

# Clear Light Community News

May 2005

Vol.4



**The newly obtained community plow truck, mighty conqueror of northern winter...**  
*the paths and trails and shrines and signs of our spiritual home.*



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



***Dear Ones,***

***Members and Friends of Golden Lotus and Song of the Morning Ranch,***

Another year has been accomplished in the Clear Light Community, an exquisite forest refuge for "plain living and high thinking" founded by directive of our Master, Paramahansa Yogananda, under the guidance and love of his disciples, Yogacharya Oliver and Bob Raymer.

This year has brought the total number of resident households to 30, with 4 houses up and many more in the planning stage. Everyone is invited to drive the beautiful new loop in the Phase II area. Look soon for new road signs, inviting you into Arjuna Trail, Babaji Trail, Krishna Trail, Anahata Circle, and – named after our beloved Bob Raymer – Raymer Ridge.

The future has just begun for the Clear Light Community. Countless members and guests have toured the homes and streets and been hosted by its residents. Brother Mitrananda of Self-Realization Fellowship, a guest of the Community during SRF's recent visit to the Retreat, said in a phone message, "We were so impressed with your place back there, and the magnetism of all that." The monks were given a tour of the Community and shown future plans for both the Retreat Center and Community areas.

The Clear Light Community belongs not only to those who live there, but to every lover of God who share's Master's vision of brotherhood with all and the ever-deepening joy of a life of meditation and selfless service. Please feel welcome at our meetings and events throughout the year, and leave your hearts in residence no matter where you live. The Clear Light Community welcomes you, and claims you, in Master's love, as its very own.

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

## **CLEAR LIGHT COMMUNITY LEASING INFORMATION**



Lots may be leased in the Clear Light Community for a total cost of \$21,900.00. This includes \$1,000 membership, \$5,000 actual lease cost, and \$15,900 leasehold improvement cost. The lease is for 50 years, renewable at no cost. It may be passed on to heirs, or sold to approved members. Yearly association dues are \$75, or \$200 once the house is built, to cover snow removal and upkeep. Architectural plans need to be submitted to our Architectural Committee as soon as feasible and before finalizing choice of house. For further information, a tour of the Community, or a copy of the lease,

***Please contact Carol or Richard Armour at 989-983-9136,  
or 9534 Rajasi Circle, Vanderbilt, MI 49795.***

## ***NEWS FLASH*** ***PHASE II IS HERE !***

### **MANAGER'S REPORT:**

Dear Members,

Paul Gordon and I, with the help of many subcontractors, have worked diligently this past three years preparing two new residential areas to lease to our members. The first is on a gradually rising ridge primarily treed with beech, maple, and basswood. The second is a high plateau surrounded by mature hardwoods with a long ravine on one side and a valley on the other. Tucked in the latter is Krishna's shrine, and adjacent to the former is Babaji's.

This past week we received approval from the Otsego County Zoning Board for the project. We are in the process of getting Health Department approval with guidelines for water wells and septic systems. We hope to be able to file all necessary documents by early summer and enable members to get title to the properties and to begin building if they wish.

This spring and summer we will complete the roads and install electric and telephone service in the new areas. It is a great joy to bring these residential areas to the members. When exploring them, if you still your mind even a little, you can feel God's presence throughout.

Richard Armour



#### **PEACEFUL OVERLOOK**

A view of eagles and migrating birds graces the lake overlook at the top of the hill off Yogacharya Way. Two benches offer a chance to tarry awhile.

# **BUILDING IN THE COMMUNITY**

## **HELP WITH THE DESIGN APPROVAL PROCESS**

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By Paul Gordon

As outlined in the Clear Light Community Guidelines booklet and reviewed previously in this newsletter, the physical design of the community, from the overall plan and land use concept to the design of the individual lots themselves, to the buildings that are placed on the sites, is to be considered as part of a conscious design whole, which directly relates to the spiritual intent and purpose of the community. Physical design affects consciousness, and it is important to be conscious of the type and quality of the design undertaken in the community and at Song of the Morning in general.

