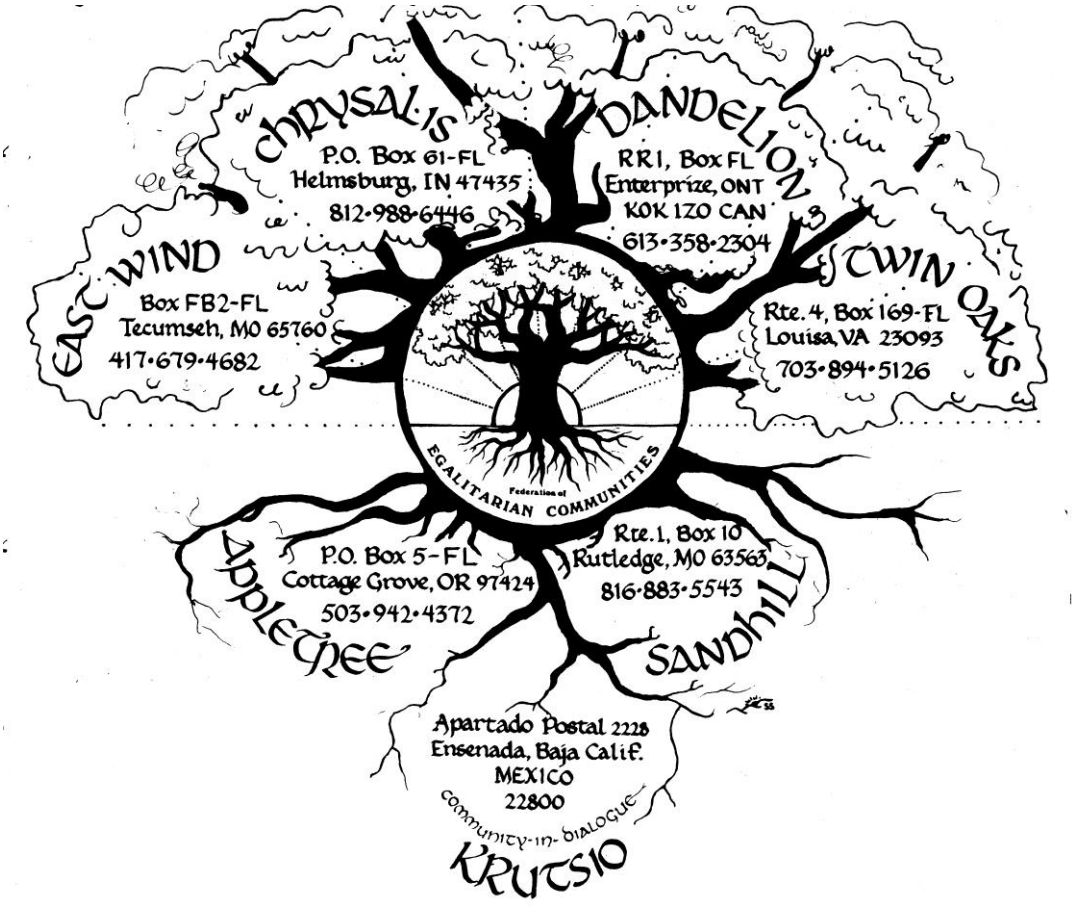
If a pregnant woman, who was a full-member, lost a community vote on the question of whether her child was to be accepted by the community, she could decide to defy Community Meeting using civil disobedience in her non-compliance with the requirement that she either leave or abort her child. There would certainly be some degree of social pressure applied to cause her to comply with the Community Meeting vote, depending upon her and her partner's social standing in the community, including what work they do for the community and who are their supporters and other factors such as the state of community finances and what housing they occupy. Yet their defiance could attract supporters from among the members to the point that enough people sided with them in asserting their right to remain as full members despite their loss of the Community Meeting vote.

The simplest resolution would be for East Wind to adopt the same policy Twin Oaks has of almost always accepting children born to members. From what I can tell, the reason why this has not happened at East Wind is because of a different interest group in the community, namely the alcohol partiers. I suspect that some part of the reason that East Wind does not build more child-adult residences is because children tend to stifle the party atmosphere.

Social anarchy in egalitarian community is an essential component of self-governance which

individual members do generally keep in mind, yet which is rarely discussed openly and in depth. While one sub-group within a community may effectively monopolize the formal decision-making process along with the informal processes of social pressure, anarchistic practices of non-compliance with and of defiance against the decisions made through the formal group process can and have resulted in effective challenges to the policies of the dominant sub-group or power structure.

For these reasons, the social-political dynamics involved in anarchistic non-compliance within egalitarian intentional community needs to be more widely discussed and understood, as non-compliance will be applied by disaffected and disenfranchised members in cases where they feel that the formal decision-making process inadequately respects their needs or wants. The informal processes of non-compliance and of social pressure are particularly likely to be used in communities like East Wind which use majority-rule, democratic governance.



Federation Membership

As explained by the behavioral psychologists Deborah Altus of Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas, and Edward Morris of the University of Kansas, Lawrence, the theory underlying Twin Oaks and other egalitarian communities originates with the philosophy that human behavior is explainable by laws-of-nature, which are discernible to humans like all other natural phenomena. This behaviorist

concept is called "naturalism," which in philosophy rejects the supernatural, and which in theology rejects revelation in favor of the observation of natural processes. (Altus & Morris, pp. 270-1)

If it is true that “human behavior is explainable by laws-of-nature,” then it ought to be possible to identify what are those laws, yet it appears that neither Skinner nor Altus nor Morris nor anyone else has ever identified what they may be. One may guess that the Golden Rule or reciprocity ethic might be one. How about the evidence that large-group communal childcare is biased against children while small-group communal childcare is best for children and parents? Perhaps the most useful application of behaviorist theory is behavioral economics, which explains that rather than decisions being influenced by rational thought, human behavior is primarily influenced by cognitive, emotional, and social factors, and is therefore often unpredictable, and often open to manipulation.

People are continually looking for ways to create community within a dominant culture of competition, and that can be stated with certainty, given the number of attempts made around the world all through the history of at least Western Civilization. (See: *The Intentioneer’s Bible* at www.Intentioneers.net)

With over sixty communities inspired by or influenced by Skinner's fictional utopia *Walden Two,* or by Twin Oaks itself, or by the networking organization which grew around Twin Oaks called the Federation of Egalitarian Communities, Twin Oaks now has more communities associated with it than did either of the two largest 19th century secular communal movements, called Owenite-Socialist and Fourierist-Associationist. However, where the Walden Two/Twin Oaks/Federation communities have not surpassed either the Owenite or the Associationist community movements is in the total number of people involved at their maximum populations. While Twin Oaks has never had more than 100 adult members and East Wind maybe a little over 70, at their high-points the largest secular 19th century communities had adult populations of: New Harmony 800 (1825-27); Brook Farm 150 (1841-47); North American Phalanx 85 (1843-54); and Modern Times 200 (1851-63). (Oved, pp. 113, 149, 157, 313)

Following is a list of sixty-four communities affiliated with *Walden Two/*Twin Oaks/FEC. The first three groups are not counted since they did not progress beyond the planning stage, while the rest had or have various degrees of association with Twin Oaks. Seven of the groups listed are or were in countries other than the U.S. Many of the 1970s communities listed can be found in early issues of the newsletter *Leaves of Twin Oaks*, while the ten listings with no founding dates are mentioned in the 2005 book *Living Walden Two* by Hilke Kuhlmann, with most of those mentioned in Tim Miller’s 2015 *The Encyclopedic Guide to American Intentional Communities*. Two branches of Twin Oaks, Merion (1972) and Tupelo (1975) are counted individually since although they were part of Twin Oaks (the main branch was named “Juniper”) they maintained separate memberships until they were merged into Twin Oaks/Juniper.

