



Clear Light Community News



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"Gather together, those of you who share high ideals."

"The day will come when this colony idea will spread through the world like wildfire."

"Brotherhood is an ideal better understood by example than precept."

A small harmonious group may inspire other ideal communities over the earth."

- Paramahansa Yogananda

Dear Members and Friends,

Our Master, Paramahansa Yogananda, said that the idea of World Brotherhood Colonies was *"in the ether, in the spirit of God."* Five months before his mahasamadhi, in a conversation with Kamala, one of his disciples, *"he described the idea as one where all may work together in a self-supporting group, made up of married couples and their families as well as single people, all dedicated to God, with the will to serve and live in Harmony with one another."* Donald Walter, Master's disciple and founder of Ananda Community, said, *"Master knew that some day, somehow, somewhere his dream must be fulfilled."*



The Clear Light Community at Song of the Morning Ranch sprang from these loftiest of human goals passed on to us from Master. The establishment of the colony was one of only two directives our founder, Yogacharya Oliver, left with his Board of Directors in his Last Will and Testament. The project came to fruition under Bob Raymer, Spiritual Director Emeritus, who remained focused throughout his tenure on this aspect of Master's and Yogacharya's work.

The Clear Light Community invites everyone to taste the nectar of a life of service to God, brotherhood with all, and the effervescent joy of ever-deepening meditation. Twenty six families have already joined. Each brings with them their own unique personalities and talents. Each will be a key factor in the growth and development of our beloved *"Yoga Retreat of Excellence"* into the *"World Center of Yoga Culture"* Yogacharya promised us the retreat would some day be. For those who cannot afford or do not wish an individual homesite, Retreat Manager

Joe Golarz is looking into ways to make condos and apartments available. The Golden Lotus Board of Directors and the Clear Light Board of Directors stand together in joy in offering this opportunity to you.

In Master's Love,

Clear Light Community Management Co., Inc.

"There is only One ... Only One - Paramahansa Yogananda

WeAreOne A World Brotherhood Colony, by its nature, encompasses a variety of opinions. Its essence, however, is working towards the realization that we are all One. This work is accomplished through meditation, selfless service, and a life of love and devotion as taught by our Master Paramahansa Yogananda and as exemplified by our founder Yogacharya Oliver and our Spiritual Director Bob Raymer.

Once we were strangers,
but when we love God we became brothers and sisters.
That Divine relationship is the strongest of bonds.
- Paramahansa Yogananda

And Now There Are Four

Houses are popping up like mushrooms along the forested trails of the Clear Light Community. Original residents George and MaryAnn Johnston are now sharing the peace and inspiration of Rajasi Circle with Richard and Carol Armour. Ian and Karen Wylie are the first human residents on Golden Lotus Trail. Mike Wyman and Dr. Sudha Narang are currently completing their northern home on Mukunda Trail. A tour of participating residences will be a part of our July 3, 2004 Clear Light Community Member Meeting. Everyone is welcome to come on this day and enjoy a resident's eye view of life at our beloved "Yoga Retreat of Excellence." Also see articles written by our new residents in this newsletter.



Home of Richard and Carol Armour



Home of George and MaryAnn Johnston



Home of Mike Wyman and
Dr. Sudha Narang



Home of Ian and Karen Wylie

Architectural Design Approval

by Paul Gordon

As outlined in the Song of the Morning, Clear Light Community Design Guidelines, an essential part of the process in building the Community is to have proposed building plans reviewed by the Design Review Committee. This requirement exists in order to insure that high and appropriate standards of design are maintained, as part of the Song of the Morning's overriding philosophy of being a "Yoga Retreat of Excellence". This philosophy relates to all aspects of life at the Retreat, including the Community's design as a whole, as well as the design of the individual houses within it. There is no one design style mandated for the Community, and so a variety of design types will be considered. It has been said that the best architectural design grows from within. As such, a good approach to design is to think of buildings as having "style," rather than being in a preconceived style.

