Clear Light Community News

March 2008 • Vol. 6

Dear Ones ...

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

A new year has begun in the Clear Light Community, and what a glorious year it is destined to be! Three new homes will be built this year, with many more in the planning. A new, low-interest payment plan is available to help those who dream of leasing one of the remaining lots. The first piece of playground equipment, donated by a devoted member, is in place in our future playground, inviting children and grandchildren to a special place they can call their own. Turtles are waking, birds are nesting, deer are challenging human residents to plant something for them, too. Above it all, majestic trees spread their protective branches, and whisper through the breeze or loudly roar with the blowing wind "God! God! God!" as Master taught us all to do.

The Clear Light Board, which has successfully developed the first phase of the PUD (Planned Unit Development) plan, as adopted by the Golden Lotus Board, has submitted a plan to construct a needed maintenance building. Following this, one of the guest accommodation buildings designed by architect Paul Gordon would be constructed from among the stellar designs members have seen displayed of future Retreat buildings. Thirdly, the Board proposes to begin work on a Community Center, which will soon become a necessity as the community continues to grow.



Yogacharya Oliver, man of joy and vitality, founder of Golden Lotus, Inc., Song of the Morning Ranch in 1970, devoted Minister of Self-Realization Fellowship until his passing in 1989 at the age of 96.

Our Master, Paramahansa Yogananda, said that the World Brotherhood Colony idea would "spread around the world like wildfire." Those of us already caught in its flames invite you to be a part of it, whether you build your home here, come to visit the Retreat, or hold the ideal in your own heart wherever you make your home. The directive and outline of what to do here was given by Master to Yogacharya Oliver, founder of the Retreat. Bob Raymer, current Spiritual Director Emeritus, began the carrying out of this plan. It remains to all the rest of us to continue this work. "All you need is love, devotion, and high purpose, and you will be guided," Yogacharya said when speaking of the future of our Retreat. May that love, devotion, high purpose and guidance continue, even more strongly this year, through all of us together, in Master's undying love.



LOW-INTEREST PAYMENT PLAN



The Clear Light Community Management Company is opening up to the Membership a new, low-interest payment plan to aid those who wish to lease a lot and build their home in the Clear Light Community at Song of the Morning Ranch. The plan is open for a limited time, and offers four payment options at 3% interest.

Total cost to lease a lot in the Clear Light Community is \$21,900.00. This includes \$1,000.00 Membership in the Circle of Community Development, \$5,000.00 actual lease cost, and \$15,900.00 leasehold improvement. Leases are for 50 years, and are renewable at no cost. They may be passed on to heirs, or sold to approved members. Heirs who wish to reside in the Community must also be approved as members. Because there are a limited number of lots, only one lot may be leased per family. Leaseholders are subject to the rules and regulations distributed with the lease, as well as all zoning and legal restrictions of local, state, and national government. Association dues are \$75.00 per year, or \$200.00 once the house is built. Leaseholders are responsible for property taxes on their lot and house. House plans must be approved by the architectural committee of the Clear Light Board before building.

Here are the steps to leasing a lot on the new Payment Plan:

- 1. Submit your Membership Application available with the lease.
- 2. Pay \$1,000.00 Membership in the Circle of Community Development.
- 3. Choose one of the four payment schedules for the total balance due of \$20,900.00.
- 4. Arrange for automatic monthly direct deposit of payment.

You must choose your lot from lots available in order to close on your lease. Lots will be chosen in payment order: *First come, first serve*. Lots must be completely paid for before building.

Application For Payment Plan Name: Address: I agree to comply with the terms of the Clear Light Community Payment Plan: Plan: ____3 year _____5 year _____7 year _____10 year signature _____ date



"While small minded men cry "impossible!," the pathfinders of this world calmly pursue their goals, and prove that the impossible was, instead inevitable." — Paramahansa Yogananda



by Richard Armour

Clear Light Community is entering a phase where its focus will primarily be in helping its members in their building endeavors and addressing the safety of the Community and the Retreat.