Hilke Kuhlmann counts in *Living Walden Two* three attempted communities in the first round of Walden Two enthusiasm by groups comprised of students and non-students where B. F. Skinner taught psychology, in Minneapolis, MN and New Haven, CT from 1948 to 1955, which "were short-lived and remained largely in the planning phase." (Kuhlmann, p. 43)

The second round of groups include two that were directly inspired by *Walden Two* plus four that grew out of the 1966 conference at Waldenwoods Conference Center in Heartland, Michigan

involving academicians and activists. Three of the conference groups still exist: Twin Oaks Community, VA (1967); Lake Village, MI (1971); Sunflower House, KS (1972) a student housing co-op. Although Los Horcones (1972, Sonora, Mexico) was not part of the 1966 conference its inspiration is primarily from *Walden Two*. (Kuhlmann, pp. 48-51, 55, 69-70)

The third round includes twenty-six groups generally inspired by Twin Oaks, including: Headlands, Ontario (1971); Merion (1972, a TO Branch); North Mountain, VA (1972); East Wind, first in MA then moving to MO (1973); Woody Hill Co-op, WA (1973); Strange Farm, VA (1973); Sandhill, MO (1974); Hidden Springs, no location (1974); Aloe, NC (1974); Cedarwood, VA (1974); Appletree, CO then moving to OR (1974); Crabapple, England (1975); Dandelion, Ontario, Canada (1975); Fantasy Farm, British Columbia, Canada (1975); Tupelo (TO Branch, 1975); Julian Woods, PA (1975, later joined School of Living Land Trust). The following ten groups are listed by Hilke Kuhlmann, with founding dates taken from Timmothy Miller's *The Encyclopedic Guide to American Intentional Communities*: Neverland, CA (1969); East Street Gallery, IA (1969); Community Design, CO & MD; Morningside, AL (1974?); Larchwood, PA; Yarrow, NY; Big Island Creek Folks, WV; Twin Pines, MN; Nasalam, WA (1969); and Jubilee, TX (merged with EW 1975). (Kuhlmann, pp. 115, 117-119, 139; Miller, 2015, pp. 134, 296, 305, 308)

The following thirty-two groups may be considered the fourth round of communities with these generally inspired by the Federation of Egalitarian Communities: Krutsio, Baja California, Mexico (1976); Ganas, NY (1978); Another Place/Mettanokit Village, NH (1978); Chrysalis, IN (1980); Community Evolving/Blackberry, CA (1988); Veiled Cliffs, OH (1990); Tekiah, VA (1991); Acorn, VA (1993); Terra Nova, MO (1995); Common Threads, MA (1995), Jolly Ranchers, WA (1995); Skyhouse, MO (1995); Beacon Hill House/Emma Goldman Finishing School, (1996); Aspenwood/Pinon Ecovillage, NM (1999); Meadow Dance, MA (2000); Walnut Street Co-op, OR (2000); Shantagani, MD, at Heathcote which is part of the School of Living Land Trust (2001); Oran Mor, MO (2003); Open Circle, Etlan, VA (2004); Woodfolk, VA (2007); Still Water/Possibility Alliance, MO (2008); Baltimore Free Farm, MD (2010); Rainforest Lab, WA (2011); Living Energy Farm, VA (2012); The Mothership, OR (2013); Sapling/Mimosa, VA (2014); A Commune in D.C. (AC*DC)/Compersia (2016); Quercus, VA (2015); Cambia, VA (2015); East Brook, NY (2015); Le Manoir, Quebec, Canada (2015).

As of 2018 when I did the research for this list, about 44% of these 64 groups were still in existence. While many of the communities listed above failed, other communities not listed have expressed interest in FEC membership and are named in Federation Assembly minutes, although some of those never attended a Federation Assembly. The current, fourth wave of *Walden* Two/Twin Oaks/egalitarian communities is ongoing and growing, with the newest groups not listed here. Among these is Alpha Farm in Oregon, founded in 1971 and long associated with the FEC, yet never qualifying for membership until recently. (See: www.theFEC.org and www.EgalitarianCommunities.org)

In addition to the sixty-four communal groups above sharing commonly-owned property, many intentional communities sharing privately-owned property have also formed over the decades from inspiration by Twin Oaks. Two communities forming as a result of people meeting at the Twin Oaks Communities Conferences are: Springtree (VA, 1971), and Shannon Farm (VA, 1973). Another community near Twin Oaks is the non-communal Baker Branch, originally a branch of The Farm in Tennessee (c. 1973) and now a form of land trust community of mostly former TO members.

Of the many poignant stories of utopia lost is the case of Dandelion Community in Ontario. Founded in 1975 as a cooperative corporation, Dandelion became one of the original Federation groups. The community built three new buildings and installed a concrete swimming pool, making tinnery and later hammocks for income. After the founders and other long-term members left, Dandelion went through a series of changes. By the year 2000 Federation membership had been dropped, and one person was renting out the rooms. While Dandelion remained a cooperative on paper, the community was privatized when one person began to benefit from the rental income, showing that an American communal group, such as Alpha Farm, incorporated as a cooperative corporation rather than a 501(d) corporation, could suffer a similar fate.

Religious and Apostolic Tax Exemption

A success of Twin Oaks Community, which is important to much of the non-monastic communal tradition in the United States, is the winning of its Tax Court case in 1981, which made legal its form of communal economy.