With this in mind there are a number of design principles which will be considered, in assessing which designs are appropriate for the Community. These are outlined at some length in the Community Design Guidelines. Three principles do stand out as being of primary importance, however, and are worth reviewing again here.

The first concern is that designs be sympathetic to the spiritual purpose of the Retreat and the natural beauty of the property. Qualities of simplicity, gentleness of form and massing are good principles. The choice of materials and colors will also be considered. Natural materials and colors from nature are preferred. The second principle is that houses be designed or selected to specifically suit their particular sites. Size of house relative to lot size is important, as is the access to the lot and the parking arrangement. The topography, natural vegetation of the site, and orientation to views and natural light, if well considered in the design, can both enhance the benefits of the design to the owner, as well as the appearance and "fit" of the house in the Community. Following from this, the third principle is that all designs contribute to an overall harmonious "whole" for the Community, and give a sense that the whole, when complete, is an conscious design in itself. A consideration of neighboring sites, what has been built, or may be built in the future, will be taken into account.

It is not uncommon in the design/build process to find that the preparation time leading to construction takes longer than the construction itself. The individual needs, preferences, and budget of anyone planning to build in the Community are major considerations. As considerable time, commitment, and expense may be entailed in the planning process and construction, and lack of timely communication with the Design Review Committee may lead to delays and rethinking design, it is strongly recommended that Community applicants discuss their design needs and wishes with the Committee as early as possible, preferably before house designs or design selection has begun. The selection of the lot itself may be influenced by an initial design concept. It is never too early to discuss ideas with the committee. Please contact me at 416-489-3728.

CLEAR LIGHT RESIDENTS

THE JOURNEY HOME

by Karen and Ian Wylie

We knew we would some day live at Song of the Morning's future intentional community. It had been a vague thought, but a focus and a definite pull as well. How that might one day manifest, we hadn't the slightest idea. Yogacharya had said that we would be inwardly guided to know the time. (Years earlier he had told Karen "This is your home." When he read her thought that maybe she should move up right away, he quickly added, "Your spiritual home, anyway." Her drama in the outside world clearly was not finished.) And over the years we had learned that it was necessary to be aware, moment by moment, of what the universe is offering for our unfoldment,---the clues, from the most subtle to the most overt, and then to act on that inner resonance without hesitation.

Relative to this drama, the first "clue," subtle and not subtle, that something was up, was in the form of an energy that began to push through us and it was for a specific purpose: clear out and clean out. The many moves we'd made still left us with a formidable amount of household baggage: Y2K stores, business inventories (there was always a business or two going on), and more books than anyone could read in 3 lifetimes. And a not-so-subtle clue: one by one our sources of income came to an end, sometimes rather abruptly, in a subsequent compressed period of time. Our inner guidance told us we were being given a small window of opportunity to move to Song of the Morning. It was a knowing to go (but not a knowing of how income would be provided). We put our house up for sale on Madison's For Sale by Owner website.

The wonderful experience we had selling our home on that website made clear a strong dream-vision Karen had had during a seminar at Peter Ragnar's in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, a few years earlier. It was profound, clear and prophetic, yet parts of it had never made sense. It was only after we put our house up for sale to move to Song of the Morning that we were given clarity on the idea inwardly presented at Peter's. It pointed to starting a For Sale by Owner business, similar to Madison's, after our move to Michigan. (Is this how we were to make our living?) Step by step events unfolded, as we continued to listen to our inner guidance. We did research and connected with some necessary business persons about the venture just days before we pulled out of Madison for Vanderbilt. Meanwhile, we had to make preparations for a place to live. Our thought had long been to move directly onto Song of the Morning property.

However, after making several 1,000 mile trips and exploring different options, renting in the area seemed to be the only reasonable option. We would rent the house being vacated by friends Denny and Carrie. Oops! Owner would now only sell. We felt inwardly directed to buy it---but now, how long would it ever be before we were living on Ranch property?