An essential part of the process of becoming a resident in the Clear Light Community is to select a site, then plan and build a home. In order to maintain the required standards of development, a Design Review Committee was founded at the outset, to assess the suitability of individual house designs for the community. New residents are encouraged to begin discussions with the Committee right from the start of their planning process, rather than waiting until plans are well advanced, only to find there is a problem when submitting their completed house design for approval.

To aid in the process of getting from here ("we've got our lease, now what?") to there ("approved plans, we're ready to build") I am available to consult with prospective residents regarding their needs and wishes for a house in the community, to discuss solutions that will satisfy them, as well as the Design Review Committee. It should be noted that there is no fee for having plans reviewed by the Committee for approval, nor for an initial meeting/discussion to establish the feasibility and general parameters of a house project. However, should a leaseholder request an ongoing design consultation and drawing service, a fee would be charged. This would be established to suit individual needs and be relative to the scope of the work and time involved.

In answer to the many questions I have received concerning this, the following is a list of the range of services that clients hire me for, as grouped under the three main phase headings of a project.

### **DESIGN**

- Design Program Requirements
- Budgeting
- Site Analysis
- Conceptual Design Sketches & Discussion
- Detailed Design Development Drawings

### **CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS**

- Architectural Construction Drawings
- Mechanical & Structural Engineering Services and Coordination
- Building Permits Application and Processing
- Tendering

### **SITE REVIEW**

- Site Visits (during construction)
- Office Functions (review of shop drawings, consultation, supplementary details as required)



Any or all of these services can be provided as a percentage of the construction cost, as a fixed fee, or on an hourly rate basis.

For a comprehensive, full service of all of the above, the fee is in the range of 13% of construction cost. When charging by the hour, the fee is approximately \$90.00/hr.

It is understood that the circumstances, needs and means of everyone who wants to build in the community is different. Some people may want a complete architectural service from myself or another architect of their choice, some may want only a partial design service, and for those contemplating using stock plans or purchasing prefabricated homes only the choice of site and the siting of the house for optimum benefit may be relevant.

It is the latter issues of choice of site, design of house – its size, general form, position on the property and the choice of exterior finished materials – that will be the most relevant to the Design Review Committee. A few hours of time invested at this critical stage, near the outset of the project, to consider where and what to build, is suggested as being of great benefit. An hourly fee would be the most appropriate for this. For a more extensive service, any of the three methods of establishing a fee could be discussed, relative to the scope of work.

In my practice working with clients, I regularly find that people's design wish list exceeds their budget, and difficult decisions must be made -- to cut back or to spend more. Also, initial wants evolve into needs, needs are relegated to becoming only wants, and some additional wants and needs are added along the way or dropped completely from the original list. This, Design Program Requirements, is another area where I may be of help early on in the design/build process, whether further services are required or not.



#### **Paul Gordon -- Architect of the Future**

Many years of listening to Yogacharya's visions of the future and countless hours of drawing and criss-crossing the property have resulted in the PUD that now exists as the Clear Light Community, as well as many inspired future building designs in keeping with the high spiritual purposes of our "*Yoga Retreat of Excellence*."

# CLEAR LIGHT COMMUNITY ANNUAL MEETING

**WEEK-END**  
**June 10 -12, 2005**

"You can feel the flow, everywhere you go..." It's in the air at Song of the Morning Ranch - can't you feel it? Things are happening.

The Clear Light Community invites you to be a part of it. Join us for our annual Community week-end June 10 - 12, 2005.

Friday night, following 8 p.m. Meditation, we will have an informal get together. Enjoy the spiritual fellowship that is part of community living and share your thoughts and ideas with us. Everyone is welcome.

