

# Clear Light Community News

June 2011

Vol. 10



**Scenes from Song of the Morning Ranch**

*"The magnificent painting of creation stretches across the infinite canvas of time and space.  
Every object, every event in nature is a masterful stroke of the Great Painter."  
– Paramahansa Yogananda*

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

Did you ever wonder if people weren't meant to have a closer relationship with the natural world, if sensitivities weren't waiting to be developed with the fascinating array of life with which God has populated the earth? Meditation, as taught by Master, deepens awareness, and that deepened awareness begins to discern a new world in each shape, size and species of being.

Life in the Clear Light Community at Song of the Morning Ranch offers endless opportunities to make the acquaintance of four-legged, feathered or furry neighbors on their own terms, wild and free and willing to learn, just like we. A friendly skunk sits quiet and curious at the feet of a guest doing recharging exercises out of doors. Is he picking up new moves? Chickadees land on a shoulder, looking for the sunflower seeds they know we supply to brighten their winter. Majestic and immense trumpeter swans, sensing no enemies here, bring their dark-colored young ones to the haven of safety we know our retreat to be. Raccoons pay for their marauding ways by free entertainment with their endless antics. The bald eagles so tune in to the important events of the community and retreat that they appear at auspicious times, signaling an understanding, a protection, a blessing. How can one resist the snapper turtle babies, so ugly they are adorable, and symbolic of how to survive in this rough and tumble world -- from time to time drawing in their limbs and resting safe in their own inner world. If you ever wonder why people get into the trouble that they do, just watch a group of birds. All is serene until one malcontent picks on another, then Bird War III has begun.

Master has said, "There are inconceivable powers locked in the heart of nature -- powers that man has yet to discover. The whole purpose of creation is to compel you to solve its mystery and perceive God behind all."

In the richness of life in the Clear Light Community, you can experience what He was saying. And with chirp, howl, squeak, or melodious symphony of sound, we all join together in offering you a heartfelt "WELCOME TO THE COMMUNITY."

Clear Light Community Management Company, Inc.

## HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION REPORT

---

***"The happiness of one's own heart alone cannot satisfy the soul; one must try to include, as necessary to one's own happiness, the happiness of others." - Paramahansa Yogananda***

In the fall of 2009, the Clear Light Community Homeowners Association was created and registered with the State of Michigan. The stated purpose of the Association is "to promote and protect the interests of the lessees of lots within the Clear Light Community developed by Golden Lotus, Inc. and located in Vanderbilt, Michigan."

Our first project, the Clear Light Community garden of 2010, was a huge success! There was so much food at harvest time that some was even donated to the local homeless shelter. This year, because so many of the residents are now on staff with limited time available, the garden will take on a different format. Instead of one large garden, we will have separate plots for each home. That way each plot will have only the crops wanted by the homeowner to allow them to budget the time they will be able to put into it. The garden is a learning experience for all, and until we have more residents in the community, the garden area awaits, fully equipped with electricity, well, watering system, amended soil, fencing and a large hoop house. The playground is nearby for those with small children.

One of the new fun events we would like to do annually will be our "Home Om". In conjunction with the home tour on July 2nd, all will gather at each home, join hands, hearts and voices to chant the sacred sound of Om to bless each home. For the past two years we have done this on Christmas Day around the sacred yantra in Sam and Linda's foyer. The energy and blessings that were created were phenomenal and felt by all. Please join us for this event, you won't want to miss it.

Everything that we do as a community creates a bond and emphasizes the joy and gratitude we have for living in these sacred surroundings, with the Masters here to bless all of us. If you have not picked out your lot yet, do so, and join with us in community.

# MANAGER'S REPORT

By Richard Armour, Project Manager

---

The Clear Light Community exists at Song of the Morning Ranch, a Yoga Retreat dedicated to the balanced development of body, mind, and soul through Master's teachings and the teachings of Yoga. All sincere devotees are welcome here, where they may attend Self-Realization Fellowship meditations and services and participate in a variety of activities. Gardening, assisting the retreat in various roles, yoga exercise classes and trainings, vegetarian cooking, and a variety of class offerings are designed to support a yoga life style, whose goal is communion with the indwelling presence of God.

