

Clear Light Community News

Dear Friends,

March 2002 • Vol.1

Welcome to the first newsletter of the Clear Light Community. I trust you will find something in these columns that will further your interest in this innovative and exciting experience in living.

All of those who have been involved in getting the community up and running are to be highly commended for their tireless efforts. The community board of directors has done an excellent job throughout the process. Thanks to the dedication of all involved, the dream of Yogacharya Oliver Black is now being realized.

Work continues on the details as to how we want this new community to function, and we welcome any ideas you may have. A good time to express your thoughts is at the annual community meetings.

Last summer, George and Mary Ann Johnston became the first homeowners in the new community, up on Rajarsi Drive. If you take the guided tour of the community, or if you walk the roads yourself, you will see their home nestled among the trees at the top of the hill, and that will give you an idea of how *your* home might look in this beautiful woodland setting. (To schedule a tour, please contact Carol Armour at 989-732-1092.)

I invite you to strongly consider the possibility of living in the Clear Light Community, along with other like-minded people who are interested in meditation and inner growth. This new “community of excellence” will generate great power for good, and it will be a lot of fun, too.

We look forward to your next visit.
In Master's Eternal Love,



Bob Raymer
President of Golden Lotus
and Spiritual Director of Song of the Morning



**Standing side by side with a great purpose,
Bob Raymer and Yogacharya Oliver.**

A SPECIAL THANKS TO THE CONTRIBUTORS OF CLEAR LIGHT COMMUNITY NEWS.

Bob and Suzy Raymer, Jessica (Kamiel) Wolf, Richard and Carol Armour, George and MaryAnn Johnston, Paul Gordon,
Sam and Linda Gabby, John Pfluecke, Susan Witt, Tom Walker, Joe Golarz



CLEAR LIGHT RESIDENTS

BRAVEHEARTS 1-18-02

Mary Ann Johnston & George

What was it that made us give our all to the Clear Light Community? It was mostly divine guidance. You might call it bravery.

I don't remember when it all started, But a few years back, Spirit said to me "you and George must be united and good example set forth for all to see."

"Oh, not me", I said to Spirit. "Oh, not me, not again, oh not me." Yet I felt a tugging within my heart, and George responded beautifully.

Well you know the rest of that rhyme. Married were we in the woods at Christ Shrine. Together, now, we put all our money, in the Clear Light Community.

We didn't listen to doubts and all gossip. We had a mission, Spirit-backed, you see. Plenty to do, build a house in the forest, and listen to Spirit did we.

The decisions were, oh, so varied and many, and I prayed to God for just enough. Enough money to finish the project. That's what I asked for and that's what we got.

It took us three tries to pick out our home, more modest and simple to just meet our needs. Must have been fate to have had all these waits. Spirit agreed and we started the deed.

So next came permits and county regulations, red tape and many, many delays. Sometimes I wanted to back out and quit. Sometimes it seemed too much to go through. Why not give up and split?

Dave Gapinski came, what a dear, with his equipment he started to clear. He dug the foundation, septic and well while trees were transplanted or fell.

Then testing, and testing and all taking time, and then, after waiting and waiting so long, came a day that stands out in my mind, an event that was sent to cheer like a song.

Seven men came to build in the sun, though cement blocks are heavy, they made it seem fun, and they didn't stop 'til their work was done.

And then..another wait, O patience a virtue, the house, on two trucks, finally did come. Parked on a side road, we waited until, finally ...days later one was hauled up the hill.

They started to bring it onto our land, but wait...oh wait, stop everything, there's a turtle in the way, in the sand. A baby turtle is in the sand.

As big as a quarter, heading for water, these big, strong men showed concern for its fate. They hunted for others but not finding any, they started up the job and cancelled the wait.

The house was lined up, to match the foundation. With rollers on girders, it was pushed into place, Til it met the foundation o'er half the crawl space.

Then the second half arrived, after getting stuck in the sand, and the same process began again.

The shingles were put on the garage roof, sporadic. Three times they ran out and had to come back at it. And when it was done and they left on their way, We saw a pop can on the peak the next day.