We spent the Fall doing some remodeling, expanding the living area and doing the necessary preparations to start our business in the Lansing area---and, as it was real estate related, timing was crucial. (And how auspicious a day when we planted our first "for sale by owner" sign: our son's birthday, our beloved friend Cealo's recent presence and blessing right in Lansing, and Yogananda's Mahasamadhi!)

A whirlwind of unrelenting activity continued. We were being given a way to sustain ourselves, but we had to do the earthly work!

We tried to interest a number of people in the wonderful home offered at the Ranch. It wasn't for us, of course, as we had just bought and weren't even quite finished remodeling. But in early summer that energy began pushing through us again, as it had in Madison to get all the odds and ends of the remodeling completed. What was this about? But we did as "directed", and soon realized we were to make an offer on the Song of the Morning home. (It was amazing to us that no one had made an offer on it!)

The selling, offer, closing and moving were a whole prolonged dramatic adventure in themselves and happened at the same time Spirit was guiding us to franchise our business (before our own business was even a year old), and with a last minute trip to Japan.

When we look back on this year and a half since leaving Wisconsin, the constant activity is almost beyond belief. We are Clear Light Community property lease holders with a growing business to sustain us. But, we asked ourselves before we left: if we don't choose to live in the Song of the Morning energy now, when the opportunity is presenting itself---now, when there is inner guidance to do so---then when would we? And why would we not? It was a no-brainer.

Though the outward drama within Song of the Morning changes rather regularly, the Energy that is here, that pulls us ever inward, is changeless, an immeasurable help and unspeakable blessing on the Real Journey Home.

OPEN HEART

By Dr. Sudha Narang

I was introduced to Self Realization Fellowship in 1988 through a friend in California. She asked me to write for healing prayers to the Mother Center for my father who was ill at that time. I received a letter from Daya Mata in 10 days which helped me to accept his passing away. My father was a strong influence on my life after having lost my mother as a teenager. He taught me to be independent and of service to others.

A few years passed and I dealt with changes in my job and some health issues. Seven years ago I was recuperating from back surgery when a sense of loneliness engulfed me, not because I was alone, but more because of what life was all about. Why was I here and what was the purpose of my life --- I was looking for that understanding of human loneliness.

Soon after I began to attend the Sunday Service at the Self Realization Center in Southfield. Although I liked the admixture of people from different backgrounds coming together on the path of self-realization, I remained aloof in my search to find peace and understanding of the duality of human existence.

Two summers ago I made a conscious effort to mingle and open my heart to the warmth and kindness that came my way from the SRF members. They are dear friends to me. Some of them shared their deep personal experiences with enlightened beings like Yogacharya Oliver Black. I have received spiritual nourishment from reading books, SRF magazines, lessons, and conversations with friends. It is an inner knowing now that I am on the right spiritual path and am building a home (a round structure which is a blend of east-west architecture) with another SRF member at the Song of the Morning Ranch. I plan to spend more time in these beautiful natural surroundings and amongst like-minded people.

SONG OF THE MORNING RANCH

- CLEAR LIGHT COMMUNITY

By Michael Wyman

As I have spent many years with Yogacharya and the Self-Realization teachings, one thing has always stood out - stick with the teachings as set down by Self Realization Fellowship and honor the Guru. Promote the teachings, as so many people are starving for truth, and don't deviate, since the SRF teachings can't be improved upon. I firmly believe in this and have honored the Gurus, for I don't know where I would be without their guidance and help. Since I have been in Detroit, Sunday has always been the best day of the week for me -- meditation, the SRF readings, and fellowship after service with likeminded souls.

This all started at the Ranch and being with Yogacharya. With the world stress and conflicts, it is now time to go back to the Ranch and give back what has been so priceless to me. The new house (Deltec) is a blend of east/west architecture, it is energy efficient, has great strength, and is a special gift to Yogacharya and to SRF. It is an example, and a gift, as taught by Yogacharya. He told me a guru is only as good as the students he produces. I want to be as good a student as I can be.