It was in the Revenue Act of 1936 that the U.S. Congress created the 501(d) section of the tax code for communal, "religious and apostolic associations and corporations, such as the House of David and the Shakers." (IRS, chapter 27, p. 2)

The House of David (1903-present) was one of the celibate, communal, Adventist communities influenced by Joanna Southcott (1750-1814) of early 19th century England. With nearly a thousand members at its peak, the House of David's primary industry was an amusement park in Benton Harbor, Michigan, for which members invented the sugar cone for ice-cream, and began a touring exhibition baseball team combining athleticism with comedy, along with the sensation of players having long hair and beards as worn by all the male community members. Their athleticism and comedy sensation was later copied by the Harlem Globetrotters basketball team, sans long hair and beards. As with the Shakers, the House of David may still exist, although with only a few members. (Fogarty, pp. xiv, 96-7, 227 n.240; Miller, 2015, p. 214)

For many years Twin Oaks filed its taxes under the 501(d) section of the tax code even though the community had not formally obtained that IRS designation. While at East Wind, Kat Kinkade had gotten Internal Revenue Code 501(d) status for the community by about 1975, yet Twin Oaks did not want to wake a sleeping giant so it quietly went on filing annual tax returns as it had always done, without requesting the official 501(d) status from the IRS. In 1977 the IRS sent to Twin Oaks Community a letter saying that you are not exempt from taxes, and would you please pay $250,000 in back taxes plus interest due? (Kinkade, 1994, pp. 281-2)

The primary problem that the IRS identified was the "vow of poverty." Catholic monasteries and similar religious societies incorporate under the 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status, which requires a vow-of-poverty, meaning that when people join they must donate all of their assets and income to the monastery and not get any of it back, nor have any claim to the communal assets when they leave. Although Twin Oaks, East Wind, and similar communities do share their income, they do not require that members donate all of their assets upon joining. They may keep pre-owned assets out of the community, or loan them to the community and receive them back when they leave if they are not used up or destroyed in the mean time. However, any income those assets may generate while the owner is a member is agreed to be donated to the community.

The IRS argued that when the 501(d) tax status was created in 1936 the U.S. Congress meant to include a "vow of poverty" clause. Not agreeing with this argument, Twin Oaks appealed the problematic IRS ruling to Tax Court, and four years later won the case!

The U.S. Tax Court held that, …

> The terms 'common treasury' or 'community treasury,' as used in section 501(d), I.R.C. 1954, refer to the communal operation of the religious or apostolic organization itself and do not impose a requirement that all members who join such religious or apostolic organizations must take a vow of poverty and irrevocably contribute all of their property to the religious or apostolic organization. (Twin Oaks Community, Inc., versus Commissioner of Internal Revenue, 87th Tax Court, No.71, Docket No. 26160-82, Filed 12-3-86; See: IRS Internal Revenue Manual 7.25.23 Religious and Apostolic Associations.
>
> [Note: this document has been removed from the IRS website, although it is available on other websites. In the place of this document the IRS has posted a proposed revised version marked with the comment, "This document is not an official pronouncement of the law or the position of the Service and cannot be used, cited, or relied upon as such … since changes may have occurred after the (2-1-2024) revision date … Exempt Organizations Technical Guide TG 23: Religious and Apostolic Associations - IRC Section 501(d). See: www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p5627.pdf]

This ruling made it possible for Twin Oaks and many other communal societies, especially Christian groups, to maintain their communal structures under the 501(d) tax-exempt status. The ruling also clarified that 501(d) organizations do not have to pay the social security tax, although according to Diana Leafe Christian they may if desired. Nor do 501(d) groups pay other employer withholding taxes such as for health insurance and the unemployment tax, since they do not pay wages or salaries for labor. In order to receive the 501(d) tax-exempt status a community must submit to the IRS a statement of religious belief, it must have a bank account into which all community-owned business income is deposited, and members must claim their share of the total community income on their annual tax returns as dividends. If the individual, pro-rata shares of community income are less than the taxable income level, then neither the community nor its members pay any income tax. (Christian, 2003, p. 197)

In an article in the *1990/91 Directory of Intentional Communities* titled "Options for Incorporation of Intentional Communities," Albert Bates stated that, "501(d) corporations have no restrictions on their political activity." Diana Leafe Christian says the same in her 2003 book, *Creating a Life Together.* 501(d) organizations, "can lobby, support candidates, and publish 'propaganda.' … Upon dissolution, assets of the corporation may be divided among the members as far as federal law is concerned.

However, state law generally requires that assets remaining after payment of liabilities should be given to another not-for-profit corporation." (Bates & Butcher, p. 101; Christian, 2003, p. 197)

Further, in a letter sent to the present author in October, 1992 Albert Bates wrote, …

> I have discussed the pro rata share more with the IRS guys and am now convinced that there is no reason why a pro rata share should ever have to exceed the taxation threshold. Not only is there a maintenance deduction for everyone's personal expenses, but also you can set aside contingency savings for capital expenses (business startups, training, buildings and land, age and infirmity) which come out before reaching net earnings. For those willing to be religious (or humanistic) and run a common enterprise, a 501(d) seems to be quite a windfall. So why don't more people apply? Who knows? (Bates, 1992, October)

In a letter to Kat Kinkade of Twin Oaks, with a copy sent to the present author, dated December, 1992, Albert Bates wrote, "What makes me think humanists can be a 501(d) … Unless I come up with a better precedent I withdraw any conclusion that mere humanists can form a 501(d). Never mind." (Bates, 1992, December)

The 20th century communal societies Shiloh and Synanon incorporated under the 501(c)(3) status, then lost everything to pay their back taxes plus interest to the IRS, due to having outside work income which they erroneously believed was tax-exempt. In case Twin Oaks was to lose their Tax Court case the community accumulated a large savings account between 1977 and 1981.

The "revenue ruling" granted Twin Oaks Community its 501(d) status effective January 1, 1981. Along with the interest earned on the funds set aside in its tax-case savings account, Twin Oaks was able to build a large new kitchen-dining complex (KDC) which it named "Zhankoye" after a Jewish communal society in what is now Ukraine, plus a new ten-room visitor building, and was able to make many up-grades of its older buildings in The Court Yard.

It was a form of validation of the Twin Oaks communal economic system for the community to win its Tax Court case, and an exciting time for members to be able to make such substantial improvements to their standard-of-living. I and my partner and child joined TO just as the main TO kitchen was moving from the original farm house in the Court Yard, named Llano, to the big new kitchen-dining-complex (KDC) named Zhankoye (ZK). It was a wonderful time to live at Twin Oaks, with our communalism validated by the IRS!

The Christian intentional communities movement of the 1980s was going through the same kind of general loss of energy, members, and activities as was the multi-faith and secular wings of the movement at the time, as the Baby Boom generation moved on from cultural experimentation in community to education, career, and family, preferably in that order. In *Fire, Salt, and Peace*, David Janzen writes of the "anticommunity eighties" as a time when social forces of the dominant culture were destroying intentional communities. (Janzen, pp. 11, 174, 177)

> Idealism died in the younger generation, and pursuit of lucrative careers took over as a dominant motivation. Ronald Reagan entered the White House and the glorification of self-interest seemed to sweep all before it. … communities found themselves in the belly of a beast whose stomach acids seemed to dissolve all support for a life of sacrifice to the common good. (Janzen, p. 174)

David Janzen explains this "beast" by quoting from Martin Buber's 1949 book, *Paths in Utopia*, where Buber states that, "the era of advanced Capitalism has broken down the structure of society. … Capitalism wants to deal only with individuals, and the modern State aids and abets it by progressively dispossessing groups of their autonomy." (Martin Buber, p. 139, quoted in Janzen, p. 191)