George wanted to climb the ladder I suppose, but I forbid that, then he used a hose. But alas, it was bound to stay in its place. Even wind didn't work, it was a tough case.

They finally came back with a ladder in tow, and quick as St. Nick, up he did go. Fetched up the pop bottle, Wow! what a sight. Then we thanked them for coming along and making things right.

Next came the power, the deck and the trellis, drive-way, black dirt and compost too.

Wood-stove and chimney and cutting up wood. Friends came by wanting something to do.

In community spirit, we live peacefully now, even though we're the only one. Community lives in the hearts of all others, who helped up til it was done.

We've paved the way for those who follow. Giving our all, we have received all, too. We love the still, quiet surrounding, yet we look forward to neighbors like you.

Om, sweet, Om



Peeking out shyly behind imposing sylvan residents of Yogacharya Way is George and Mary Ann's house!

ON THIS MOMENTOUS DAY

By Carol Armour

On March 8, 2001, I was meditating in front of the wood stove of my Gaylord home, tired from working late the night before and not focused on the events of the day. I began to feel an elation, an extreme joy, seeping into my consciousness. I couldn't understand its source. It continued to build. Finally I asked myself, "Is something momentous happening today that I should feel this way?"

I thought for a minute, then realized that my husband Richard and I were due to sign our lease in the Clear Light Community that day. I also realized that, as we were the first residents to sign, this was the first time that anyone was to be given the legal right to build their permanent home on Golden Lotus soil! What effort, what selfless devotion and service of how many people, had gone into arriving at this moment! I could contain myself no longer. I got up and telephoned Irmgard Kurtz, a future resident of the community.

"Irmgard, do you know what is happening today?" I said.

"No," she replied. "But this morning I heard the Inner Voice say, 'On this Momentous Day!'"

March 8th is sandwiched between Master's Mahasamadhi on March 7 and Sri Yuktaswar's Mahasamadhi on March 9. Thus protected on all sides, what further joys await Richard and myself when we finally put up our permanent home next year at our beloved Yoga Retreat?

We will build on Lot 22 right across from George and Mary Ann's house. Our neighbor on one side will be long time friend and co-worker Don Handyside. On the other side is the Lot chosen by our Spiritual Director Bob Raymer and his wife Suzy. On the alert for the welfare of all will be our dog Barney.

A special feature of our Lot is the remains of one of the oil wells that Yogacharya tried to drill with the help of members. It has special meaning for me. Many years ago I gave the only \$1,000 I had towards one of these wells. The offer Yogacharya had made was money back if the well failed and double your money if it struck. When the well failed, I felt so bad that Yogacharya should have to pay back so much money that I told him I was donating my money to Golden Lotus and didn't want it back.

Years later, Yogacharya paid me back that \$1,000 anyway. I was then on staff and had no income other than \$50 a month allowance.

Still more years later, when I had left staff and was earning an acceptable income, I was shocked to learn that Yogacharya had left me \$1,000 in his Will. Right away I knew why. The original deal was double your money if we struck. We were going to strike, all right! Although the money for development had not flowed from the depths of the earth as he had planned, it was flowing from the depths of the love we all bear him, Bob Raymer, Master, our Retreat, and our beloved God. It will continue to flow from that source, and will finally result in all the glorious visions Master foretold to him.

Indeed, March 8, 2001, was a momentous day.

DREAM HOME

By Sam and Linda Gabby

Linda and I feel so fortunate to have the opportunity to build a "dream home" on land I have always felt to be sacred. We are so happy with our site location, which was able to accommodate my "south facing hillside" criteria; the overlook opposite the entrance to the path to Babaji's shrine is a special bonus.

We are in Phase II of the development plan, but since the utility lines pass very near to our property, it is likely that we may build sooner than the official start of Phase II. At present we are uncertain when we will be able to build, as family duties require us to remain living in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin for three or four years.

