

Clear Light Community News

December 2006 • Vol. 5

Dear Ones ...

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

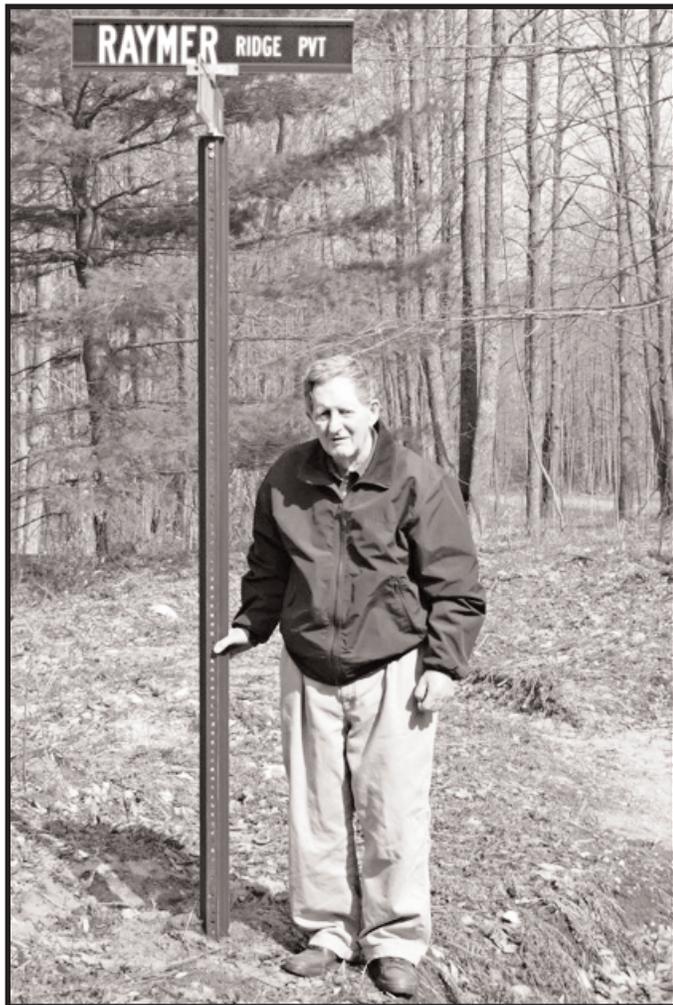
What if all of your neighbors were friends, and you got together each night to meditate, shared common interests, worked for common goals -

What if your roads were made of Mother Earth, and the turtles laid eggs on them and the elk and deer babies frolicked near them?

What if you could take off anytime by yourself into the woods for a secret rendezvous with the Masters?

What if the silence there were so deep you could meditate without trying, the stillness so real you could touch what was behind it? What if Master's dream of World Brotherhood was where you lived every day?

THAT is the Clear Light Community!



Bob Raymer stands by the sign that bears his name. He was pleased by the tribute to his many years of service to Golden Lotus and Song of the Morning. The photo was taken by his wife Suzy shortly after the sign was erected last spring. © 2006 Suzanne Raymer ~ All Rights Reserved

Welcome to its lofty thoughts and its deep sense of brotherhood shared by all.

Master said to Kamala, one of his disciples, five months before his Mahasamadhi, that the idea of a World Brotherhood Colony was "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, and with the will to serve and live in Harmony with one another."

In a letter to Yogacharya Oliver dated October 4, 1949, Master said, *"These colonies will do much to forward the cause of unity and peace. There the ideals and tenets of Self-Realization should be taught that there might be a unity of purpose in coming to the colonies- a threefold purpose of harmonious development in body, mind, and soul, with the soul development of the greatest importance. For the ultimate goal of life, which is God-communion, must be stressed, because without this it is difficult for a group of people with varied personalities and habits to live in harmony."*

On behalf of Master's ideals, and the dedicated examples of Yogacharya Oliver and Bob Raymer,

WELCOME TO THE COMMUNITY!