## GRAND OPENING OF PHASE II - RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY

The Community Meeting begins at 11 a.m. following Brunch on Saturday. Topics will include a guest speaker on alternate Construction techniques, our own architect Paul Gordon with a Checklist of things to think about when planning to build and some help with building cost estimating. Following the Manager's Report, it is our great joy to have the OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE PHASE II AREA. Everyone is invited on tour of the two new residential loops following the RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY at the entrance to the Raymer Ridge loop.

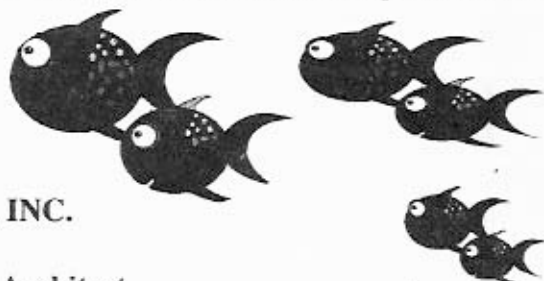
Following the tour, please feel welcome to join the Clear Light Board as it holds its regular business meeting. All ideas and participants are welcome -- and there is plenty of work for all to go around! As Yogacharya liked to quote from the Upanishads: "May He protect us all. May He nourish us all. May we work together with great energy. May our study be thorough and fruitful. May we never hate each other!"

IN MASTER'S ETERNAL LOVE,

CLEAR LIGHT COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT CO., INC.

Richard Armour, Project Manager  
Don Handyside, Chairman  
John Pfluecke, Secretary  
Eileen Guilford  
Carol Armour

Paul Gordon, Architect  
Irmgard Kurtz, Treasurer  
Tom Walker  
Roy Thibodeau



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

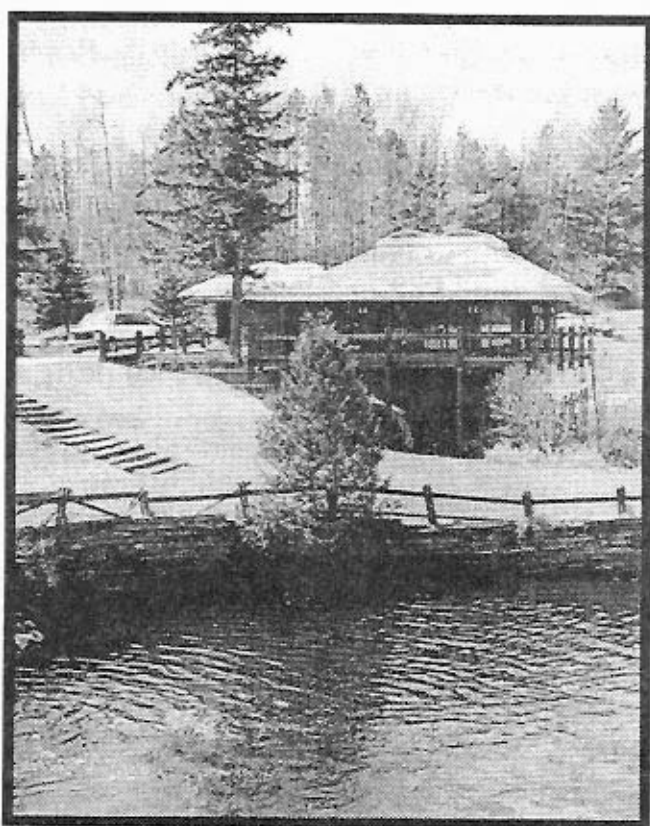
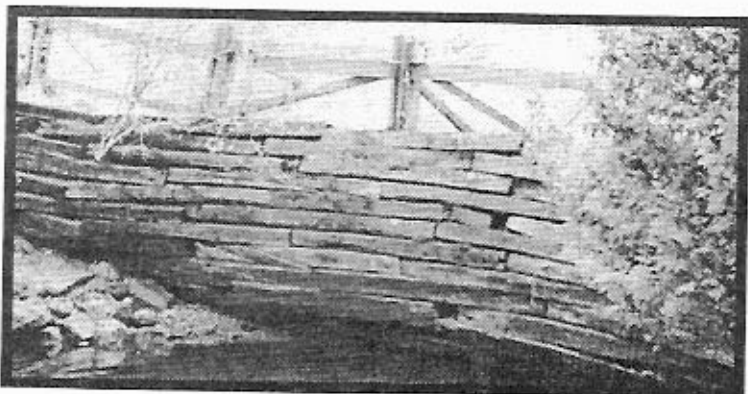
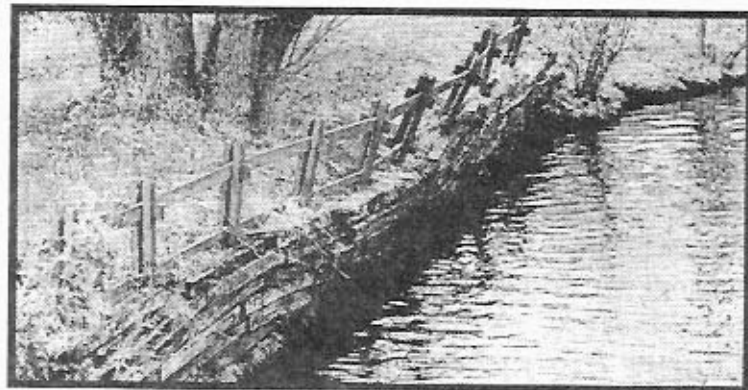