Our plan is to have Paul Gordon work with us to design the home, currently envisioned as terracing up the hillside in three levels, partially bermed. We want to have lots of light and windows to take in the wonderful views. We want to build with energy efficiency in mind and plan on radiant heat throughout. I have a friend from high school who is with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Colorado who has offered to provide additional consultation regarding the energy efficiency aspects of the project.

I often picture myself looking out over the woods amid the changing seasons and get such a sense of serenity that I wish it were already a reality for us.

A PERFECT DIVINE CITY

....A perfect divine city, which can be an inspiring model pattern after which all nations of the earth would like to build their cities.” – Paramahansa Yogananda, Inner Culture Magazine

“Yoga is the highest form of culture.” – Yogacharya Oliver

“Our community is for those who spiritually want to go all the way.” – Bob Raymer

The loftiest ideals for a balanced, God-permeated life have been passed down to us by our Master, Paramahansa Yogananda, our Founder, Yogacharya Oliver, and our Spiritual Director, Bob Raymer. In “The Flawless Mirror:” by Kamala, Master speaks of “the joining of groups within a city or rural area in the manner of hermitage life, among members who do not desire to become renunciates, or who cannot because of certain obligations.” He describes the residents as those having “the will to serve and to live in harmony with one another.”

In his Last Will and Testament, Yogacharya stated, “It is my deepest interest and desire that the Song of the Morning Ranch continue in existence for the purpose of furthering the teachings of Paramahansa Yogananda and the Self-Realization Fellowship of Los Angeles, California, together with the establishment of the World Brotherhood Colony as I have directed.”

Referring to the instructions he had been given for our Retreat and Community, Yogacharya said, “Master laid out my work and pointed out just what He wanted me to do, and foretold what would happen. I said, ‘How can I do anything like that? I know what you want, but it would take the tax-exempt money from 12 - 15 of the richest millionaires in the country to finance a thing like that!’ He said, ‘Forget that --all I’m asking you to do is put your mind to it, and we’ll all help you.’ ”

We’ll all help you refers to all of us as well. Those of us in the community have found that by putting our mind to the project, all the help we need comes. Those of you who also dream of contributing in some way need only put your mind to it, and you will be helped in ways you have not dreamed of.

We welcome you among us,
in Master’s love.

**Clear Light Community
Management Co., Inc.**



Master and Yogacharya Oliver - Week of Sept. 4, 1951

WHY THE RETREAT ROADS AREN'T PAVED

By John Pfluecke

Truly, the Master knows our desires (and needs) before we do. When we were engaged Anne said that she wanted a home in the woods at the end of a long dirt road. Over the years, I forgot that she had one more desire for her ideal home.

A few years ago, the Mother Center sent Anilinanda to visit our beloved retreat. After the evening meditation, he walked down the hill and stopped on the bridge. Standing quietly for a few moments, he looked down the river, then said. *"This place is incredible!"* He too, felt that indescribable "something" that draws us time and time again to our spiritual home. How many of us have taken a walk on the paths or on the roads of the retreat and just stopped to look at the evening sky, or to look with wonder at the afternoon light shimmering off the ferns, not wanting to or not being able to take another step. "It is so beautiful here. Would that I didn't have to leave." To paraphrase Ramakrishna, "When will dawn for me that day of blessedness" when I can live at Song of the Morning.

That day is here. We can live here in our own place amidst the shimmering ferns. One day in 1998, Carol Armour called. Baba said that it was time to start the community. It just felt right. With a feeling of joy, we took out a loan against our retirement plan to purchase a lease on one of our Clear Light Community lots at the top of a knoll in the woods at the end of a long dirt road.

When I showed Anne the lot to which I felt a strong attraction and asked her what she thought, she agreed immediately to lease this lot. Truth be told, I already had leased this particular lot. "Well," I said, assuaging my guilt, "You wanted a home in the woods at the end of a long dirt road." Oh this was too easy, I thought. Maybe this lot was a bit small. I tried to interest Anne in larger lots, some with more privacy, but she showed no desire to look further. She reminded me that there was one more "desire" regarding her ideal home. "I wanted my home to be on top of a hill."