**CLEAR LIGHT COMMUNITY
MANAGEMENT COMPANY, INC.**

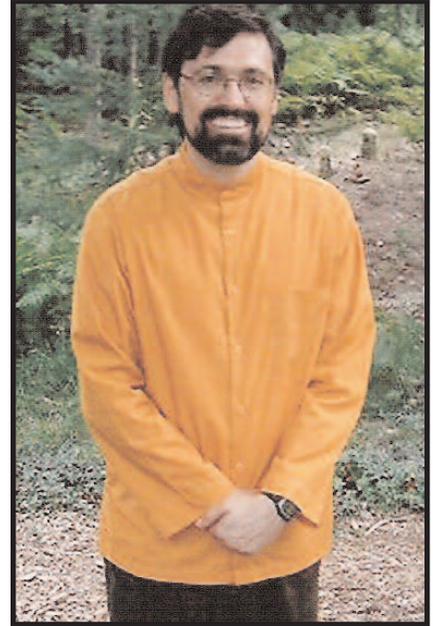
HONORED GUESTS



Brother Vishwananda, a member of the SRF and YSS Board of Directors, Brahmachari Joe, an assistant to Brother Vishwananda and Daya Mata, and Brahmachari Paul, head of the SRF Center Department, were very welcome guests of the Clear Light Community during their August visit to Song of the Morning Ranch to meet with the Golden Lotus Board of Directors. They were hosted in the homes of Richard and Carol Armour and Mike Wyman. The monks were taken on tour throughout the Retreat and Community, including the sites for the future town center, temple, and cottage industry area, and through the home of George and MaryAnn Johnston, first residents of the Community.

All three enjoyed the pristine forest setting. Brother Vishwananda especially liked the "little reminders of God" wherever he went on the property -- road signs with spiritual names, shrines dedicated to the Masters. He also expressed deep interest in the temple design. Many members will remember this design from a prototype model Yogacharya had built years ago and left on display in the Main Dining House.

The visit of the monastics was by special request of Daya Mata, president of SRF, who is celebrating her 75th Anniversary with Self-Realization Fellowship this year. In a letter written back to our retreat following the visit, Brother Vishwananda, and Brahmacharis Joe and Paul said, *"It was a special joy to meditate with you, tour the grounds, hear the plans for the Ranch, and meet the many wonderful devotees and Board members who are helping to build your spiritual community."*



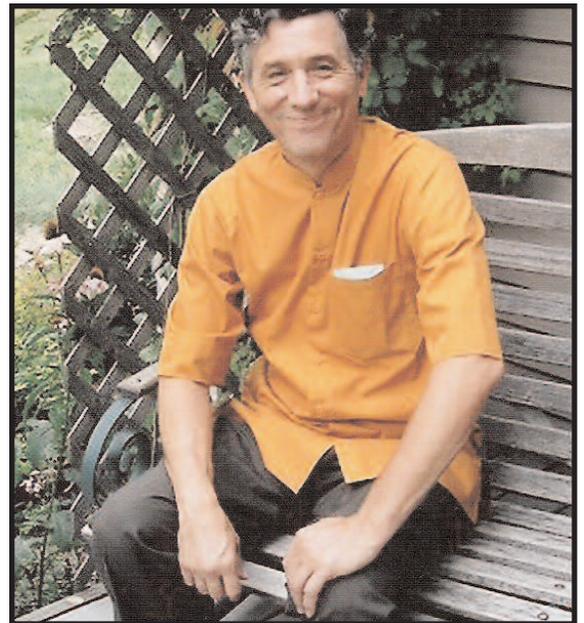
Brahmachari Joe

"The spiritual friendship, warm hospitality and many acts of kindness extended to us by all whom we met there made us feel most welcome and deeply touched our hearts."

Thank you, Daya Mataji, for your many letters and acts of support throughout the years, culminating in this visit. We look forward to a wonderful future, in Master's love.



Brother Vishwananda



Brahmachari Paul

Managers Report

by *Richard Armour*

Dear Members,

In the last year we have had an additional 30 homesites in Phase II and III approved by Otsego County. We have installed electrical service to all lots. This was our largest single expenditure -- \$48,261. The roads in the retreat have been recently upgraded. In the spring, we will extend telephone service to Phase II and III.