## STAYING IN THE FLOW

### Replacing the Retainer Wall



As we know yoga has a lot to do with Flow: The flow of the breath; the flow of prana; the flow of teachings from Master to disciple; quieting the flow of our thoughts. As Ranch members we are incredibly fortunate to receive the flow of blessings from the line of SRF Masters and from Yogacharya. In turn the Ranch has been able to exist only because of the generous flow of contributions from our members. We now need the help of our members to replace the retainer wall on the wheel house side of the river. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources has required that this work be completed this year. Unless we replace the wall it will soon collapse, the bank will eroded and water quality in the river will be affected. We have received several bids for this project and expect that the work will cost \$22,000. We need your help with this project. Please give as generously as you can. Please also note "Retainer Wall Fund" on your check. Contributions can also be made by credit card. *Thank you for your help.*



## STAYING IN THE FLOW

### RETAINER WALL FUND CONTRIBUTION



YES, I would like to help in replacing the Retainer Wall. You may also call in your donation: 989-983-4107  
Enclosed is my contribution in the amount of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

(Please Circle) Check / Credit Card: Mastercard ~ Visa ~ Discover ~ American Express

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to, *Golden Lotus, Inc.* and note "Retainer Wall Fund" on the bottom. Send to: *Golden Lotus, Inc., 9607 Sturgeon Valley, Vanderbilt, MI 49795.... And thank you very much!*



# LIVING THE DREAM

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## *What's it like living in the Clear Light Community?*

The entire natural world is an ashram here! The sacredness in everyone and everything glows, lighting the faces of residents and visitors alike.

Come, drop your problems at our doorsteps for a while. Watch the chartreuse budding of springtime from our windows, or the gentle white of winter as, layer by layer, it conquers all creation one gentle, uniquely created, ephemeral flake at a time.

On a Saturday, freed from the week of worries, a quick walk might take you to a Meditation at the Retreat, where for one hour or three you may merge yourself in a still deeper Presence, supported and expanded by the devotion of your peers – devotees from next door or across the continent.

Take up a project, if you wish, to help the Retreat -- there are no end to them. Let your love know no limit in what you are willing to do.

Then, wake up one morning to find that, all along, you have been living and loving not as yourself, but as an eternally unique part of the ever-fascinating and infinite fathomless heart of God.