The residents of the Clear Light Community have an unequalled opportunity to participate in and support the Retreat Center, and their permanent houses on the property offer a stability and continuity to the retreat development that cannot be supplied by a retreat staff that comes and goes. We are very proud of the dedication and commitment of our community residents to the maintenance and development of Song of the Morning Ranch. Retreat staff and guests have become our extended family, and if staff members move on to pursue a career in the world, they know they have a spiritual home to come back to, where they can, if they choose, build their home, raise a family, and continue moving our retreat forward towards the realization of all the dreams, visions and directives passed down from our Master Paramahansa Yogananda through Yogacharya and Bob Raymer.

One small part of that vision will be in development this year. Many years ago, Yogacharya predicted that trails would criss-cross the entire property. One of those trails, connecting the Lahiri Mahasaya shrine to the Sri Yukteswar shrine, will be completed this summer. Walk quietly, so as not to disturb the eagles nesting nearby!

The opportunity for private communion with God and the Masters throughout our 800 acre property, supported by the stellar displays of undisturbed nature, will be greatly enhanced by this trail system.

We are also accumulating the funds, through lease payments, to put up all maintenance buildings that will house our fire protection, road maintenance and other equipment, as well as office, meeting, and work space. All money from leases goes directly to the work of developing the community.

Don't forget to attend our Saturday, July 2nd Community Meeting and Workshop. This year, we are excited to have Doug Good, of Preston Feather's building supply in Gaylord, talk with us. Doug represents a component building system. Plans are brought to them in Gaylord and they build the components at their Gaylord facility and then deliver them to the builder or homeowner at the building site. The framing from the basement to the roof can be up in less than two weeks. He will describe the benefits of this system-- improved quality controls and savings in time and money.



Bald Eagle's Nest, near overlook

*O' Divine Mother; I am Thy little babe, Thy helpless babe, secretly sitting on Thy lap of Immortality. – PY*

# **Congratulations to Lessees on the No-Interest Payment Plan**

Eight years ago, the Clear Light Community Management Company offered a one-time-only no-interest payment plan to bring forward lessees in the Clear Light Community. Beginning July of this year, those members who took advantage of the offer are the proud owners of their lease in the Clear Light Community -- completely paid and waiting for their house!

We are deeply grateful to these members. The funds that their lease provided, years before they themselves were ready to move into the Community, have brought in our roads, electric power, phone lines, and community garden. Continued funds coming in from leases will construct a much needed maintenance building, bring fire safety, develop the cottage industry area, and many other projects as we progress in the development of the PUD adopted by the Golden Lotus Board and approved by the Zoning Board. Those who lease lots in the Community actually "double their money." Not only do they gain the right to build their primary or second home on the sacred ground of our "Yoga Retreat of Excellence," but since Clear Light members take no salaries for their work, every penny goes directly to develop the project -- its like making a donation while leasing a lot!

If you are on the eight-year plan, as you approach your final month of payment, you will receive a letter to confirm your final payment date. If you missed this original payment plan, the flexible, low-interest payment plan is still available to you, allowing you to pay for your lease at a rate that fits your budget and your time line for joining the Community. Total cost for leasing a lot in the Clear Light Community still remains \$21,900, which includes "\$1,000 Membership, \$5,000 actual lease cost, and \$15,900 leasehold improvement costs. There are also some closing and legal fees applicable when the lease is signed.

Yogacharya has said, "Spiritual things grow slowly." Yet, like the tortoise, the "slow and steady" option of paying for your lease can win you the race of being among the first to participate in this great project of Master's -- a community of like-minded devotees who support each other in love and brotherhood, and in making their search for God the central focus of their life.

## **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

**ABOUT LEASING AND THE CURRENT PAYMENT PLAN, OR A TOUR OF THE COMMUNITY,  
PLEASE CONTACT:**

**RICHARD OR CAROL ARMOUR AT: 989-983-9136.**

**Please leave your name and phone number so they  
can return your call.**

**RICHARD OR CAROL ARMOUR**

**9534 RAJASI CIRCLE**

**VANDERBILT, MI 49795**



# Annual Clear Light Community Meeting

Saturday, July 2, 2011  
11:00 a.m. - 3 p.m.