Our focus is to do all we can to aid you in building your home in our World Brotherhood Colony, the Clear Light Community. We have upgraded our lot corner markers and our maps. Official road signs of Otsego County have been in place throughout the community since last spring. We are helping bring together local builders, architects, and subcontractors with our members.

We are currently working on the layout, design guidelines, landscaping and roads in the proposed cottage industry area. More and more members have been stepping forward to add their expertise to our ongoing efforts.

Please feel free to attend our working Community Board meetings throughout the year, as well as our annual Community Member Meeting on June 30th. It is our joy and privilege to have you.



If They Build, It Will Come!!!

Where is the Golden Temple and the tastefully landscaped cottage industry area, and the Arts Theatre with its spiritually uplifting performances, and the schools of higher thought, the gardens and programs designed to develop the all around person, one dedicated to God and beloved by his fellow beings?

As each one leases a lot in the Clear Light Community, they become a vital part of all that will happen here. Their skills, abilities, and dedication to Master's dream will join with the love and devotion of all who come to bring about that aspect of Master's work that is theirs to do.

The first step in this process is to get here. Many leaseholders are currently deciding on house design, and puzzling over their personal budget and timeline. Whether they live near or far away, for each it is a challenge and a victory when that first shovelful of earth is lifted to dig the foundation of their new home. All of us, this next year and for many years to come, will be privileged to share in the joy and accomplishment of each one, as their dream to live at the Ranch manifests. With every house that goes up will begin some part of the future for us all, and for the thousands that will follow in our footsteps.

If you are on a visit to the Ranch, and hear the sound of construction down one of our tree-lined trails, why not stop in and welcome our new resident.

They are building the future for you, too.



CLEAR LIGHT RESIDENTS

Clear Light, A Community of Opportunity

by Ray and Kaye Thomas-Hogan



The Clear Light Community of Song of the Morning Ranch had been a long time dream in the mind of Yogacharya Oliver Black, since his founding of the Retreat in 1970. It has been stated that Paramahansa Yogananda had conceived of the concept of World Brotherhood Colonies since he came to the United States in the 1920's.

This kinship, at the behest of Mr. Black and the SRF Masters, is a divine sanction to all truth thirsty souls deciding to commit their lives to such a noble spiritual endeavor.

The Clear Light Community is destined to become a vortex of spiritual power and light to help stabilize the ever-international greed that continues to intimidate the peace of this world and the brotherhood of mankind, as well as, in the words of Yogacharya, "a geographical sanctuary against certain planetary changes."

As future residents of the community, we are looking forward to sharing in the comradery of friends we have known for decades. We've spent enough time in the outer world to know that it is a simpler life we want. A life where we can share philosophical conversations, thoughts, plans and ideas with people of like mind and spiritual consciousness is important to us.

Our journey of obtaining a lot and planning our new home has taken many twists and turns. Hence, we have been blessed first hand of learning to trust in Spirit. When we first got married 10 years ago, Bob Raymer wanted us to be the first residents, build our house and use a generator for the winter until electricity would be brought in during the following spring. The idea of the noise and fumes for the length of a Northern Michigan winter didn't appeal to us, so we searched for land nearby with a similar flavor to the Ranch. Our plan was to build there, stay a couple of years and then move back when the community obtained power. The power, however, didn't arrive

for about four years. We were happy with our home, had jobs and decided to wait a little longer to build at the Ranch. George and Mary Ann Johnston built their home first, prompting us to search out a lot. We were not financially able at that time to lease a lot, so we started on a new venture: raising llamas. Thinking we would do that for awhile and then retire to the community took several more twists and turns too numerous to name here.

So, to make a long story short, we received the letter regarding Yogacharya's birthday celebration, decided to cut out the Yogananda quotation, "Put your mind to it and we will all help you" and placed it on our altar. We are now purchasing our lot and living our dream. We put our minds on it and it is manifesting faster than we ever expected, thanks to the expeditious work of the Masters.