Thank you, Yogacharya and Baba. Thank you, both for all that you have done.

GOLDEN LOTUS UPDATE

Please send us your current email and mailing address to business@goldenlotus.org, or to Song of the Morning 9607 Sturgeon Valley Rd., Vanderbilt, MI 49795 or phone: (989) 983-4107.

We are renovating our web-site, www.goldenlotus.org. It will be undergoing improvements over the next few weeks. We welcome your suggestions.

NEW LEASES *RIGHT NOW*

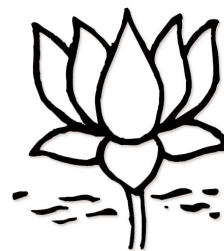
Spring has come, and we need funds to bring in phone lines and to continue the work of developing Phase II.

The phone lines will service the Retreat as well as the community and will allow residents to go online with their computers. Some residents and potential residents in the Phase II area wish to build in the near future. As the process of getting complete approval for Phase II may take a while, we wish to begin the work right now! The Clear Light Board is beginning to plan the area where residents will be allowed to conduct "cottage industry" types of business.

If you are planning on joining the community in the future, will you consider leasing right now? It takes the commitment and forward looking of many people of vision to complete this work. Total cost continues at \$21,900, including \$1,000 Membership in the community, \$5,000 actual lease cost, and \$15,900 leasehold improvement. The lease is for 50 years and is renewable at no cost. For further details and to obtain a copy of the lease, please contact Richard or Carol Armour at 989-732-1092.

As all of us have been fortunate to sit at the feet of real men of God at our Yoga Retreat of Excellence, let us all join with them in doing all we can to manifest their dreams for the benefit of all.

E-SCRIP PROGRAM



Do you ever shop at Glen's Market on your way to and from the Retreat? Do you have a Spartan store in your own community where you shop? You can now donate to Golden Lotus while shopping at these and other select stores around the country. Golden Lotus has joined the "eScrip program" and our Group ID# is 35042. You can join by going to www.escrip.com. The best approach is to find a store that you shop at a lot, like Spartan, on the web-site, sign up at the store to get your number, then go to the escrip web-site and join. If you do not have internet access Song of the Morning has application forms that lists participating stores. They are available at the office in the Main House. Thank you.

RETREAT UPDATE

By Susan Witt

Knowing it's a chilly 3 degrees outside doesn't diminish the beauty of the expansive view looking out the windows of the main-house with the sun glistening on the snow covered lake here at the Ranch. A fresh bed of snow covers the peaceful land, icicles of all sizes line the roof edge, and from the warmth here inside it feels like heaven. The staff is in their regular Monday morning routine cleaning up from the weekend's activities and preparing for the coming week ahead. I write to share with you some of the happenings and hope you can feel some of the beauty. There's a settling sense of stability here after a year of many changes in staff and programs.

CURRENT STAFF

JOE GOLARZ, as many of you may know has been serving as General Manager since late fall. He comes to us out of early retirement. Previously he served as Production and Personnel Manager for TTX Draco Division in Waterford, MI. His management experience and accounting background are much appreciated by the staff. Joe and his family (wife Mary, daughter Susan and son Keith) discovered the Ranch in 1997 and have been members ever since. We are lucky to have them here!!

TOM MOSER is steadfast as ever as our Maintenance Manager. His endless energy keeps him hopping and he works tirelessly on many projects around the grounds. Thank you Tom!!

SUSAN GOLARZ is back on staff as Kitchen Manager. The vegetarian cooking is delicious! She returned here after completing (well, almost) her degree in Commercial Recreation and Facility Management at CMU. Congratulations Susan, and welcome back!!

LUKE FOWLER has also returned on staff as Kitchen Assistant and Maintenance Assistant. His quiet demeanor and willing help is special and is much appreciated. Welcome back Luke!!

PAULA RUPERT (NITYA) continues as our Housekeeping Manager. She has been on staff since last summer and is a calming, beautiful presence. Thank you Nitya!!