There is a tremendous future here, and what better way than to spend my later years in service to those who have helped me the most.

FURTHER INFORMATION, ALONG WITH AN OVERVIEW OF PLANS, AN OPPORTUNITY TO MEET COMMUNITY MEMBERS, AND A CHANCE TO JOIN IN THE PLANNING AND FORWARD MOVEMENT OF OUR COMMUNITY IS AVAILABLE TO ANYONE INTERESTED.

PLEASE JOIN US AT OUR ANNUAL COMMUNITY MEETING ON SATURDAY, JULY 3 AT 11:00 A.M.

THOSE INTERESTED IN A TOUR OF THE COMMUNITY, A COPY OF THE LEASE, OR OTHER INFORMATION MAY CONTACT CAROL OR RICHARD ARMOUR AT 989-983-9136.

**IF WE ARE NOT AT HOME, WE WILL RETURN YOUR CALL AS SOON
AS POSSIBLE AND SCHEDULE A TOUR AT YOUR CONVENIENCE.**

Gandhijee who received Kriya from Paramahansa Yogananda said life is an aspiration. Its mission is to strive after self realization. The ideal must not be lowered because of our weaknesses or imperfections.

Ranch Update

by Patty and Susan

What a splendiferous spring we're having down at the Ranch! We feel the rebirth around us with flowers blooming, trees budding, spinach sprouting, new programming scheduled, and plans finalized for the magnificent redesigning of the Camp Vanderbilt buildings. We've hired an architect and plotted out a piece of land back by the garden. This new lodging will increase our capacity by 30 private rooms and eight 500 square foot apartments. They should be well on their way to completion by fall. PLUS, we have the go ahead to refurbish the Lodge and everyone is thrilled about getting new siding and windows there this year.

Since staff changes frequently, you may be interested in a current update. First, we are sad to say good bye to Zachary Wiley, who served on staff for three years. In all the tasks he performed at the Ranch, he emanated unparalleled warmth and generosity. With his talents in sound production, computer graphics and office administration, he will go far. We wish him many blessings.

We welcome Will Brennan and Patty Sutherland into the bookstore where they will share the responsibilities of reservations and sales. Patty also does the housekeeping, guest relations and helps in programming while Will is groundskeeper when he's not in the bookstore answering your emails. Patty brings with her the vibrant young energy of her two children, Mariam (13) and Iskandar (12). Mariam is home-schooling and Iskandar is enrolled at Vanderbilt Schools. Both Mariam and Iskandar volunteer to help wherever they can and it's a delight to have the energy of young teens around. Our staff also includes Dan Boss in the garden and kitchen, Kate Moraine in the kitchen and Will Hippensteel in maintenance. These focused young adults give us a sense of awe as they work in ease and are examples of the Guru's guidance to act with equanimity in all facets of life.

Susan Witt is overseeing program planning and advertising

Joe Golarz remains at the helm in general management, accounting, and building construction. Last but not least, our stalwart Tom Moser continues to manage maintenance and will assist with all our building projects. We're quite the crew and enjoy working and sharing together. Currently, we have the Wheelhouse basement and two apartments in the Mainhouse rented. This adds to the atmosphere of a true community of people living and striving on the path together. The devastating storm of Sept. 2003 left an immense amount of clean up. Not only did we have to remove more the 80 fallen trees from the roadways just to get in and out of the property, but we also had prominent sections of the forest demolished by the high winds. This winter we hired a timber company to come in and remove all the dead and fallen trees. This work left a huge amount of debris which we endeavor to clear as time allows. We invite members to come and exchange a meal and a night or two for some grunt labor just moving and piling brush. Happily, we are already seeing new growth in the understory and this reminds us God has a plan.