In closing, to all of those, "truth thirsty souls" who want to reside here in this beautiful community but see only obstacles in the wake of their desires...well, give it to God. For in the words of Sri Ramakrishna: "God is the doer, we are his puppets."



OH MY FRIEND

Here might I stay a while . . .
and ponder of the oceans . . .
of the sky . . . so high
and yet so far from I.

Here might I play . . .
upon the winds of time . . .
and depth of life . . .
and sing a while of love.

Here might I gladly spend
all my days
with grief of thine . . .
to sooth you and relieve you . . . friend.

Here might I think a while . . .
not too long or chance goes by,
to give myself for you . . .
as I am you and you are love.

Here might I listen . . .
for the tears and quiet thoughts
and words unspoken and pain untold . . .
to send the loveless love . . .
and see a life unfold.

Here might I give you love . . .
and in that love, Oh . . . my friend . . .
you might know that from whence we came
is where we are and are going . . .
—Mary Ann Johnston

The Seeds He Planted In Us Have Begun to Sprout

by Greg Rorabaugh



Marilyn and I have been talking and planning for some time now about our move to the community. It has been a real goal to focus on and one that brings us feelings of hope and joy for the future. Although we love LA and the climate here, sometimes we do feel stuck and bogged down by all the hustle and noise—the “*getting and spending*” and so the idea one day we will actually have a permanent home near our exquisite retreat where we can escape from the jarring vibrations of the city life for at least six months of the year, does us wonders.

We both are looking forward to the experience of living in the community and building it by involving ourselves in all the projects that will bring this World Brotherhood Colony of Master’s into the physical plane from the Astral and Causal where it has lived for so long.

I had a foreshadowing of what this experience would be like one afternoon while helping Richard Armour with one of his many tasks as project manager. We were both concentrating on the work at hand and suddenly I felt this Brotherhood Colony manifesting itself right there in action. It was a feeling I’m sure many of you have felt when working at an activity guided by a higher purpose.

At that moment I had the realization the work we were doing, the work we are all doing to build our community is the highest work possible. It’s not that we are building dream vacation and /or retirement homes (although they will be); it’s not that we are developing a gorgeous “*country-club-like*” resort/retreat (although it will be); it’s that we are actual pioneers helping bring about the ideas that Master and Yogacharya spoke of in their vision of spiritual practical living for a higher age.

Sometimes it’s hard to believe that a higher age can be right now. Wordsworth wrote that “*intimations of immortality*” were all that was possible in the finite world. But at the retreat and the community we have more than intimations- we have actualization of a

higher age in the form of nightly group meditations householders living in harmony and peace in an inspiring setting, residents and future residents working together with great energy to create something permanent, vital, healthy and whole.

In the spirit of this realization, I walked around our community that Master and Yogacharya and countless devotees over the years have dreamed of over many lifetimes. I encourage anyone who is a leaseholder or a prospective leaseholder to spend time walking and working on the community site. Devotees who do that will experience a profound sense of peace, inspiration and exhilaration.

The Clear Light Open Board Meeting held on Saturday, October 28, affirmed these sensations. In spite of the wet blowing winds outside that day, the atmosphere inside was warm and inviting. The meeting brought together many of the thoughts and concerns that we’ll all be tackling together over the years to come. There were practical concerns of the moment and of the near future and sweeping plans for the far future, perhaps not even do-able in the lifetimes of those present.

And yet all of us in that room were in lock-step with the ultimate vision that Yogacharya continually shared -- that in this specific place, a city of the future would arise with living and working space for those who were committed to their spiritual practice; who were willing to work together with great energy; who were anxious to serve selflessly for the greater common good; who were wholeheartedly in agreement with the aims and ideals that Paramahansa Yogananda expressed in his work; who were willing to make sacrifices for this profound and noble cause.