> More overt persecution was not absent, however. Government surveillance and dirty tricks dogged activist communities like Sojourners and Jubilee Partners. The Reagan administration used the Internal Revenue Service to investigate nonprofit organizations, including many community groups. New Creation Fellowship in Newton, Kansas, and Fellowship of Hope in Elkhart, Indiana, both found their Apostolic Order [i.e., 501(d)] status disallowed. … In the face of persecution by bureaucracy, these fellowships dissolved their common purse arrangements and reorganized as congregations with a more informal understanding of mutual aid. Their exhaustion and loss of identity over these events, however, had a traumatic impact for years to follow. (Janzen, p. 174)

New Creation and Hope were probably denied tax-exempt status because too much of their community income was from members holding jobs outside of the community and contributing their wages and salaries to the group, while too little of the community income was from community-owned businesses. Perhaps like Shiloh and Synanon, New Creation and Hope may have had practically no community-business income, so their IRS denial may not actually be evidence of persecution. Regardless, Christians must always claim to be persecuted, whether they are or not, because in the Book of 2nd Timothy in the New Testament it is written, “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” Denial of requests for favorable tax status would therefore necessarily be considered evidence of persecution, just as surely is the greeting “Happy Holidays” evidence of a War on Christmas. (2nd Timothy 3:12)

The IRS has never stated their limit for the ratio of outside-job income to community-owned business income, which will result in the denial of a community's application for 501(d) status. One may assume that communal groups must derive 100% of their income from community-owned businesses with none from outside jobs in order to qualify for 501(d) tax-exempt status. For this reason, income from jobs cannot be mixed in the same account with income from community-owned businesses. The following is from the IRS Internal Revenue Manual about 501(d) organizations.

> An organization supported by wages earned by members from outside employment, rather than from internally operated businesses, is not described in IRC 501(d). (IRS 2-23-1999 Handbook 7.8.2, section 27.7, Digest of Published Rulings and Procedures Relating to Religious and Apostolic Associations, paragraph 4)

> An organization that is substantially dependent on wages earned by some of its members from outside employment does not qualify for exemption under IRC 501(d). (IRS 2-23-1999 Handbook 7.8.2, section 27.7, Digest of Published Rulings and Procedures Relating to Religious and Apostolic Associations, paragraph 5)

Notice in both of the two quotes above that the IRS uses the term “outside” to refer to the off-premises, private-property, patriarchal, competitive, exploitive, dominant culture.

A proposed revision of IRC section 501(d) rewrites the two paragraphs above, removing the word "outside," and the words "some of its members." The proposed 2024 revisions do not state a requirement that 100% of 501(d) organization income must come from community-owned business, yet the final version might, as that seems to be where it is going.

IRS technical guide (TG 23 2/1/2024), states in part 2 Exemption Requirements, section C Requirement 3: Engage in Business for Member Common Benefit, "1. … organizations qualifying for exemption under Section 501(d) must be supported by internally operated businesses in which all the members have an individual interest. 2. An organization supported by member's independently earned wages rather than by an internally operated business does not qualify for exemption under Section 501(d)." (IRS 2/1/2024, p. 6)

Since new communal groups especially will not likely have community businesses to support themselves, a way to accommodate wages and salaries is needed. The financial design that best responds to the IRS requirement for the 501(d) tax-exempt status involves keeping the two primary income sources separate, in two different communal bank accounts. These two income sources are: community-owned business income, which after allowable deductions is prorated and reported on the "Dividends" line item on each individual member's tax return; and salaries or wages from jobs outside of the community, the income from which is kept in either individual member accounts, or in one or more unincorporated partnership account(s), and reported on the "Wages and Salaries" line item on the member's individual tax return.

There are precedents for intentional communities with more than one legal structure. Diana Leafe Christian presents several such communities, three of them being Occidental Arts and Ecology Center, Los Angeles Eco-Village, and Mariposa Grove. Occidental Arts and Ecology Center (OAEC) in California has a limited liability company (LLC) for holding the land, called Sowing Circle LLC, and a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization for its educational programs called Occidental Arts and Ecology Center which itself owns nothing, although it leases most of the LLC land. Los Angeles Eco-Village (LAEV) has two 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organizations, one a limited-equity housing cooperative which leases parcels of land to co-ops, and the other a community land trust (CLT) owning the land beneath the limited-equity co-ops and other housing. Some members own and some rent their apartments. Like Better Housing Colorado which owns five properties in Boulder and Denver, LAEV's tax-exempt organization is the parent organization for its housing cooperatives. Mariposa Grove Community in Oakland, California uses a condominium association to own its buildings while the land is owned by the Northern California Community Land Trust leasing limited-equity housing cooperatives. The community founder owns a large house with tenants renting small apartments in it, and all community residents share community spaces. There are also regional community land trusts (RCLTs) organized as 501(c)(3) educational organizations, which hold land in more than one state, with each having its own 501(c)(2) title-holding corporation. These are: the School of Living RCLT; and the Ozark RCLT. (Christian, 2016, pp. 52-53)

Herb Goldstein of The School of Living inspired the idea of the two-communal-treasuries solution to the problem of sharing wages and salaries in 501(d) organizations, in his application of it to 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organizations, typically used by Catholic monastic societies and other religious and educational organizations. In the 1970s and '80s the evangelical Shiloh Youth Revival Centers used a 501(c)(3) corporation for receiving income from jobs held by members. The IRS ruled that those jobs were unrelated to Shiloh's exempt purpose, and required that back taxes plus interest be paid, which forced the dissolution of the entire Shiloh community network. In a letter to the present author, April 10 of 1989, Goldstein explained that if Shiloh had formed a separate for-profit corporation to operate its businesses, allowable deductions would have created minimal tax liabilities. (Butcher, pp. 8, 15 n.9)

The unofficial IRS technical guide (TG 23 2/1/2024) states in part 3 Other Considerations, section C 501(d) Organizations Do Not Have Unrelated Business Income that, “The concept of unrelated trade or business has nothing to do with a Section 501(d) organization because the organization is granted its exemption not because of its function, but because of its form. It is totally unrestricted in function. Section 501(d) specifically allows the organizations it exempts to engage in business. Once it meets the exemption requirements, it is unlimited as to its functioning business or combination of businesses. It is definitionally impossible for a Section 501(d) organization to have unrelated trade or business income.” (IRS, p. 9)

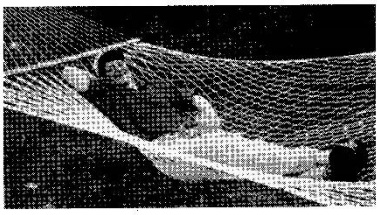
In communal societies using the two-communal-treasuries financial structure, not mixing the two types of income, community and personal, in one common treasury yet keeping them separate, the IRS' concern about wage income versus business income resulting in a bill for unpaid taxes is avoided.

Even though the IRS lost in Tax Court to Twin Oaks, and whether or not the two-communal-treasuries financial strategy may satisfy IRS requirements, David Janzen may still be correct in saying that the IRS is biased against communal societies, and not just religious communes yet the secular variety as well. In 1987 East Wind Community sent a letter to the Richmond, Virginia law firm used by Twin Oaks, Mays and Valentine, asking about its idea of letting members make money in the community's businesses for members who wish to leave and relocate, called the "Earned Leaving Fund" (ELF). In the reply the lawyer suggested setting up a separate bank account in the name of the person(s) accumulating funds for leaving, refraining from accessing them until their membership is ended, just like with assets previously owned by members before they joined which are not loaned to the communal society.