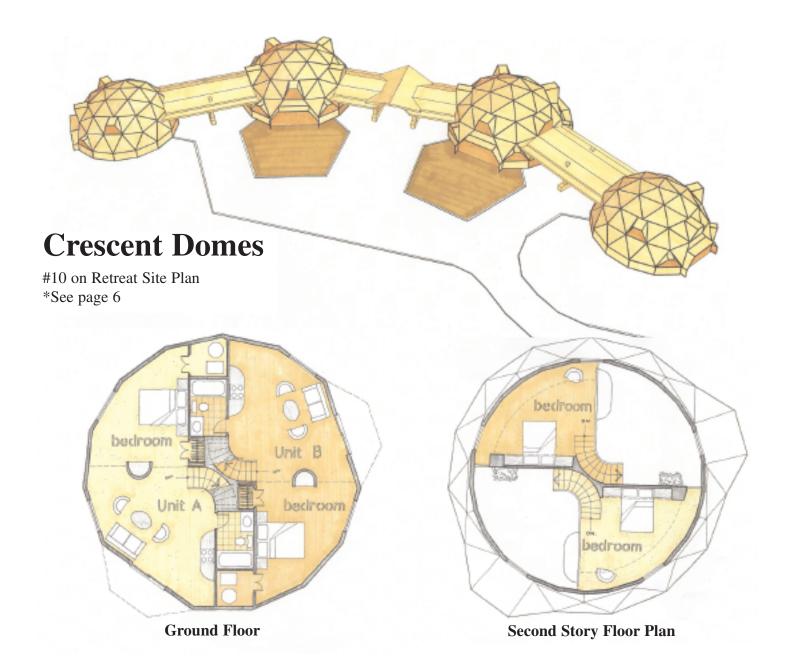
CLCMC has proposed that we design and oversee the construction of a maintenance building to be used by Golden Lotus and Clear Light. The building will be heated and have the capacity to house our road maintenance equipment and keep it operational at all times. It will have a mechanic's bay, a multipurpose woodworker's shop for the Retreat staff, two bays for fire trucks, a small room to one side that residents could use to meet contractors, architects, and building professionals in the initial stages of building their home, and on the other side of the building a small apartment for Retreat maintenance staff.

Because of our distance to Vanderbilt's Fire Station, we feel we need to enhance our capability to fight fire by having our own fire fighting equipment as we had in the past. The design, location, and cost shall be approved by Golden Lotus. The building will then proceed after receiving Otsego County permit approval and as funds become available from lease income. The building could be built in stages

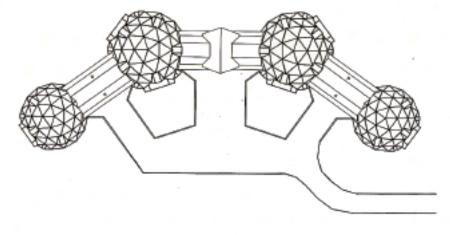
Following this, we have proposed to address one of the greatest needs of our Retreat – high quality guest accommodations for retreatants. Following the development of the PUD, which outlines the future land use of the entire 800 acre Ranch property, Bob Raymer commissioned architect and long-time devotee Paul Gordon to develop specific designs for future buildings. The inspirational and innovative nature of Paul's work is ideally suited to the "Yoga Retreat of Excellence" Master requested of Yogacharya. The Golden Lotus Board will choose which of the three designs illustrated in this newsletter the Clear Light Board will construct first. The projected layout of the Retreat area shows where each of the buildings would be.