*“Gather together, those of you who share high ideals.”*

*– Paramahansa Yogananda*



## GOLDEN LOTUS YOGA TEACHERS UPDATE

Golden Lotus Yoga Teachers Association is proud to announce two newly elected officers. Kathy Campbell has taken on the responsibilities as Chairman/President and Roy Thibodeau the duties of Secretary/Treasurer.

On April 9 they held their first GLYTA meeting at Kathy Campbell's home. The meeting began with a meditation led by Kathy. Those who were able to attend were Kathy Campbell, Carol and Richard Armour, Brij Chhabra and Roy and Mary Ann Thibodeau.

It was discussed and agreed that the next GLYTA meeting would be the Sunday of Yogacharya's birthday celebration, September 4, 2005 at 7 pm. They all felt that this would be a convenient and an exciting time for all the teachers to get together. It was decided that for Yogacharya's birthday weekend GLYTA would provide Hatha Yoga classes each day at 8:30 am.

Traditionally over the last several years the GLYTA has provided funding for Yogacharya's Birthday celebration. This usually consists of mailing the Birthday celebration announcements to the Golden Lotus, Inc.'s membership. Of course we plan to do this again this year. It was decided that this year's gift will be donations to repair the retaining wall near the damn.

There was discussion that GLYTA is quite probably the oldest continuous Yoga Teachers Association in the United States with a unique heritage and tradition. We have direct ties to Yogacharya and Yogananda and many of our teachers have over 25 years of experience teaching & practicing Hatha Yoga. We feel compelled to perpetuate the tradition and grow the organization to continue Yogananda's and Yogacharya's work.



# CLEAR LIGHT FUTURE RESIDENTS

## WORKING TOGETHER

Roy & Mary Ann Thibodeau

Mary Ann and I decided to lease lot nineteen on the corner of Yogacharya Way and Rajasi Circle about a year and a half ago. Nineteen happens to be an auspicious day for us since Yogacharya married us on June nineteenth. We have no visions or revelations to relate as to why we made this decision or how it came about, but what we can say is from the heart.

Mary Ann and I have been Golden Lotus members and devotees of Yogacharya and SRF since the early 1970's. Yogacharya married us and christened our three children. We lived in the Gaylord-Vanderbilt area until November of 1985 and cherished all of the times we were able to spend at the Ranch and in Yogacharya's presence. The many dinners, Satsangas and Kriya classes are still bright memories and continue to inspire us.

When we left the area because of financial and family obligations we always knew it was temporary and as Yogacharya would say, the Ranch is our "Spiritual Home." We never knew exactly how we would end up at the Ranch, but we knew we would become more involved again. Thanks to Yogacharya's vision, the opportunity to once again be part of the future of the Ranch was presented to us. So, we decided that we would lease a lot and build a home, the only question is when.

Late in 2003 with the interest free financing, the perfect opportunity presented itself and we jumped in. Now comes the decision as to when to build. Our circumstances have allowed us to become more active with the Ranch and the community, so it is our hope that we are able to begin building a geodesic dome in the community this year. We will have to see what the year brings.

Since leaving the Gaylord area and even more with Yogacharya's passing, we have always felt his presence and guiding hand in our lives.

Now the time has come when we can more fully give to Yogacharya and his work. We are appreciative of the opportunity to have a home in the Clear Light Community and to further Yogacharya's and Yogananda's work on earth.

*"May we all work together with great energy"*

## THE GOOD LIFE

By Richard Jackson

"I worked hard for 25 years and soon I'll be able to retire and enjoy the good life," my kind-hearted attorney stated to me. "Just two more years and that's it!"

With an upbeat cheerful attitude, I asked my friend if he had researched this subject. "Have you asked yourself deeply, what is the good life for me?"

"Well not exactly. I'm looking forward to resting and relaxing and a little golf, that sort of thing."