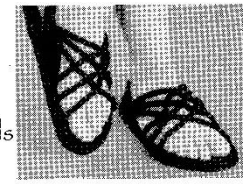
> I think that it would be helpful if in your minutes or other records you would set out the prospective budget needs of a departing member in order to justify … [the amount] necessary to re-establish the departing member in a new environment outside the Community. This would involve putting anticipated price tags on the needs which justify the Earned Leaving Fund, such as advance rent, utility deposits, and the like.
>
> On the advisability of seeking a private ruling from the Internal Revenue Service on this question, I believe that it would be time consuming with no reasonable assurance of success. I believe it likely that the Internal Revenue Service would refuse to rule on the question and the exercise would serve only to put a spotlight on [the Community]. I believe that the Internal Revenue Service still maintains an internal bias against 501(d) organizations which do not have a vow of poverty. In saying this, however, I must point out that I have not made any inquiries or seen any IRS publications which support my feelings that a bias exists. (Collins Denny, III, Mays & Valentine, Richmond, Virginia, September 4, 1987)

That the two Christian communities, New Creation Fellowship and Fellowship of Hope were denied 501(d) determination suggests the need for making information about two-communal-treasuries for supporting communal economies more accessible and more widely understood. In the past, information about two-communal-treasuries was conveyed to the Federation of Egalitarian Community’s Point-A Project for the support of its work in sparking the creation of new egalitarian communal societies in East Coast cities, and was shared with a later initiative rising in the Northwest for the development of new communal communities.

(Disclaimer: The present author is not a tax lawyer, and is not offering legal advice, only an option for further research, consideration, and experimentation by communal societies.)



Twin Oaks Hammocks and East Wind Utopian Sandals



Federation Community Businesses

Twin Oaks Tofu

Federation Community Businesses

Top Left: Aloe/Dandelion's Tinnery

Top Right: East Wind's Nutbutter

Bottom: Acorn, TO, and other groups' Seeds

The Threat of Another IRS-versus-Twin Oaks Community Tax Court Case

The current hostility of the national administration toward anything left of Dark Enlightenment autocracy suggests the vulnerability in Twin Oaks' and other Federation communities' chosen or preferred identity as "secular communities." As presented in the preceding section, it appears that the IRS is revising its regulations with regard to the 501(d) tax-exempt status, which could result in groups that do not meet the IRS requirement of "religious or apostolic" losing their tax-exempt status. Once the IRS finalizes its new regulations it may go on the hunt for secular communal groups. And since the IRS lost an earlier Tax Court case against Twin Oaks, the community may again be in mortal jeopardy.

Download the IRS' *Exempt Organizations Technical Guide TG 23: Religious and Apostolic Associations – IRC Section 501(d)* document here: www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p5627.pdf

TG 23 states on its cover page, "This document is not an official pronouncement of the law or the position of the Service and cannot be used, cited, or relied upon as such. …" However, the IRS removed its earlier document on the 501(d) status from its website, suggesting that the TG 23 version

or some similar revision is likely to be in the process of becoming an "official pronouncement." (IRS 2-1-2024)

Communal groups could periodically search the IRS website to watch for the finalizing of TG 23 or other 501(d) documents, and expect that when the changes are official that the IRS will soon be knocking.

Of the several changes in the TG 23 "not an official" IRS document is part 5 Examination Techniques. These provisions provide for revocation of an organization's tax-exempt status if it is found to be in violation of IRS requirements. Section A.2. Request the Determination File, paragraph 4 states: "Determine in the review of the [original] application, whether: a. The organization is organized for the purpose of operating a religious or apostolic community with a common or community treasury." Section B Examination Procedures states under B.4. Concluding the Examination, paragraph 2: "Prepare a report of examination revoking the organization: a. If the organization lacks a religious or apostolic character. Note: Consult Counsel because the "religious or apostolic character" is not defined by law." (IRS 2-1-2024)

In the past it has been assumed that because the IRS does not define religion practically any statement of belief suffices. However, note in the previous section "Religious and Apostolic Tax Exemption" where Albert Bates comments about humanism saying, "I withdraw any conclusion that mere humanists can form a 501(d). Never mind." Clearly, a half-century of saying that Federation communities are "secular communities" gives the IRS exactly what it needs to revoke the communities' tax-exempt 501(d) status. (Bates, 1992, December)

Assuming that IRS 501(d) regulations are going to become more strict, one option is to abandon 501(d) and re-incorporate as a legal cooperative, whether on the state level or as an IRS Subchapter T organization. Since Alpha Farm uses the cooperative corporation legal form for its communal society, it may be possible for other communities to do the same, although Alpha Farm is a much smaller group, and every state has different cooperative corporation enabling legislation. However, it may not be possible for a tax-exempt organization using the 501(d) status to change to a legal cooperative, since privatization is much simpler for a cooperative than for a 501(d) tax-exempt organization.

The other possible solution is for Twin Oaks and other communities to explicitly adopt some form of religious identity, and begin to develop a set of community functions that will justify the perception on the part of the IRS and others that a religious organization exists.

TG 23 states in part 2 Exemption Requirements, section A. Requirement 1: Possess a Religious or Apostolic Character, paragraph 5, "The facts from some administrative rulings and court opinions suggest the following factors support a favorable religious determination: a. The organizational documents create a religious organization. b. The members of the organization are members of a church or church group. c. The organization or its members follow religious tenets or canon law." (IRS 2-1-2024)

Among these organizational documents needing to be written to "create a religious organization" is the community bylaws. How to amend bylaws to create a religious organization is open to discussion, yet it is probably easier than amending the articles of incorporation, When East Wind attempted to obtain bulk third-class rates from the U.S. Postal Service in 1979 it was denied, with the USPS saying

that, “the organization does not meet the … primary purpose test as religious. … The bylaws submitted by the East Wind Community makes no mention of any religious worship or religious activities.” (USPS, p. 1)

TG 23 also states in part 4 Recognition of Exemption and Return Requirements, section A. Application for Recognition, paragraph 3a. “Are you organized for the purpose of operating a communal religious community where members live a communal life following your tenets and teachings?” (IRS 2-1-2024)

Kat Kinkade wrote East Wind Community’s statement of religious belief herself about 1975 and sent it off to the IRS, without discussing it with the community. When Twin Oaks later applied for 501(d) status about 1978 one member [name withheld] adapted Kat’s statement and sent that off to the IRS, again without discussing it with the community. I do not think that such a process would be advisable today, as TG 23 suggests that it is likely to require more than a one-page statement of religious belief.

The proposed changes in the IRS 501(d) tax status may be delayed due to the 2025 reduction in IRS staffing, with the IRS Enforcement Division recently losing 30% of its staff. This may give the Federation communities more time to consider their options.

If Twin Oaks and other Federation communities are to seriously consider adopting a religious orientation to preserve their communal cultures, the question is what would it look like?