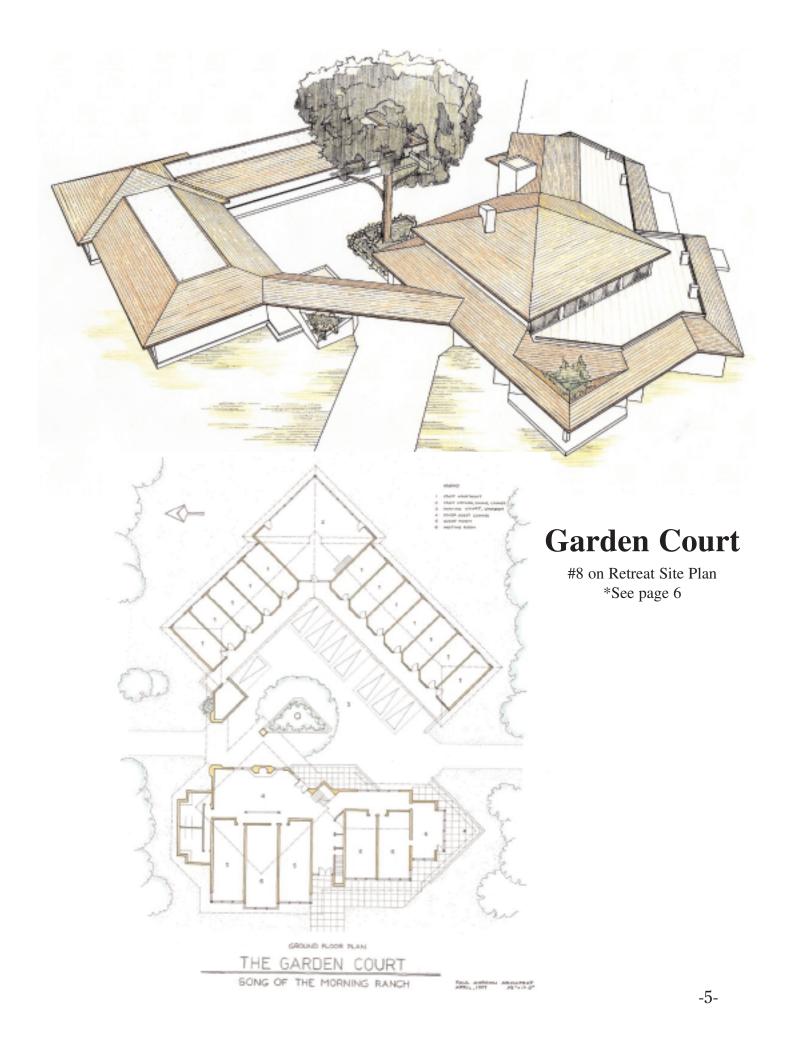
Once this building is completed, CLCMC has proposed to build the Community Center on the Lot in Phase I designated for this purpose, located on the corner of Mukunda and Tranquility Trails. The structure, not yet designed, will serve not only the fast growing community with already needed office, meeting, and activity space, but will also be available for the growing number of Retreat events.

With the continued guidance of the Masters and support of all of you, these structures will soon be here to serve devotees.



This innovative design by Paul Gordon creates the illusion of a complete dome from either apartment of the two center domes. Each apartment actually occupies only one half of the two-story domes.





Retreat Area Site Plan Building Legend

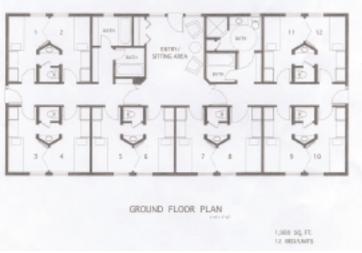
- 1. Boathouse
- 2. Lodge
- 3. Wheelhouse
- 4. Lower Domes
- 5. Dining House/Office
- 6. Proposed Building, "Diamond Site"
- 7. Ranch Garden
- 8. Proposed Building, "Garden Court"
- 9. Future Reconstructed Domes
- 10. Proposed Building, "Crescent Cluster Domes"



SONG OF THE MORNING

TRUL CORDOU ARCHITECT





Diamond Site

#6 on Retreat Area Site Plan
*Above



Tri-Devi Nilayam: A Home Dedicated To Divine Mother

by Sam and Linda Gabby

When I first read *Autobiography of a Yogi* in 1970 I was impressed with Yogananda's devotional fervor, his longing for and love of God, whom he often referred to as 'Divine Mother'. He would say "*Pray to the Mother Divine and she will answer, for the Mother is closer than the Father.*"

Having been raised in a typically patriarchal Protestant tradition where God as the Father is emphasized, this seemed strange to me. But I respected the integrity of Yogananda and several of his direct disciples that I later met enough to suspend judgment when they described frequent inner dialogue and guidance received directly from Divine Mother. Yogananda once told Swami Kriyananda that he 'only did what Divine Mother told him to do.' While I do not remember Yogacharya speaking in quite that way, he did often say that one could 'converse' with God in meditation as friend to friend, and he often received guidance from the 'inner voice'. I recall with loving remembrance the stirring inner alertness one felt while waiting for Sunday services to begin, as his 'theme song' "Engrossed is the bee of my mind, on the blue lotus feet of my Divine Mother" would signal his arrival.