Then please allow me to share with you what I deeply feel on the subject. The good life at a glance seems the same for everyone, but for most people it's actually different. For example, some say the good life is having \$250,000 liquid, a minimum of \$100,00 in mutual funds, a home that's paid off (\$350,000 value), both cars paid for, and owning a 36 unit apartment building yielding a positive cash flow of approximately \$5,000 per month. For others a more conservative example of the good life might be having a cash flow of \$3,000 per month by way of social security and/or pension, low medical insurance, one car paid off and a modest home with less than 5 years left on the mortgage.

Maybe the good life is having a balance of these four key elements:

1. To have and maintain a happy and loving marriage.
2. To be satisfied and content with a moderate income.
3. To have and maintain good physical health.
4. To discover and enjoy a spiritual relationship with God.

Masters of the East might say that the good life is maintaining a constant awareness of the Presence of God, in everything you do, everywhere you go and at all times.

Maybe the good life is as natural as a mother whose child is healthy and eventually becomes a good citizen. My mother used to always say, "When you've got your health you're rich!"

## THE GOOD LIFE cont...

I believe Christopher Reeves would agree with my mom. Christopher proved to be a real "Super Man" by his will power, his positive attitude and love for his fellow man.

Whenever I used to feel sorry for myself after a long and challenging day, I would stop and suddenly realize that Super Man would gladly change places with me if he could just be healthy again. Just to be healthy rather than having two million in the bank might have been his "Good Life."

Some believe that each of us has a special gift to share with the world. If that's true then once we discover our special contribution to mankind then maybe our vocation will be our vacation! Wow!

That could mean that everyone who found their gift, would love to desperately want to work, give and share their special contribution given to them by God, to all those who would gladly receive it. Now that could possibly mean that the people who found their particular attribute of support to others and themselves may have discovered the good life and don't know it.

Scientists and philosophers say that man wants to work, and that man is not happy when he is idle. Children say it's when mommy and daddy play with them and give them quality time. Teens say it's when they can impress their peers over and over. Young adults feel complete when they settle down with a very attractive spouse. And on and on...

Does the good life keep changing as we grow older and wiser? Or is it always the same but we haven't yet discovered it. Is it possible that the little things in life are really the big things?

I know a very nice woman in her forties who's confined to a wheelchair because she has Lupus. She is always extremely positive, upbeat and full of love. Whenever I see her, she always talks about how she is going to be walking very soon! She can not wait to finally walk again.

Maybe we are not yet wise enough to realize what the good life is. Is the good life mostly a physical experience or a mental experience? Did you ever wonder why so many blind people have a smile on their face?

Did you ever wonder why a person who has a near death experience says, "Now my life has changed forever and everyday is Christmas?"

There seems to be a consistent pattern with people who are unexpectedly and suddenly struggling for their life. Just as they are about to give up, they realize, oh my God, my daughter needs me to survive. So now they discovered a very important purpose to live for, rather than my house note is almost paid off. I can't die now! As a result they find the strength and will power to live.

Speaking of living or dying, has any human being ever really died? My sources tell me that no one actually "dies." Dying is actually a myth!!! Well that's a relief! Fr. Markham never told me that at St. Elizabeth. Although I probably never asked him.

Let me tell you a brief story. One special night when I was in my 20's I had a very unusual dream.

I dreamed I was standing on top of a very tall cliff overlooking the ocean. The weather was warm and the sun was shining brightly. The wind was blowing briskly in my face. The powerful waves of the ocean were crashing far below me. As I stood out there all alone looking onto the ocean, something very profound happened. I felt sooo happy! Happier than I ever dreamed possible! On a scale of 1-10, I was experiencing a 20!!!

How could I be so happy? Why was I so happy? I did not have a 10,000 square foot mansion in the background, or a bank account with one million dollars in it. I had none of these material assets or things in my dream.

Yet I was happier than I ever could have imagined and happier than I have been.

Was the joy I was feeling possibly what is called bliss? Was the joy I was feeling maybe a key ingredient to "THE GOOD LIFE" for me?

Perhaps the great Masters are trying to show the way?