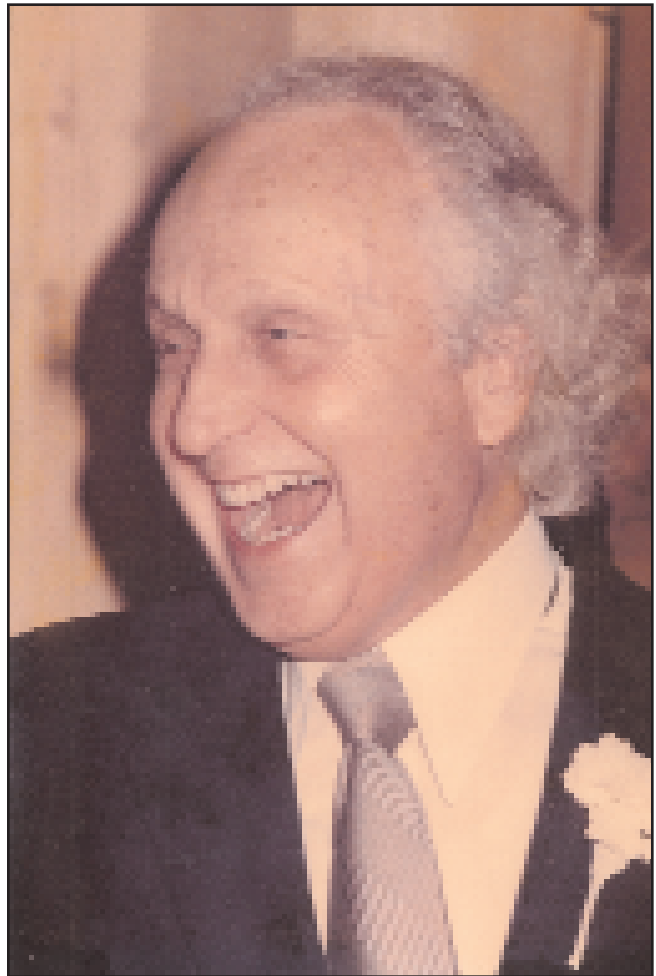
Everyone is cordially invited to hear updates and be involved in the future plans of our Clear Light Community at Song of the Morning Ranch.

This year, focus will be on cost cutting techniques of building your home.

Featured speaker Doug Good of Preston Feather's in Gaylord will speak about improving quality control and saving time and money by having your building plans brought to them, and having components constructed and delivered to your building site.

We will be looking into home kits, and exploring possibilities of pooling skills to help our leaseholders build within their budget.

Tours of the community will be available following the meeting, including an introduction to our new trail.



Yogacharya Oliver

*"Follow the trail of beauty. I am hidden somewhere in its heart." –Paramahansa Yogananda*

Join us for the "Home Om," sponsored by our new Homeowner's Association.

## PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITY

---

Building in a forest requires diligence in fire safety. Besides the extra precautions that each home owner and the retreat can make, which was presented clearly by Alan Frank at our annual community meeting last summer, there must be the capacity to contain a fire until the Vanderbilt and Gaylord Fire Departments can get here. This would mean the difference between saving or losing a structure, and preventing a wide-spread tragedy.

Clear Light Board Members Tom Walker and Richard Armour are actively investigating just the right fire equipment, supplies and training. There are no plans to reestablish the Golden Lotus Fire Department that once existed at the Retreat, due to new regulations and expense. However, there is much we can do with trained personnel, a regular schedule to be sure equipment is usable at all times, and an "on-call" system for access to those trained to use it. The proposed maintenance building would house the equipment, keeping water from freezing and equipment accessible and organized.

Tom Walker, active volunteer fire fighter for many years, will work with managers Richard Armour and John Pfluecke to develop the program. In the meantime, homeowners should be reviewing the hand-outs provided by Alan, to see if they are doing their part in protecting their home and our retreat.