Over the last almost 40 years it has been my great joy and blessing to have spent many blissful hours with many of the world's greatest living Masters. During this time, true to Yogananda's word, Divine Mother has gradually become real to me on many levels – and certainly much closer than I ever could have imagined. It is with immense gratitude, both for the privilege of building and living on land that Linda and I have always considered sacred, as well as for the countless blessings Divine Mother has showered on us through so many great Lovers of

God, that we wished to build our home according to the ancient Vedic principles of Vastu, as an offering to Divine Mother (especially as represented by three of her principle representations: Kali, Saraswati, and Lakshmi). Since we currently live out of town, we wanted to work with a local architect familiar with local contractors who would personally oversee the construction process. We also wanted someone who was committed to energy efficiency, green building, and was cost conscious. We chose Tad C. Latuszek, AIA, LEED to work with and have been impressed with his enthusiasm, integrity, and willingness to learn and work with us within the specifications of Vastu design. We feel that Tad represents an excellent value for us, handling all aspects of the design and construction process for a reasonable fixed fee.

Our home will be situated on Lot 57 in Phase II. It will be super insulated, concrete form, two stories with full basement, attached garage, approximately 2400 square feet. The exterior will be stucco and artificial stone. It will have radiant heat throughout, solar assisted high mass (insulated sand box) with a wood burning backup furnace/fireplace.

A central column of light will stream down from a clearstory through an opening in the second floor called the Brahmastan. The second floor center area forms the shape of a four gated Yantra. The clearstory will contain a Tripura Sundari (Sri) Yantra, and at the bottom of the light column on the first floor will be a Tripura Bhairavi Yantra at Ganesha's feet who is facing the main entrance of the house. The Puja or meditation room in the north east corner of the porch will have stained glass overlays of the ten Mahavidya yantras of Divine Mother around the upper perimeter of the room. Traditionally, yantras are regarded as actual embodiments of the aspects of Divine Mother they represent in geometrical form. It is our wish that the house itself may be regarded as a Divine Mother Yantra and that all who enter may be blessed by Her presence.



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Designing Our Home

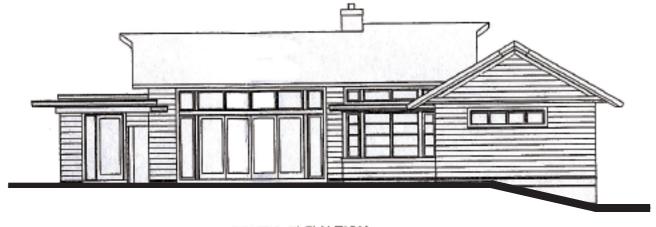
by Anne & John Pfluecke



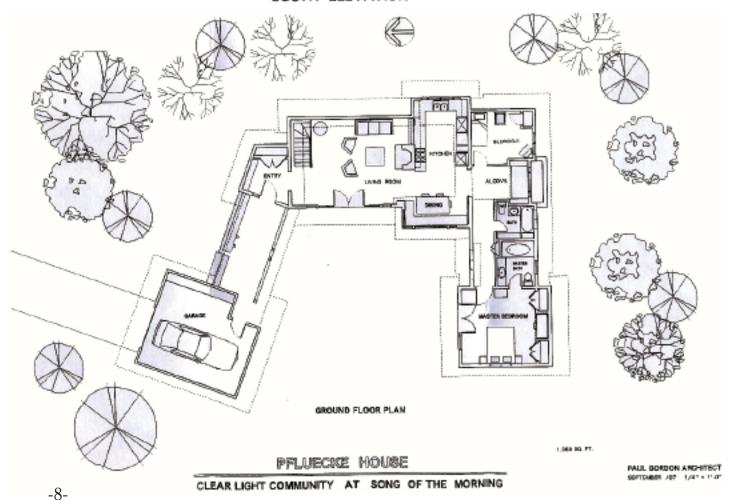
Anne and I asked Paul Gordon to design a home within a range of 1250-1350 square feet with French doors and a Japanese influenced look. Other than that, we did not suggest what shape the home should be. He designed a home just the way Anne thought it would look! Paul has cautioned many times that no matter what one's budget is, what the home owners want and what the owners can afford, may be two different things.