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*We are the petals of thy manifestation;  
Thou art the Whole Flower –  
All Life and All Loveliness  
–Paramahansa Yogananda*



## FINDING MY SPIRITUAL HOME

By Dennis Crabill

I want to say something about why buying a lot and living in the Clear Light Community is a rare opportunity for spiritual growth.

When I first drove up Sturgeon Valley Road in the Winter of 1977, my years of praying for spiritual support and a new spiritual beginning were about to be answered. While living and working in Ohio after discovering yoga and meditation in the Navy, I discovered it was tough living in an area that had no meditation groups. Yes, I had my books and daily practice and a wife who also meditated, but I was a relative beginner and wanted the support of others to keep up my enthusiasm.

After praying for some years I happened to take up cross-country skiing and found a place called *KenMar on the Hill*, in Gaylord, while reading a ski magazine. I made a reservation for a week of skiing and adventure. My second day in Gaylord there was a blizzard and snow was falling fast on top of the deep four-foot base. We decided to forget skiing that day and go for the adventure part of the vacation. We found ourselves in downtown Gaylord at Duke Bliffert's bookstore at the Swiss Village Mall and discovered a yoga book section. Duke comes over and introduces himself and proceeds to tell us about Yogacharya Oliver Black and Song of the Morning Ranch. This place is about twenty miles away, you can look it over, have a vegetarian dinner then go to a meditation, but Mr. Black is away on vacation so you won't meet him this time, he tell us.

Well here I am driving down Sturgeon Valley Road, snow everywhere, it was a beautiful magical forest scene unlike Ohio, which was nice but too tame looking. About two miles from the front gate I pulled over because I felt as though a wall of energy was hitting me. I was so happy I started to cry, saying, *I think I am finding my spiritual home*. I could not imagine what I was going to find.

I was not disappointed; the first person I met was Carol Armour who greeted us with enthusiasm in the blizzard and gave us a wonderful tour. I knew my prayers were answered and this was my spiritual home. After two more vacations at Song of the Morning, I was wondering if they were inventing this spiritual teacher Mr. Black because he was always on vacation when we were there. So, after attending one of his birthday parties (wow, what a party!), we met him and were even

more impressed with the Song of the Morning vibe. There was a big staff then and buildings and domes were going up and there was talk of a community someday where you could live in a spiritual atmosphere, amongst like-minded people.

Like many or even most people it is tough living (out there) in places where people don't understand what you are doing. You know you are being drawn to a higher consciousness, but you also know you need support and guidance.

Yogacharya taught and trained and guided many souls. He gave us a blueprint for success and gave us this beautiful piece of land on which to grow and interact with each other and the world to help ourselves and others who are ready to walk their spiritual path.

When we even dream of building a home nestled in the woods of Clear Light we should think of the rare opportunity we have been given on all levels to live, work and play together as a spiritual community. We are humans, which means we will always face some challenges and troubles working out our karmas as best we can but where will you choose to do this. If your spiritual life is important to you and you feel that you need the support of other good people and the peace and quiet of a beautiful spiritual setting, then plan for and take action to get your lot and your place in this growing community. I would like to be your neighbor, See you there.

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## MARK YOUR CALENDAR: COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS

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Christmas and expansion of consciousness go together! The Clear Light Community will be hosting its first COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS this year and YOU are invited to attend.

Saturday, December 24, the Retreat will hold its annual 6-hour Christmas Meditation from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m.

Then on Sunday, Christmas Day, there will be an SRF Meditation Service at 11:00 a.m. followed by a Progressive Dinner hosted by members of the Clear Light Community. There is no charge for Christmas dinner. However, a Christmas love offering to Song of the Morning Ranch to support our retreat is greatly appreciated, and can be left in the office.





## THE NATURE OF WATER

There was a school of fish who wanted to find out what water was.

So they went to a wise fish.

*"You're in it!"* he said.

It is above you and beneath you.

