

A project of the [Alliance for Democracy](#) created by Jan Edwards of the [California Center for Community Democracy](#)

## *Tapestry of the Commons* - Gifts from our Ancestors

Common	Gifts	Status
LANGUAGE	Names, grammar, alphabets, words, talking, reading, sign language, writing	Words and names are being privatized [trademarked] and removed from commons
NUMBERS	Symbols, mathematics, statistics, abacus, computer programing, zero, equations	E=mc <sup>2</sup> instantly in commons. Open-source software. Can't patent laws of nature...but
KNOWLEDGE	Science, medicine, folk wisdom, lore, recipes, cures, poisons	New ideas build on common knowledge, Patents are extended and expanding.
HISTORY	Stories, antiquities, genealogy, archeology, anthropology, ancestors, fossils, lessons	Nations fight over artifacts, stories and lessons forgotten or altered for TV
ART	Music, musical instruments, notation, scales, paints, perspective, crafts, fashion, theater	Films, theater, music, fashion all corporatized and copyrights are extended endlessly
LITERATURE	Bible, Homer, Shakespeare, Dickens, printing press, book binding	Corporate publishing giants control every aspect of books from writing to selling
TRAVEL	Paths, trails, roads, airways, sea lanes, trade routes	Traditions pathways now on private property
RULES	Law, lawmaking, democracy, money, government, manners, local customs, courts	Private and corporate control of all aspects of democracy law, courts and government. WTO makes the rules
TOOLS	Wheel, plow, axe, inventions, processes, ideas, can opener	Corporations seek extended patents. Little being given to commons, much being taken
TRADITIONS	Religions, holidays, myths, superstitions, farming practices, healing plants	Neem patent sought, Starbucks tries to trademark Christmas for coffee
SOCIETY	Schools, libraries, communities, theaters, town squares, city halls, playgrounds, parks, historic sites, blood banks	Schools privatized, corporatized [grey areas: clubs, churches, shopping malls, military bases, sports arenas]
GAMES	Sports, football etc., childrens games, nursery rhymes, songs, chess, dances	Must pay royalties to sing Happy Birthday to You. Major sports still in commons.
BREEDS	Traditional hybrid seeds, plants, grain, corn, cotton, Basmati rice, animal breeds, golden retrievers, Arabian stallions, wool sheep	Patents sought on traditional plants. Certain plants and animals are patented.
MEDIA	Internet, public radio and TV, ham radio	Almost all media is corporate to some

		extent
BUSINESS	Shaking hands on a deal, barter, contracts, banking norms, sales traditions, auctions, stock markets, lending, credit, bookkeeping, garage sales, flea markets, farmers markets, advertising, interest, shares of stock, incorporation, assembly line, production of common items [can opener]	Corporations and other businesses draw heaviest from the commons yet seek to give nothing back. They take profits and knowledge from the commons and give back only the costs [like pollution, loss of habitat] E-bay tried to trademark internet auctions attempting to stealing 2 commons at once.