The budget price came in a "bit" high but with a little work we think we will be able to build the home without any design changes.

We felt that Paul understood what we wanted, both voiced and unvoiced, and he was able to turn our words and thoughts into a wonderful design. Paul remembered the little things we mentioned. Furthermore, he integrated into the design something that we'd liked and had said to him more than a year earlier. Paul was so thoughtful in his approach to designing our home, it was as if he were designing the home for himself!



SOUTH ELEVATION



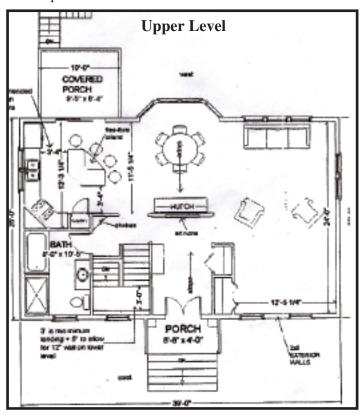
Building a House; Where to begin?



by Don Handyside

We have all heard the adage that "a journey of 1,000 mile begins with one step". The prospect of building a house can seem like a monumental journey. This journey also must begin with a few basic steps or decisions. In the sincere hope that my decision making process may be of assistance to others embarking on this journey, I will share the series of steps I have taken so far.

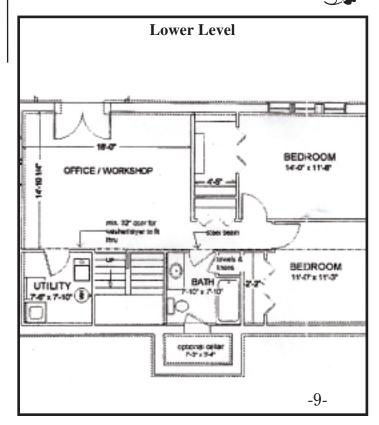
With so many possibilities for house designs, it was clear I needed to make some basic decisions that would point me in a specific direction. As I looked at houses and house designs, the style that I found most interesting was a modern design that was fairly simple and also had a subtle Asian "flavor". I came to call this style "Asian fusion". I was also interested in some design concepts suggested by feng shui. A symmetrical shape such as a square or a rectangle is suggested by feng shui as being the most beneficial. Fortunately, this building shape can be the most costeffective to construct. This shape also lends itself well to the type of design that I was attracted to. Next, I needed to make a decision regarding size. The ancient Greeks believed that a "Golden Mean" rectangle, that is a rectangle with a width to length ratio of 1.618... (phi), has the most aesthetically pleasing proportions.. A rectangle with this ratio is also thought to have certain beneficial vibrational qualities.



My decision regarding the exact length and width of the house was influenced by the knowledge that a two story house can often save 20% in construction costs over a one story house with the same sq ft of living space. This is because the two story house requires a smaller foundation and smaller roof, both which are expensive to build. With respect to orientation of the house on the lot, both feng shui and its vedic counterpart, vastu shastra, strongly suggest that the main entrance to the house be facing directly east or north.

So, now with a few decisions, I had the basic design, size and placement on the lot. The interior floor plan also fell into place once a couple of decisions were made. First, I knew that I wanted to place the meditation room in the northeast part of the house. Second, I wanted a south facing window in the kitchen so I could grow sprouts in the window and could have an adjacent green house. From those two decisions the rest of the floor was easy to design.

With regard to the house exterior, I just have a few more details to work out. So we'll all have to wait a while to see the finished design. While this process has taken a lot of thought, it has been and still is a very interesting journey. For others the first steps in this process may be different. Some may first consult an architect, others may find a stock house plan. But, whatever your first steps are, my suggestion is that you begin the journey as soon as possible. With the opportunity to live at the Ranch as the destination, the journey is just too compelling to pass up.



The Northern Michigan Experience

by Stephen Sandner



By mid-December, 1971, in northern Michigan, there was an extraordinary amount of snow that we just don't see nowadays so early in the season. The ski resorts had already started operating by Thanksgiving, and they were charging the enormous sum of \$12 per day to ski. I was about to move from Detroit to Gaylord, and was scheduled to start working at Otsego Ski Club as a full-time musician. When I told Yogacharya how much I was making, he seemed surprised, but, he said, don't feel bad about making so high a salary, because they charge so much for the ski passes!