As gender-equality is a primary value of the Federation communities, that could become the basis of a religion for our egalitarian-culture. However, since the term “egalitarian” is a big word and can be obscure in meaning, using the term “partnership” instead is a better idea, as it is more meaningful to most people, and has half the number of syllables. Additionally, the term “partnership” can mean many different things, such as involving more than two people; involving liberal and conservative partners; and involving a human-and-nature partnership, all of which could be included in the term “ecopartnership.”

A partnership religion does not have to refer only to communal organizations. Any kind of community could adopt the “partnership” identity, in the same way that any community can adopt the “ecovillage” identity. And of course, being a religion, any individual can profess to believe in partnership spirituality.

I have been developing the concept of partnership spirituality for about the last decade, and although I do not yet have a website by that name, I do have a couple papers about it on my website. One is a 4-page document titled “Partnership Spirituality,” and the other is 74 pages titled “Intentioneering Ecopartnership Culture.” These papers are free for download as PDF documents from my website: See: Intentioneers.net

Another source of ideas about partnership culture is developed by Riane Eisler in her concept of "partnerism," which replaces hierarchies of domination with equitable partnerships. Eisler has several books on the subject, with a large following. See: partnerism.org

With regard to childcare, I think that most people have as much trouble thinking of anything different from the nuclear family as we did, yet now I believe that the Federation communities have, inadvertently, developed a successful alternative in what I call the "cofamily," and this can be advocated, with or without association with a partnership religion.

David Brooks wrote an article in *The Atlantic*, March 2020, titled "The Nuclear Family Was A Mistake," saying of the devolution of the American family from the large extended family clan of the past to the small, detached, nuclear family of today that, …

> We're likely living through the most rapid change in family structures in human history. The causes are economic, cultural, and institutional all at once. ... Social conservatives insist that we can bring the nuclear family back. But the conditions that made for stable nuclear families in the 1950s are never returning. ... Conservative ideas have not caught up with this reality ... and so for decades things have been falling apart. … People who grow up in a nuclear family tend to have a more individualistic mind-set than people who grow up in a multigenerational extended clan. (Brooks, pp. 6,7,8,9)

David Brooks wrote exactly what many of us have felt since the 1960s, expressing why many of us sought community, and why many people are seeking community today, and so the Federation could develop an outreach campaign explaining the idea of affinity groups formed around children or each child focusing upon their needs. Brooks uses the terms "chosen family" and "forged family" to mean mostly non-related people living together, while I suggest the term "cofamily."

Contemporary religious organizations having a gender-equal partnership orientation include most neo-pagan groups, the best documented being the Reclaiming Tradition co-founded by Starhawk. Unitarian Universalism also respects women and men equally, and for many years Twin Oaks members considered the community to be a UU Fellowship. Money and labor was contributed to Twin Oaks by the UU church in Charlottesville, VA for the building of the Ta'chai Living Room for TO's UU Fellowship meeting room. (Kinkade, 1987, "UUF," p. 53)

I do not recommend FEC association with Unitarian Universalism, even though in the past UUs have joined FEC communities, and the local UU church has aided Twin Oaks. While UUs appreciate the idea of community, a church community and an intentional community are different things.

Consider that the UU Association (UUA) has declined in membership 13% from when it was formed in 1961 to 2024, according to a Google search, while the U.S. population increased 85%. Both the UUA and the FEC have failed to grow, and so association is unlikely to help either any more now than before.

I think of UUism as being an anachronism, losing relevance even though the 1,700-year Unitarian opposition to Trinitarian Christianity (since the 325 C.E. Council of Nicaea) remains important, and the Universalist idea that no religion can refuse access to Heaven by non-believers is still needed.

Those are valid concerns; however, I believe that the most important concerns today are gender equality or partnership, and human-and-nature harmony, symbiosis, or partnership.

While neo-paganism affirms gender equality and harmony with nature, its focus is very scattered with many other beliefs involved.

Co-creating a partnership religion is a far better idea for affirming FEC values than trying to fit into any existing religion that may be sympathetic to partnership. The Federation communities use alternative forms of governance and economics, and it would be best to create an alternative belief system as well, for affirming and advancing all forms of partnership culture.

Partnership spirituality merges revelation and mysticism, which are usually considered to be mutually exclusive. This is an alternative to patriarchal culture and religion, which I call a "Binarian monotheism" as opposed to Christian "Trinitarian monotheism." Merging the patriarchal Abrahamic faiths of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Baha'i, and others with women's spirituality, and holding both of these opposing beliefs in mind, is considered to result in the mental discomfort or tension of cognitive dissonance, yet reconciling opposites is precisely what is meant in the political concept of bi-partisanship, requiring people to look for and act on compromises, involving the fusion of differing opinions. That may be a difficult concept upon which to base a religion, yet it offers many philosophical and theological possibilities.

Historically, there have been times when patriarchal and matriarchal or matristic beliefs co-existed in different forms of partnership spirituality, in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. I'll summarize both.

In the Old Testament, patriarchal Judaism excluded women from many rituals, and in response Hebrew women adopted the Canaanite Goddess Asherah, creating alters dedicated to her in their homes, often including goddess figurines. Traditional places of Asherah worship were in hilltop groves, as was the case with many goddess religions. Trees were sacred to Asherah, and she was often represented by intricately carved wooden poles called "Asherim." According to Raphael Patai in *The Hebrew Goddess* for almost two-thirds of the time that the Temple of Solomon stood in Jerusalem a statue of Asherah was present, "and her worship was a part of the legitimate religion approved and led by the king, the court, and the priesthood and opposed by only a few prophetic voices crying out against it at relatively long intervals." (Patai, p. 50)

Among those prophetic voices was that of Jeremiah, who called Asherah worship an "abomination." Yet Hebrew men and women both tended to believe and want their god Yahweh or Jehovah to have a wife, consort, or partner, so they adopted the indigenous Canaanite Asherah.

The story of how Asherah worship was ended is long and convoluted, involving the Jerusalem Temple, out-of-favor Levite priests in Shiloh, a "pious fraud" of a supposed discovery of a long-lost scroll in the Temple containing Moses' words which included ancient laws assembled to benefit the priests, which became the Book of Deuteronomy in the Old Testament. This book was then presented

to an illiterate Jewish king by priests who told him that because the scroll says that there could be only one God and only one place of his worship, at the Jerusalem Temple, then he had to destroy all the places of Asherah worship. The Jewish people were then to send annual offerings to the Jerusalem Temple to fund its upkeep and expansion, which happened to begin soon after the invention of coinage in Lydia in Asia Minor. The subsequent accumulation of wealth in the Temple later resulted in the Jewish wars with Rome, the deaths of a million Jews, and the great Jewish diaspora. This is the story of Jewish priests replacing a divine partnership of Jehovah and Asherah with a patriarchal God, thereby sanctioning a strategy for material-wealth accumulation that eventually brought a great tragedy upon the Jewish people. Parts of this story are in the Old Testament books of Kings, Jeremiah and Deuteronomy, yet few people know about it and its true significance. I relate this story in detail in my paper, *Intentioneering Ecopartnership Culture* available as a free PDF download at Intentioneers.net.