"Don McMullen received fire training while on staff at Song of the Morning Ranch. Today, the Clear Light Community will be organizing once again for the protection of the retreat and community."



"Is this the right truck?  
Tom Walker checks out an available vehicle."

## CLEAR LIGHT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

---

Yogacharya Oliver told us many times that Song of the Morning Ranch had an extensive future, and that those of us alive now are the "pioneers" of this great project. At the outset of the Clear Light Community, we were asked by the Zoning Board to present a plan with our intentions for future as well as current development, resulting in the PUD (planned unit development) adopted by Golden Lotus and approved by zoning. This plan designates certain areas for specific types of development. For example, besides the Retreat with its accommodations, activities and meditation areas, there is a single-family residential area, a "cottage-industry" area, and a "town center" area.

Funds to begin the development of the project came from leases in the single family residential area. The Rules and Regulations that each potential leaseholder is given when inquiring about the project states that this area is for single family residential purposes, and the Disclosure Statement also given at this time states that rental apartments, condominiums, hotel-style guest accommodations, and other developments are anticipated for the future in the overall development plan, in areas designated for these purposes.

As our community has grown, questions have arisen as to what is permissible in the single family area as regards to rentals. If a leaseholder is not occupying their home, they may sub-lease it to another for single-family residential purposes. Thus, if their home is built and they are not occupying it, or if they occupy it only seasonally, they must obtain approval for the temporary tenant if that tenant will occupy the home for more than six weeks, as long as the subleasing is not a business use of the property. An example of this is a bed and breakfast, or a policy of renting to retreat guests, which is not allowed. Here is the wording provided by our attorneys:

*“You have requested my opinion with respect to the term ‘single family residential purposes’ as provided in the Clear Light condominium documents.*

*Michigan courts have held that “residential purposes” prohibit a commercial or business use of property as a for-profit operation. The courts define “family” as a husband and wife having no children and living alone together, or it may mean children, or blood relatives, or any group constituting a distinct domestic or social body. Therefore, apartments, time-share and Bed and Breakfasts are not allowed.*

*The condominium Residential Property lease provides that subleasing for a period in excess of six weeks requires written permission of the Clear Light Community Management Company, Inc.. Subleasing is permissible if it is not a business use of the property for profit.” – David M. Delaney*

*“... while the occasional rental of property to family or friends is allowed, steady rental of a unit for what amounts to business purposes, is prohibited by a deed restriction restricting use to ‘single family residential purposes.’ As discussed during our meeting, long term rental, for example for a period in excess of six weeks (as referred to in paragraph 9 of the Residential Property Lease), does not violate a restriction for “single family residential purposes” since the property would essentially become the residence of the renter, not a vacation site, during the course of the rental.” – James F. Pagels*

These definitions allow a great deal of flexibility for leaseholders while prohibiting commercial use. For example, a leaseholder may share their home as a social unit with another like-minded yogi, or provide a place to stay to another friend building their home in the Clear Light Community, as long as these are incidental occurrences, and not a steady or “commercial” practice.

Although these are the “pioneer days” of a much more extensive project, as described to Yogacharya by Master Himself, it is the responsibility of the Clear Light Community Management Company to maintain the growth and development in keeping with its approved Plan and long-term organization.

If you have any questions, please bring them up at our Annual Meeting on July 2nd, or call 989-983-9136. Please leave your name and a number where we can reach you. It is our joy to discuss the plans of the Clear Light Community with you.

## **A JOURNEY WORTH TAKING**

By Sandi Jones and Tom Walker

---

I came to Song of the Morning for the first time in the mid 70's. I was living in Milwaukee at the time and had been introduced to our Hatha Yoga classes taught by Jessica Vendetti and her brother Bruce VanDyke. Dianne Western, a member of the Ranch, was a fellow teacher in the elementary school where I taught and she had made me aware of Yogananda's teachings and the local meditation group. I was drawn to the teachings but not quite certain how deeply I wanted to go in this new direction.