This Spring we had several weekends of inspiring programs. One weekend we had over 70 people for Swami Dayamrita, the lead U.S. swami for Mata Amritanandamayi (Ammachi), a blessed teacher of many Ranch members. The Swami's talk centered around Peace and included a puja, chanting, and a special walking meditation. Another weekend we experienced the joy of a special group doing Dances of Universal Peace. They decorated the domes and danced the weekend away using sacred phrased from many of the world's religions. It was so beautiful they have decided to return next September! In mid-April a large yoga group from the Detroit area spent a weekend in the domes and we are honored to be of service to such groups, preparing healthy meals, a peaceful environment and comfortable accommodations. The Ranch can serve all on the Spiritual path to God Realization and the varied programs appeal to the varied members needs. We are happy to be the venue for such programs.

This summer we have a full calendar of activities. In addition to big retreats like TriYoga®, His Holiness Gayana Cealo, Norm Paulsen, and Sri Shibendu Lahiri's visit, we've added "ReCreation" weekends, where Ranch staff will offer a pleasurable weekend of fitness and fellowship.

Of course, don't forget to check our website regularly and suggest it to your curious friends (w). We update it weekly and often add events that aren't in the brochure.

Manager's Report

by Richard Armour

The year 2003 was one of rapidly moving forward with the development of the Clear Light Community. The no-interest payment plan, offered for a limited time, brought our community membership to 26 lots. Four houses are up in the Phase I area of the Community, and other leaseholders are in various stages of planning to build their own homes.

Work has already begun this year on opening the new loops in the Phase II area. Once lots are staked out, those members who have chosen the Phase II area will be able to finalize their choice of lot and begin the enjoyable task of deciding on house design to suit their particular forested setting. Freezing ground and other setbacks delayed the laying of phone lines last year. However, 50 lines were brought into the Retreat area and lines laid over ground to provide phone service to residents in the Community as of December of 2003.

Both the Retreat and the Community are now enjoying mail delivery direct to rural route mailboxes in front of homes and the Retreat office, courtesy of the U.S. Postal Service. Extremely heavy snows and melting made last year's road upkeep difficult. The Community is now adding gravel to Retreat Road (the main entrance road to the property) and to various trouble spots around the Community, as well as planning on purchasing a used truck to improve Road maintenance and snow control around the Retreat. Burying phone lines around the Phase I area will be accomplished this summer, along with the task of getting Phase II ready for zoning approval.

Serving a Higher Board

by Carol Armour

The Clear Light Community has suffered a great loss in the sudden death of our lawyer, Don Ducastel, last fall.

Don first came to Song of the Morning as a staff member. He had requested an opportunity to live and work at the Retreat around the same time that our Spiritual Director Bob Raymer was turning his attention to organizing the Clear Light Community.

Don's ground-breaking work for and dedication to the Community outlasted his stay on staff. While working professionally as a Prosecuting Attorney in Alpena, Michigan, he continued to guide the Community's every legal move. He never charged legal fees for any aspect of his work, nor asked compensation for his many expenses involved in working with us. He made himself available by phone or in person to anyone who had questions or problems concerning the lease or other legal aspects of the work.

Don was a real devotee. His own plans were to lease a lot in Phase I (he had already selected it) and join more fully in the spiritual and community life of the Retreat. Last summer he said to me, "My work is over, you won't need me anymore." He meant that he had provisioned every legal challenge to our Community, and structured us so we could successfully meet them, in court if need be. I replied, "We will always need a lawyer." Unfortunately, his comment was a premonition of the unexpected, massive heart attack that took him only weeks later.

The night before I was to know that Don had died, I had a dream. I saw a Board Room of regal proportions with a golden chair vacant at the end of a massive wood table. I didn't know what it meant until the next day, when, sitting at the Golden Lotus Board meeting, I was told that Don had passed away.

The gold chair was for him, advising, I am sure, some Higher group of workers in astral realms.

We will miss you, Don. Generations of spiritual aspirants who will come to know God while living in our Community are in your debt. Yogacharya would sometimes quote, "A man is known by his works." The future of our Community will be testimony to what manner of man we had in you.