In the New Testament and other writings of the period there are references to women being active and even leaders in the Early Christian Church. In the collection of Gnostic texts called the Nag Hammadi Library [Note: "Nag" may be pronounced "naj"] *The Dialogue of the Savior* states that Mary Magdalene "understood everything," with other sources saying that she became a religious teacher and spiritual leader. Although the later patriarchal, orthodox Catholic Church branded her as a demon-possessed prostitute, apochryphal and Gnostic texts indicate that she and Jesus were partners who inspired the rise of the Early Christian Church. (Meyer, p. 308)

Good sources on Goddess religions are Marija Gimbutas *The Living Goddesses* and Merlin Stone *When God Was A Woman*. A good source on women leaders in not only the Early Christian Church yet also later European spiritual movements often branded as heretical by the Catholic Church is *Women Preachers and Prophets through Two Millennia of Christianity* edited by Beverly Kienzle and Pamela Walker.

Patriarchal Christianity inspired and led by St. Paul and later codified at the 325 C.E. Council of Nicaea affirmed the silencing and subjugation of women and women's spirituality, as Jewish culture had done centuries earlier. This story I also relate in detail in my paper, *Intentioneering Ecopartnership Culture*, again, available as a free PDF download at Intentioneers.net.

Consider, however, that Bart Ehrman in *Lost Christianities* suggests that later writers may have inserted anti-women comments into Paul's letters which became books in the New Testament, since Paul honors women in the Early Church, listing several in Romans 16:1-15. Ehrman writes, "… there are good reasons for thinking Paul did not write the passage about women being silent in (1st Corinthians) chapter 14. … How could Paul condone a practice (women speaking in church) in chapter 11 that he condemns in chapter 14?" (Ehrman, p. 38)

The first sentence in the Gnostic text *The Wisdom of Jesus Christ* in the Nag Hammadi Library states that there were seven women disciples of Jesus, along with his twelve male disciples. We know the names of four of them. One was Salome who is said in *The Infancy Gospels of Jesus* to have been present during or soon after Jesus' birth, possibly as a midwife, and she is mentioned in Mark 15:40

and 16:1. Those passages also name three Marys who, although a little confusing, seem to be the three Marys mentioned in the Gnostic *Gospel of Philip*. “Three women always walked with the master: Mary his mother, (Mary his) sister, and Mary of Magdala, who is called his companion.” (Meyer, p. 167)

A partnership religion can shine a light on the Old and New Testament traditions that forsake women, and affirm instead the parts of those texts which evidence women’s teaching and leadership histories, while affirming women’s equal and extraordinary cultural creativity and co-creation today.

Another part of the idea of partnership religion is to further the syncretic nature of Christianity as it incorporated aspects of not only Judaism yet also many different pagan beliefs, including: Persian dualism; Egyptian, Greco-Roman, Germanic, Norse, Slavic and other religious traditions. As the historian Will Durant wrote in *The History of Civilization*, “Christianity was the last great creation of the pagan world.” (Durant, vol. 3, p. 595)

The partnership spirituality graphic merges the iconography of patriarchal and of matristic or partnership cultures, combining both the Christian cross and Jewish Star of David with the crescent moon from women’s spirituality. In the center is the Taoist Taijitu or ying-yang symbol suggesting a “partnership” of Eastern and Western cultures, along with the idea of two opposing concepts or forces ever swirling around each other, exchanging energy, with each having a seed of the other within it. I also use the Taijitu in politics (i.e., left & right), and in economics (i.e., private & common property). For the School of Intentioneering there are three primary aspects of culture: governance, economics, and religion. Partnership, then, is more than a religious concept, it can be the basis of an entire culture of egalitarianism.

It is certainly a sea change to begin to think about the Federation communities as religious organizations, yet as Alex TO wrote in her *Communities* article “Are Federation Communities Aspiritual?” (see Appendix E) many of the values we hold are generally or can be seen as religious or spiritual in different faith traditions. There is no reason why the communities today should not embrace religion and spirituality as means of creating our preferred culture of gender partnership, similar to how we use governance and economics to evidence and support egalitarian culture. It may even be seen that partnership religion is the missing element in egalitarian culture needed for the growth of the movement, and likely its very survival.

Partnership Spirituality

Gender equality is not respected in cultures with a patriarchal religion, like Judaism and Christianity. Gender-neutral terms like "Spirit" affirm one-ness by subsuming differences. "Partnership" affirms differences as desired in gender equality.

God is Love, Goddess is Wisdom

God & Gaia, Heaven & Earth

The syncretizing or fusion of Judaism, Stoicism, Dualism, and Paganism which created Christianity can add women's spirituality, by merging the Triple Goddess of Maiden (waxing moon), Mother (full moon), and Elder (waning moon), with the Christian Trinity as: Maiden with Son (Mary the Magdalene w/ Jesus the Christ), Mother Mary with the Holy Spirit, and Elder with the Father (Greek Sophia w/ God, Jewish-Hebrew Shekinah w/ Yahweh, and Canaanite Asherah w/ El).

Immanence
Goddess; **Partnership**
MYSTICAL
Virtue and grace come through the physical bodies of the universe, the stars and planets, then to our own hearts and minds as an innate aspect of life.

L♁VE through intuition creates social and ecological awareness

REVELATORY
Virtue and grace come from the external source of energies and forces of the universe to our hearts and minds, as an acquired aspect of life.

WISDOM through reason creates self-awareness

Transcendence
God; Patriarchy

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Partnership of East & West cultures as Taoist Taijitu with Western spirituality.

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Appendix A: EW statement submitted to IRS sometime prior to 1978

EAST WIND COMMUNITY

Statement of Religious Beliefs - Theory and Practice

"Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which co possessed was cos own, but they held everything in common . . . and distribution was made to each as any had need."
From the Acts of the Apostles

* * * * * *

There is one God, the Eternal, the Only Being; God is One with the Universe; nothing else exists but God.

There is one Holy Book, the Sacred Manuscript of Nature, the only Scripture which can enlighten the reader.

There is one Religion, the unswerving progress toward the ideal, which fulfils the life's purpose of every soul.

There is one Law, the Law of Love, which can be observed by a selfless conscience together with a sense of awakening justice.

There is one Moral Principle, the love which springs forth from self-control for the sake of others, and blooms in deeds of kindness.

There is one Object of Praise, the beauty which uplifts the heart of its worshipper through all aspects from the seen to the unseen.

There is one Truth, the true knowledge of our being, within and without, which is the essence of all wisdom.

There is one Path, the annihilation of the false ego in the real, which raises the mortal to immortality and in which resides all perfection.

* * * * * *

Because we are one with God, we are also one with each other. Whatever harms any of us harms us all. Whatever lowers one of us lowers us all. Therefore we endeavor:

To eliminate hierarchy in relationships between people

To practice nonviolence in our personal, interpersonal and political lives;

To respect and preserve the natural environment for the use of our own and other species, now and in the future.