Arriving at the retreat in late afternoon, I was aware of how remote the area seemed to me, having lived in the city for a few years. I was introduced to Yogacharya --- what an unusually vibrant man, I thought. Later I helped in the kitchen, and I thought "I wonder if I could do this." Thus the seeds were planted for my coming on staff a few years later. After spending quite a lot of time driving across the Upper Peninsula and back on a regular basis, I decided it was time to move to Song of the Morning. So I asked Yogacharya if I could come and he inquired when I was able to arrive there. I said that I would be there by the Labor Day weekend, which was his annual birthday celebration, and one of the most well-attended activities of the year.

What a flurry of activity I was in for! Mountains and mountains of dishes! Cleaning, cooking, gardening, canning -- in those days we had a big garden and froze and canned alot of food. It was a never-ending blur of work. Gradually I began to work with more joy in my heart, clearing the many barriers to service and fulfillment that had been placed there over the years and incarnations. Of course, we always had meditation at 8pm and Yogacharya was always present. He often talked afterwards as well as after dinner. These were special times when questions were sometimes answered, often without asking! What an amazing experience to have an enlightened being in our midst!

When I left staff to go back out into the world, I was a changed person. I wondered how it was that folks on the outside could live without the peace of meditation. I wondered what I would do next! Spirit had a plan for me and soon I was driving up and down I 75 and 23 to Lansing for work on my Masters degree in Social Work. Back to the integration of my spiritual life with the larger world.

One of my many blessings was that I had found my life's partner while at Song of the Morning, and Tom and I began our life together in the then small town of Gaylord. We had a little cabin in the woods that was rented to us by Bob Korb, the owner of 80 acres of land near Gaylord at the time. This was another blessing as it made a nice transition from the privacy of the Ranch.

Many years later we are still living nearby and attend Ranch activities on a regular basis. I can't imagine not being with my "family"! We both look forward to the day when we can build our home at Song of the Morning. We have almost paid off our lease and can look for the next step, whenever it should unfold for us.

Whether you too are planning to build in the Clear Light Community or are a regular or a occasional visitor, there is always something worthwhile in the experience of coming together with fellow yogis in the beautiful setting that has been bestowed on us. Love and guidance is always with us wherever we go, but seems enhanced while in the uplifting atmosphere of the retreat center. Tom and I enjoy the company of your presence in our family of fellow spiritual travelers. May you be blessed with peace and joy and may we all find our direction through the Wisdom of our Gurus and our unfolding path towards enlightenment.

## WHY YOGACHARYA FOUNDED SONG OF THE MORNING RANCH

---



We know that the basic features of our *"Yoga Retreat of Excellence"* were outlined by Master himself. This is how Yogacharya explained it: ***"Master told me to get out of business, regular business activity---that I didn't need it anymore. He said, Your work is spiritual work."***

***I don't know how long later that Master laid out my work and pointed out just what He wanted me to do, and foretold what would happen. I said, How can I do anything like that? I know what you want, but it would take the tax-exempt money from 12-15 of the richest millionaires in the country to finance a thing like that.' He replied, "Forget that ...all I'm asking you to do is put your mind to it, and we'll all help you." So I've done that ever since."***

Yogacharya also said: ***"We have property here that's worth 10-12 million dollars. We've got grass roots to begin to lay out phases for a whole new type of spiritual culture through His teachings, which is balancing the physical, mental and spiritual. We have the talent, and every necessary thing to do this thing."***

The Clear Light Community is just one phase of the multilayered plans for the development of Song of the Morning Ranch. Yogacharya told us that ***"Yoga is the highest form of culture."*** He said: ***"Master's work, to me, is perfect. I see no fault in His teachings in any way."***

***"It just seems like the old truth that 'if you give, you get. I gave it without any recourse or anything coming back to me, getting not only a great spiritual satisfaction, but I found out the law works! Its getting better and bigger all the time. All we have to do is wait now for a while and see what happens!"***

Master predicted that the time would come when the Retreat would be connected with Self-Realization Fellowship, assuring that His teachings would remain the central core of Retreat life. Which one of us has not benefited from the beauty, the peace and the presence of God that is our Song of the Morning Ranch? How very many of us feel that it is our own?