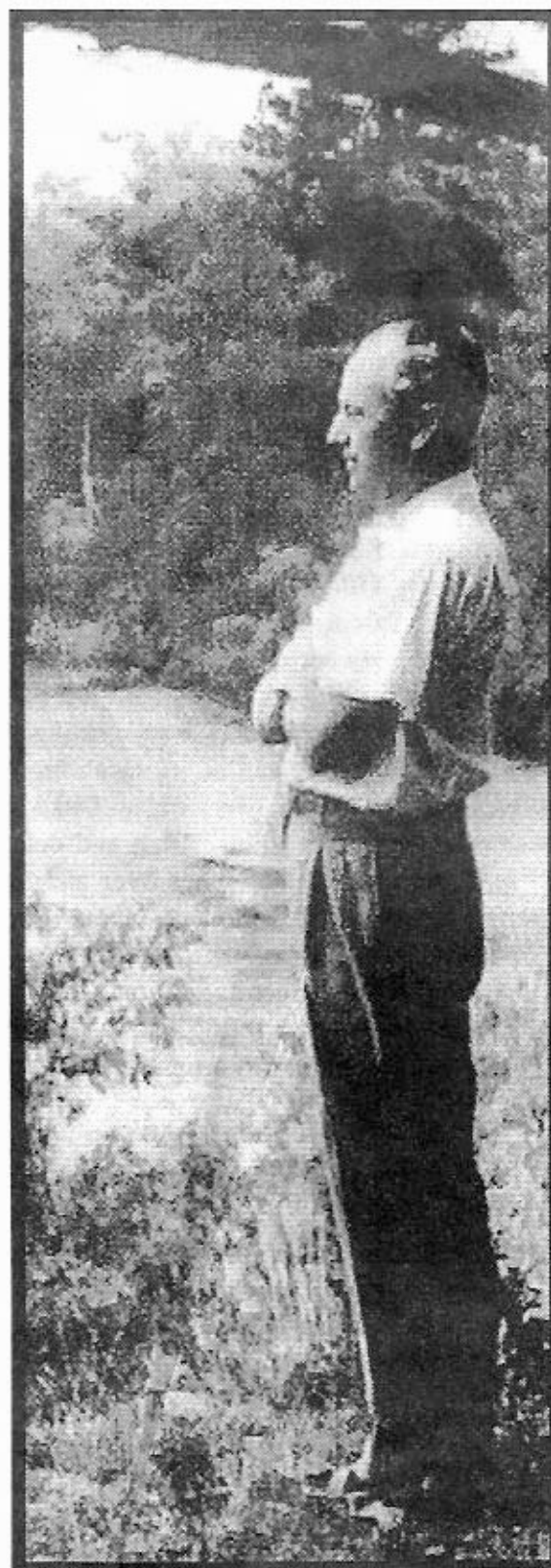
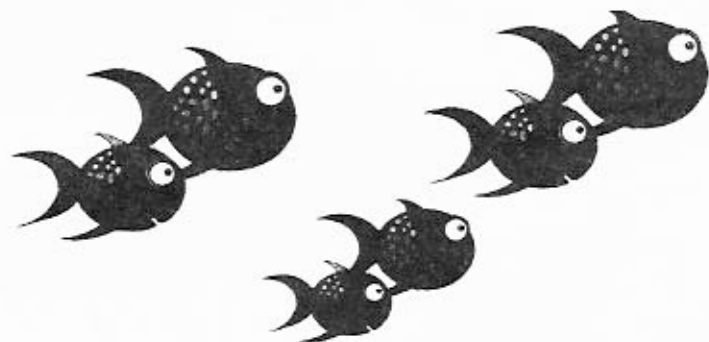
To the left and to the right.

It is within you and without.

You live, and move and have your being in it."

They thanked him, and swam away.

Then they all got together and decided that they still didn't know what water was!



Yogacharya often told this Fish Story explaining how the nature of water is like the nature of God.