When Marilyn first walked into the retreat in August, 1971, she had a “*vision*” of what the place would be like. She told Yogacharya “*this is the city of the future and I want to be here*” and he said, “*It is and you will!*” He went on to describe to her the beautiful multi-storied and multipurpose buildings, the climate-controlled passages between them, the outdoor and underwater theaters, the huge media center, the meditation caves sprinkled throughout the property, the thousands of people who would live, work and study there. He continued to describe them until his passing from this

The Seeds He Planted In Us Have Begun to Sprout Cont...

by *Greg Rorabaugh*

physical plane and she continues to see his descriptions come to life in her dreams.

Marilyn thought the city would manifest way before now but spiritual time moves in a different way than ours does. And of course, lots of things had to be learned and accomplished - karma worked off--before the time was right. Now that it's all finally started to happen, she sees that thirty-five years hasn't been such a long time after all--not from the perspective of eternity.

Maybe all the things that Yogacharya described haven't been made physical yet (we're still working on the buildings and all the rest) but certainly the seeds he planted in us have begun to sprout. It's our desire and willingness to commit to a spiritual community life that will make those seeds take root and eventually blossom.

By making that spiritual commitment, putting our mind on it, meditating and working together and never giving up, we can and will not fail to achieve Yogacharya and Master's great goal of a model World Brotherhood Colony and ultimately our own self-realization.



The Most Important Goal In Life

by *Frank Wheeler*

Years ago it became clear to me that the most important goal in life was self-realization. After much searching I found Yogananda (or he found me) and I have been a dedicated (if imperfect) yogi ever since. One week after applying to become an SRF monk a friend of mine brought me to the Song of the Morning Ranch. That was the last I ever thought about becoming a monk. The personnel department had a better place for me!

As the years went on I met many people here, made many friends and participated in many projects. One of the early aspects of Yogananda's and Yogacharya's

vision was that a community be established here. For years there was little progress on this as we all pursued the demands of our busy lives and other projects in the Ranch's development. In more recent years as the community began to become reality my heart beat faster at the possibility of living in a community of yogis with the same spiritual goals as I had. That this was going to happen in such a spiritually charged location as Song of the Morning Ranch was literally a dream come true. Yogacharya once said that the company you keep is stronger than your will power. What better company to keep than devoted spiritual seekers?!

I began the purchase of my property about three years ago and am very much aware of the challenge of actually moving to the Ranch. Many of us working towards this transition are aware of the financial, immigration (in the case of Canadians such as I) and the social challenges of making this move. It is easy to feel good about making one's monthly payments and forget that proactive work must be done to untangle oneself from the details and responsibilities of our soon to be former lives. Many of us see retirement as the time. Others, the day our kids become fully independent (challenging dream that). And others the point at which certain business and community responsibilities are realized in their present location. It is important for us to remember that in the total immersion lives that we lead it is very difficult to see the forest for the trees as our busy lives tend to breed more busy-ness, more ties and local involvements such that we are NEVER able to escape and run the risk of losing this most important of dreams: that of living in this wonderful spiritual environment with other like-minded and motivated devotees.

The potential of this community to be a vanguard of the culture of the future is immense and to me irresistible. The work that Yogacharya and the masters are doing through us to lift the consciousness of humanity through this one little geographical pinpoint called "The Ranch" will eventually cover the globe. While this may sound grandiose, I believe it to be true. We are true spiritual pioneers here moving forward. I for one, feel infinitely honoured to have the opportunity to play a role in my own small way. And I am very much looking forward to doing it with you.





Joy to You for Christmas Community Christmas

YOU ARE FAMILY

"Once we were strangers, but when we love God, we become brothers and sisters. That divine relationship is the strongest of bonds."

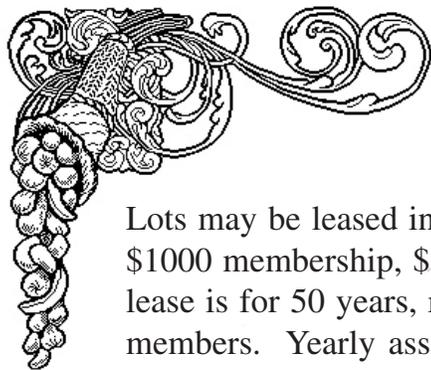
– Paramahansa Yogananda

The annual 6-hour Christmas Meditation will be held on Saturday, December 23, 2006, from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. at the Lodge.