A main feature of visiting or living in northern Michigan is a certain "experience:" hard to describe, but it includes a kind of euphoria and a feeling of peace and deep contentment. Largely, I think, it's this "experience" that attracts millions of tourists and accounts for the many second (or third) homes, and an accelerated population growth in the area. Many hunters will tell you that the main attraction for their activity is "being in the woods, being in nature." It's true that, after living in the North Country for a while, the euphoria fades a bit—but experiences will always recur: a sunset, a starry night, a blissful breeze, when you say to yourself, "this is why I live here."

Driving up I-75 that cold December day, accompanied by a pregnant wife, and with all my possessions packed into a small unheated Ford Falcon, I was filled with high emotion and anticipation. Best of all, relocating in Gaylord would mean living close to the Ranch, where a new, young staff was enthusiastically producing tasty, healthy meals; and, Yogacharya between weekends, would often drive up from his home in Detroit and supervise Ranch projects, lead evening meditations and provide lively conversation during dinner and after meditation.

Experiences years earlier at the Ranch were amazing. The morning of my first visit to the Ranch (which was in the summer,) I walked out of the lodge, and at the opposite side of the lake, a doe and fawn were drinking at the water's edge.

There was an intoxicating smell of pine trees, and the sky was a dazzling blue. There was a spiritual aura of peace that we all feel. Since then, I have enjoyed living in Gaylord and in other beautiful areas of northern Michigan, but the experience at the Ranch has always been deeper. Bob Raymer once remarked that even an accidental visitor to the property, maybe someone just exploring the back roads and stumbling onto the lake and waterfall setting, will have some kind of spiritual experience.

During these earlier visits, Yogacharya had helped to initiate me in some of the ways of Northern Michigan. After an afternoon of exploring back roads and fields, on foot and in his Lincoln, we were about to travel back to the Ranch. We were both wearing shorts, and Yogacharya changed to long pants and asked me if I was going to change. No, I said, it's a beautiful summer day, and I'll just stay in my shorts. As we walked at the Ranch later that evening, I "froze," while Yogacharya was quite comfortable, thank you! (The lesson, northern latitudes are much cooler, especially at night.) Another visit, he got the idea that I should experience using a chain saw. There was a fallen tree in the field by the domes, and he put me to work. This was a completely new experience for me, and I tried to use a little common sense, cutting at correct angles and using the right amount of pressure. After just a few minutes, the chain snapped. I was devastated to have failed so blatantly in front of I dejectedly carried the broken chain Yogacharya. saw, and we walked slowly together, in complete silence, across the lower bridge and back to the workshop. (The lesson: use the oil button to feed oil to the blades, and don't twist the saw while cutting.) Later on, I bought my own chain saw and used it successfully and quite extensively!

Then, this December move, 36 years ago, was the beginning of many more life experiences in spirit and nature. It was gratifying to make new friends in town who shared an appreciation for living in a small town, peaceful environment. There were also difficult challenges facing problems in work and relationships—possibly made more intense, in general, living close to the Ranch, by our dedication and desire to grow spiritually. We remind ourselves that every problem has a solution and that the Masters won't give us more than we can handle!

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The Northern Michigan Experience continued...

by Stephen Sandner

Of course, there were many indescribable moments of peace and joy along the way: hanging out late at the boathouse; chanting outdoors; a late-night moonlit walk (with long pants); the northern lights; a spontaneous outdoor meditation; meeting just the right person at just the right time; feeling, at times, utterly at peace with yourself and with the Infinite Spirit. Finally, it was a joy to be at the Retreat this past summer, seeing the bright, young staff in action, teen week, renewing old friendships, renewing outer and inner experiences. Continuing to build on moments such as these, and similar experiences that we have all had, the new Community and the Retreat will have a far-reaching future.

Namaste, Steve

Aloha All From Maui



by Anne Trygstad

I have been most fortunate to live in Maui for ten years. I have worked as a Registered Nurse and Community Project Coordinator, focused on improving Maui's health care for residents and visitors. It has been rewarding work, but I have always known I would not remain in Hawaii.