ZACH WYLIE continues as a Maintenance Assistant. He has been on staff since last summer. You will always recognize him by his pleasant smile and evenness. Thank you Zach!!

BOB RAYMER (BABA) continues as our Spiritual Director. We look forward to his weekly Sunday service discourse, which is always meaningful and filled with stories of his spiritual journey. We are so appreciative to have him here. What a blessing to have his guidance!! Thank you Baba!!

SUZY RAYMER, Bob's wife, also serves as his administrative assistant, a position that encompasses several duties. Thank you, Suzy, for all your work!!

Walking through the Domes last week was a sight of bustling activity as Tom and his crew of about five members and staff worked fervently towards the completion of the dry-walling in the center dome. The two dormitories are finished with exquisite lighting fixtures in place after the walls were completed. The ceiling skylights are especially impressive. As it gets closer to being finished we are visualizing the many possible future group retreats. We should extend a special thanks to Tom Moser, Erich Moraine, Ivan Witt, Josh Clark, and Zach Wylie who have each worked significantly on the Domes project. Other important projects under Tom Moser's direction have included heating work completed in the wheelhouse, bathrooms refurbished in the main-house, and carpeting in the lodge. Thank you Carol Kowalski for the carpet!! It seems there is no end to the project possibilities.

Volunteering here is a wonderful way to practice the art of karma and bhakti yoga. A number of members find great personal benefit in offering regular volunteer service. Some volunteers receive meal or program exchange while others simply help the Ranch thrive and grow. What a blessing to have volunteers. A special thanks goes to the more than 35 people who volunteer their time when they can. They help in the office, in housekeeping, in the garden, on the grounds, in the kitchen, at the weekly service, or even offering programs. This includes our board of directors who work throughout the year listening to the membership and making decisions. Their generous service is admirable and a big thanks goes to all! Many members work quietly behind the scenes too. Service by anyone is what makes the Ranch work. Keep it going by helping when you can.

NOTICE: Coming up this Spring and Summer there is a growing need for work exchange helpers. If you can help for short or long-term be sure to let Joe Golarz know.

The growth of the Clear Light Community is inspiring to watch. Celebrating the first house completion during the past Fall left many in awe that it is actually coming to fruition.

The programs over the past few months including the silent retreats, the three hour meditations, the yoga weekends, the healing seminars, the special guest seminars and the special holiday celebrations each continue to attract a variety of people. Some are new visitors and some are the regulars.

It's always wonderful to see each and every one participating. The Ranch is a special slice of heaven hard to describe. One has to experience it to understand. It is always hoped many can partake in the events and feel the wonder. I thank my lucky stars I can be a part of it.

See you soon.....Susan Witt

**YOU MAY COMMUNICATE WITH THE
CLEAR LIGHT COMMUNITY BY EMAIL**



Please contact Tom Walker at: tgwalker@voyager.net

GOLDEN LOTUS NEWSLETTER

Anyone who would like to see the return of "The Golden Lotus News" and contribute articles please don't wait. "Please share with us your stories, reflections, poems, memories of Song of the Morning. The Golden Lotus Newsletter will be published soon...send your submissions to Song of the Morning now."

Amy Simpson

Our beloved long-time member, Amy Simpson, has recently passed away. Amy was known for her unfaltering dedication. She contributed selflessly with her musical programs, organ playing, and hatha yoga classes throughout the years. Her stamina and energy have been an inspiration to many. Amy often opened her home by hosting many Golden Lotus members and considered herself the gatekeeper to Song of the Morning. We will miss her!

 A Memorial Service for Amy will be held on Sunday, May 12, at Song of the Morning 

CLEAR LIGHT COMMUNITY ANNUAL MEETING

The yearly meeting of leaseholders in the Clear Light Community will be held on Saturday, May 11 at 11a.m. Anyone interested in the community and its development is welcome to join us as we discuss details, meet future neighbors and look for ways that the many ideas given to the Clear Light Community Board can be manifested. Bring your questions and ideas. Our Spiritual Director, Project Manager, Architect, Lawyer, and First Residents will all be on hand to answer them.