The idea of an all-day meditation at Christmas time was started by Master, and has been a tradition at Song of the Morning Ranch since its founding. There will be breaks every hour on the hour, and anyone arriving late should plan to come at one of these times so as not to disturb others.

On Sunday, December 24, there will be a Meditation Service at 11:00 a.m. followed by *"Community Christmas."* Present and future residents of the Clear Light Community invite all to share the joy of Christmas with them.

There is no charge for Christmas dinner on the 24th; however, those who wish may leave a donation to the Retreat at the Main Dining House office. These donations are greatly needed and appreciated to keep our Retreat open during the slower winter months.



CLEAR LIGHT COMMUNITY LEASING INFORMATION

Lots may be leased in the Clear Light Community for a total cost of \$21,900. This includes \$1000 membership, \$5000 actual lease cost, and \$15,900 leasehold improvement costs. 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 copy of the lease, Please contact Carol or Richard Armour at 989-983-9136, or 9534 Rajasi Circle, Vanderbilt, MI 49795

*– Mark Your Calendar –
JUNE 30, 2007*

ANNUAL CLEAR LIGHT COMMUNITY MEETING *Everyone Welcome!*

- Will there be lights throughout the community?
- Can we organize a brigade of members to lay out our walking trails?
- What about fire protection?
- What help is there to build your house, and who is building next?
- New building techniques?
- Who will your neighbors be?
- Where will everyone park?

Bring your questions and be a part of the answers at our annual Clear Light Community meeting...

Mark your calendar now, and look forward to meeting fellow and future residents during this pioneer era of our World Brotherhood Colony.





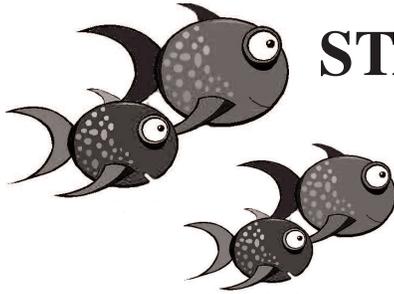
Two Devoted Servants of Master-- Daya Mata and Yogacharya Oliver, 1956

Eternal Youth in Service to Master

Yogacharya Oliver conducted his last Kriya Initiation as a Minister of Self-Realization Fellowship in June of 1989 at Song of the Morning Ranch. He consciously left his body at the age of 96 on September 16 of the same year.

Congratulations Daya Mataji on your 75th Anniversary with Self-Realization Fellowship. Each year of your life shines like a new jewel in the hearts of countless devotees worldwide.





STAYING IN THE FLOW RETAINING WALL FUND CONTRIBUTION

DONATE &
RECEIVE A
DVD OF
YOGACHARYA
OLIVER

As a member and friend of Golden Lotus, you have the opportunity to give your support through several projects and donation programs. In thanks to your donation we will be sending you the latest DVD of Yogacharya Oliver that was shown at the last Birthday Celebration, over Labor Day.

You may wish to contribute to the following. When you make a donation, please designate which fund you are contributing to.

Continuation of the Yogacharya Birthday Fund. This fund focuses on three needs identified for the 2006 Birthday Celebration. 1) A safety rail for the retaining wall 2) A study of dredging the impoundment 3) The completion of a meditation chapel in the woods.

Circle of Friends monthly donation program. Join this monthly donation project for ongoing operation of the Ranch. Post-date a series of monthly checks or authorize an automatic monthly charge to your credit card by calling our office at 989-983-4107.

Golden Lotus Fire Department. This fund goes toward the purchasing of a fire truck for the Ranch. As our retreat continues and our community develops, our preparedness of an on-site fire department and equipment is an important development.

I have already donated to the retaining wall fund, but did not receive my DVD.

Name: _____

Address: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Method of Payment:

Check# _____ Make checks payable to: **Golden Lotus, Inc.**

Mastercard # _____ EXP# _____ / _____

VISA# _____ EXP# _____ / _____

If you wish to call your donation in the number is: 989-983-4107