To confront and defeat classism, racism, ageism, patriarchy, and other forms of oppression, both in ourselves and in other people.

To practice community of property, sharing all that we are and have and can produce with one another.

Appendix B: TO statement submitted to IRS sometime prior to 1981

Twin Oaks Community

Statement of Religious Beliefs - Theory and Practice

[above is Unitarian Universalist symbol]

Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things co possessed was cos own, but they held everything in common and distribution was made to each as any had need.

From the Acts of the Apostles

*****

The day will come when the idea of community will spread through the world. Gather together those of you who share high ideals. Pool your resources. Buy land in the country. A simple life will bring you inner freedom. Harmony with nature will bring you happiness and peace of mind known to few city dwellers. In the company of other seekers of the truth it will be easier for you to live in meditation and collective unity.

Parmahansa Yogananda -- Indian Mystic

*****

There is a common unity or spirit which dwells in all of us. This unity of spirit is best cultivated in a communal environment. All people are one in this spirit and equal in their rights to share its bounty.

All life is worthy of respect. We believe in the Gandhian principle of Satyagraha (non-violence) and value gentle and caring relations between people.

In living communally, every act and every moment of life can be seen as coming to harmony with ourselves, our community and the holy earth we dwell upon.

The environment around us is our greatest teacher. Therefore responsible steward-ship and conscious maintenance of that environment is our devotional service.

There is an inter-relatedness between all beings. What affects one, affects all. Therefore the path to true harmony is the reinforcement of group consciousness. The one moral principle we espouse is the love which springs forth from self-control for the sake of others and blooms in deeds of kindness.

Our one object of praise is our evolutionary education in the sacred art of living together.

Because we share a planetary unity we are one with each other. Whatever harms any of us harms us all. Therefore we endeavor:

To eliminate hierarchy in relationships between people.
To practice non-violence in our personal, interpersonal and political lives.
To respect and preserve the natural environment for the use of our own and other species, now and in the future.
To eliminate classism, racism, ageism, patriarchy and other forms of oppression, both in ourselves and in other people.
To practice community of property, sharing all that we are and have and can produce with one another.

Appendix C: Acorn Community Statement of Spirituality

Acorn Community

ACORN

Mineral, Virginia

Statement of Spirituality

We believe in the existence of a spiritual force that is part of all life and that this unity of spirit is best cultivated in a communal environment.

We believe in the equality of all people and strive to eliminate hierarchy in relationships between individuals and between groups of people. To implement this value we practice community of property, sharing all that we are and have and can produce equally with one another.

We are pacifists and, just as we reject violence in our lives, we embrace gentle and caring relations between all beings. What affects one ultimately affects all.

We see the path to true harmony coming through the reinforcement of group consciousness. The moral principle that binds us is the love which springs forth from self-control for the sake of others and grows in acts of love.

Our environment reminds us of the cycles and balance in the natural universe and our conscious stewardship of the land is part of our devotional service.

Appendix D: Federation of Egalitarian Communities 1976 Poster

FEDERATION UPDATE

by Alex McGee

Are Federation Communities Aspiritual?

The Federation of Egalitarian Communities (FEC) is a mutual-support organization for a number of egalitarian, income-sharing communities in North America, including Twin Oaks, East Wind, Tekiah, Ganas, Krutsio, Acorn, Blackberry, Sandhill Farm, and Veiled Cliffs.

CHATTING WITH A RECENT VISITOR, I learned that he had lived in two spiritual communities and still follows a spiritual teacher. Meanwhile, he is seeking a nonspiritual community. I was much the same: after living in a Catholic community, I chose a secular community, and at Twin Oaks, I have found a good home. I can think of 10 of our 85 members who have similar histories—including an ex-monk!

Is this a paradox? Does this mean that something is wrong with spiritual communities? I think the answer is No to both questions. Sometimes spiritually active people find a spiritual community too rigid, so a secular community offers a place to practice one's own spirituality.

Religion is not generally embraced, and often disparaged. But spirituality is blossoming.

So far, none of the communities in the Federation of Egalitarian Communities calls itself spiritual. The values which we state to hold in common are equality, non-violence, participatory government, and environmental responsibility.

I like to distinguish between spirituality and religion. To me, spirituality is a way of exploring the mystery of life; a religion is outlined beliefs and structured rituals. In my year at Twin Oaks, and on visits to FEC communities, I've discovered that religion is not generally embraced, and often disparaged. But spirituality is blossoming.

Because a we have a rich variety of backgrounds and because people are accustomed to throwing off custom, we are comfortable with combining traditions.

Thus, at a recent Twin Oaks wedding, we used the Quaker practice of people speaking spontaneously together with a pagan ritual of a circle song. At Acorn, a Shabbat ritual is held every Friday evening. Although this is a Jewish ritual, most of the people attending aren't Jewish, but each person is there because he or she values the candlelight, bread, and wine, the quiet review of the week, and the gathering with friends and co-workers.

Trying to practice religion in the way I did before I came to community is difficult. All Federation communities are rural, and choices of congregations are limited. My old church in Seattle was largely gay and lesbian and quite casual. Here in Louisa, our congregation of 25 includes both folks who grew up in the church, wearing their best polyester suits, and others, new to Virginia, in their shorts and Teva sandals. Despite our differences, we all manage to find Spirit together.

The up-side of being rural is that we are forced to be creative. Lacking for an Easter service due to our rural location, one may settle for attending the pagan celebration in our meadow. As a result, we learn about each other's faiths and ways of seeing the world and ritualing. One also learns that eggs are part of both Easter and Spring Solstice celebrations!

Those who want to be surrounded by folks who use the same language to refer to God and share in their rituals should not look to an FEC community. We hold a community value that no one has the right to tell anyone else what to do, so practicing one's own religion is accepted, but not necessarily nurtured. Others also have the right to criticize religion and speak freely. Thus, I one day found myself in the hammock shop, hearing someone describe the hypocrisies of Christianity. I chose to defend Christianity, saying that every major religion is hypocritical. However, the next time I heard such comments, I decided not to spend any energy on it.

Of course, communities vary. At Acorn and Sandhill, the group gathers around the table before a meal to sing or share silence (you might or might not call this prayer). On the other hand, you could never get all the Twin Oakers or East Winders to agree to such a practice. (However, they wouldn't stand in the way of someone else doing it.)

Life's journeys may lead some to seek a spiritual community. A number of Twin Oakers have left our secular community in search of something more religious, choosing places such as Kripalu, Yogaville, and Catholic convents.

So, I do not believe FEC communities are aspiritual. The FEC brochure states, "We want a better life not just for ourselves but for everyone. We strive to be models of a cooperative, non-violent, egalitarian lifestyle."

Sounds like Jesus ... and Buddha ... and Mohammed, too ... and Lao Tzu and many others, doesn't it? And just like every major religion, sometimes we are goofing up and straying far, with occasional glimpses of making our values a reality. Ω

Alex McGee moved to Twin Oaks last year. She teaches yoga, cooks, does community networking, sewage treatment, and of course, weaves hammocks. She has lived in a Jesuit Volunteer community and studied comparative religions in college.

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