**THIS PROJECT BELONGS TO ALL OF US
WE APPRECIATE YOUR PRESENCE AND SUPPORT**

**PLEASE MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS IN ADVANCE
SO WE MAY BETTER ACCOMMODATE YOU**

MANAGER’S UPDATE: Opening Phase II

By Richard Armour

Our master plan for the Clear Light Community is progressing in its own unique way. The development progresses solely with funds from out intrepid, idealistic members when they lease lots. Paul Gordon and I have begun planning and laying out the roads and homesites in detail in Phase II which will provide approximately 36 more homesites in two beautiful areas. - one a high plateau surrounded by mature hardwoods and the other area a gently sloping highland with predominately beech and maple trees.

The process from inception to final approval from the local county planning commission is long and involved. It includes a Site A plan that encompasses requirements of surface water drainage of the County Drain Commission, the traffic safety standards of the Michigan Department of Transportation, fire safety and emergency vehicle access requirements of local fire and road departments, County Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control requirements and the requirements of the Michigan and District Health Department regarding water supply and septic or sewage disposal. As well it must address whether the development will add to local school population, their health needs, the addition to local traffic and whether it will affect the animal habitat or change the nature of the larger area.

After the application is made to the County Zoning Commission there is a public forum where any individual, private group or state agency may comment or oppose the plan as well as any of the aforementioned regulatory bodies. If approved, a special land use permit is issued and work can proceed with the Zoning Administration monitoring compliance with terms of the permit.

While the process will probably take a couple of years, the good news is that we have a good team assembled and have learned a lot from past efforts. We have a great contractor for roads and excavation, David Gapinski. The firm Wade Trim provides surveying, engineering, erosion control and environmental impact work for us. Members Don Ducastel, Ron Powers and a local attorney provide legal guidelines. Bob and Suzy Raymer and the Golden Lotus board have continually supported our efforts. Paul Gordon is integral in guiding every step of the development. In the initial stages of the development that began almost a decade ago, Gary Saks helped get our overall concept approved.

The work, though strenuous, has been a joy. I’ve felt Master and Yogacharya’s presence guiding us throughout.

CLEAR LIGHT COMMUNITY - MODEL HOME

It has been apparent for some time that as the Clear Light Community grows there is a need for residential designs that will serve individual and family needs, be affordable, and that will also be in keeping with the specific architectural character that has been developed in the architectural guidelines for the community and for all future buildings at Song of the Morning. One possibility being considered is the financing and construction of a custom designed model home within the community, that could be purchased or rented, and which would serve as is, or with variations as a prototype for other future homes.

With this in mind, the following design program list of spaces for the model home is suggested, as a first step towards developing a design. Our request is that people interested in the possibility of buying or renting a custom, “ready made” house in the community, will respond with their thoughts and suggestions concerning their own specific needs and wishes for a house. If there is enough common ground as to these requirements, then a design may be developed that will satisfy similar needs. Please respond in writing with comments, ideas, or alternate lists, concerning any aspect of design to:

Paul Gordon Architect, 24 Glenvale Blvd., Toronto, Canada M4G 2V1, Fax: (416) 489-8831.

<div>CLEAR LIGHT COMMUNITY MODEL HOME</div> <div>DESIGN PROGRAM</div> <div>1,350 sq. ft. exterior size</div> <div>1,080 sq. ft. interior size</div>	Entry, closet	60 sq.ft.
	Living Room/Dining, fireplace, table for six, built in shelves	300 sq.ft.
	Kitchen, 16 ft . of counter, pantry closet, overhead cupboards	80 sq. ft.
	Master bedroom, closets	175 sq. ft.
	Second bedroom, closet	125 sq. ft.
	Study/bedroom, closet	125 sq. ft.
	Utility/Laundry, stacked washer/dryer, tub, counter, cupboards	80 sq. ft.
	Bathroom, 3 piece	75 sq. ft.
	Outside storage	60 sq. ft.
	Garage/carport, single car	