Many refer to Maui as "paradise." However, I have learned each of us carries "paradise" within our hearts. The closest I have come to "paradise" was during my staff years with Yogacharya, at Song of the Morning Ranch. As Yogacharya used to say, Song of the Morning Ranch is "Dixie" to me.

As I contemplate returning to the Ranch, I am flooded with precious memories. After visiting Hawaii, Yogacharya referred to it as "a rose in the Pacific." He brought trinkets back for the staff. He invited each of the "girls" to choose a shell necklace. We all scrambled and chose while he observed quietly. Afterwards, he said each of us had picked the one he had selected for us. It made the necklace very special to me.

Yogacharya used to say "we learn through our fingertips." I remember standing by the stove with a cookbook in one hand, stirring a huge pot of broccoli soup with the other. Yogacharya saw me and roared with laughter. I didn't know what I was doing, but I was learning through my "fingertips." (I later became a Kitchen Manager for the Good Earth Restaurant in La Jolla, California.)

His teaching was incomparable on all levels, and "custom tailored" to each of us. He said, "All the Masters have blessed the Ranch," and he "stomped" over every part of the land leaving his blessing.

I look forward to returning as a member of the Clear Light Community. Nothing compares to the stunning beauty of the woods, the lake and the deep spiritual fellowship of our community. Hawaiian culture is based on the values of Aloha (Love) and Ohana (Family.) Both of these qualities are deeply embedded in our Clear Light Community. Song of the Morning Ranch is my "*Paradise*." It has always been my spiritual home.

Discounted Lots Available

Two of our leaseholders are willing to sell their leasehold interest at a discount. Purchasers would apply for membership to the community, and pay the \$1,000 membership fee required of all leaseholders. They would then pay for the lease according to terms agreed upon with the lease owner. The lots available are Lot #18, located at the junction of Yogacharya Way and Tranquility Trail, and Lot # 34, located on Golden Lotus Trail. Both lots are in Phase I, the residential area closest to Retreat activities. Persons interested in Lot 18 should contact Sam Spitale at 586-260-6850. Persons interested in Lot 34 should contact Joyce or Roger Fitzgerald at 515-457-7986.

If you plan to visit the Retreat, Carol or Richard Armour at 989-983-9136 will be glad to help you.

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A Letter From Yogacharya Oliver

To The Membership, Written February 7, 1986



Dear Ones...

Thank you, my dear ones, for your continued generous love offerings to GOLDEN LOTUS. You have no idea how much they mean to all of us.

We are gradually making progress with improving the Retreat, as well as planning the Colony.

We are all gathered together, following Master's Teachings. Looking the world over, we would never find any teachings that would surpass His in basic Truth. We have come to the end of our searching!

May we continue working together for the furtherance of the cause of Master's Work.

With unceasing blessings,

Yogacharya

Friends and Members Week at the Retreat

MONDAY, JUNE 30 THROUGH SUNDAY, JULY 6, 2008

If you are coming for the June 28 Clear Light Meeting, why not give yourself a real treat and spiritual boost by staying awhile? Friends and Members Week provides meals and lodging for only \$140 for the week, or \$25 a day. In exchange for the discounted rate, you will have the opportunity to organize and work on exciting Ranch projects, attend daily Meditation, and enjoy evening concerts, get-togethers, and the unspeakable joy of being all together in Master's love and service – a dedicated yogi's dream sadhana vacation!

Contact the Retreat for -12- further information: 989-983-4107.

Building the Future



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

- Paramahansa Yogananda

ANNUAL CLEAR LIGHT COMMUNITY MEETING

Saturday, June 28, 2008

11:00 a.m. *Everyone Welcome!*

Watch the community grow! Join us on tour of construction sites around the community to help you with the decisions you face in building your own home.

It takes the love and devotion of all of us to bring about so grand a project as the World Brotherhood Colony envisioned by Master, Yogacharya Oliver, and Bob Raymer for our Retreat. Will you be part of it?

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



In Memory Of Our Beloved



Brij and Aasha Chhabra

who passed on
March 11, 2008
Brij and Aasha had intended
to build a home on Lot 17
in our community.
They will always have a home
in the community of our hearts.

Special Condolences to their daughter Suman.

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 for the 2006 Birthday Celebration. 1) A safety rail for the retaining wall a 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