

# Clear Light Community News

June 2012

Vol. 11

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

If spiritual devotees around the world could have their wish of an ideal living environment, might they not visualize something like what already exists at Song of the Morning Ranch? The tranquil, natural setting, like-minded companions -- Master's very concept of a "World Brotherhood Colony" in our war-torn and competitive world is inspirational. The reality is more so.

What we have is a Retreat Center, with meditations, vegetarian meals, and accommodations, where visitors of every background can share in forest serenity and natural beauty while being exposed to Master's teachings through Self-Realization Fellowship services and meditations. This is beautifully symbolized by a future temple plan passed on to us by our founder, Yogacharya Oliver. It will have a large central meditation dome, surrounded by five small chapels like the five points on a star -- each one dedicated to one of the world's major religions: Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. Each chapel will join with the central SRF meditation dome, where through the scientific meditation techniques taught by Master, people of all religions can realize God.

Besides the Retreat area, we have the single-family living area, consisting of 72 home sites. Residents of the community have a unique opportunity to participate in Retreat life. Entrepreneurs will find exquisite opportunities in that we are still in the "pioneer" days of the project, described to us by Yogacharya, and begun under our second Spiritual Director, Bob Raymer. Recently, residents have stepped forward to bring Broadband to the Retreat, to organize meditations and services, gardening and root cellar projects, all-day retreat programs, and other classes and activities benefiting everyone who visits the Retreat.

Lastly, and most importantly, the spiritual atmosphere of Community, staff, and guests united in their search for God gives an other-worldly glow to everyday life. "Live God," Yogacharya said. All of us blessed to live here invite all of you to come and join us whenever you can.

We offer you a heartfelt -

### ***WELCOME TO THE COMMUNITY!***

9607 Sturgeon Valley Rd.  
Vanderbilt, MI 49735



**Yogacharya J. Oliver Black, Minister of Self-Realization Fellowship, Founder of Golden Lotus/Song of the Morning Ranch.** -- Yogacharya followed Master's wishes in leading the Detroit SRF Center and in founding a "retreat away from the city" where people could come for relaxation and spiritual refreshment.

He passed on in 1989 at the age of 96. In his Will, he expressed his "deepest wish" that we remain with Self-Realization Fellowship, and found the World Brotherhood Colony now known as the Clear Light Community.

☞ Operated by Disciples of Paramahansa Yogananda ☞

## AWAKE AND READY

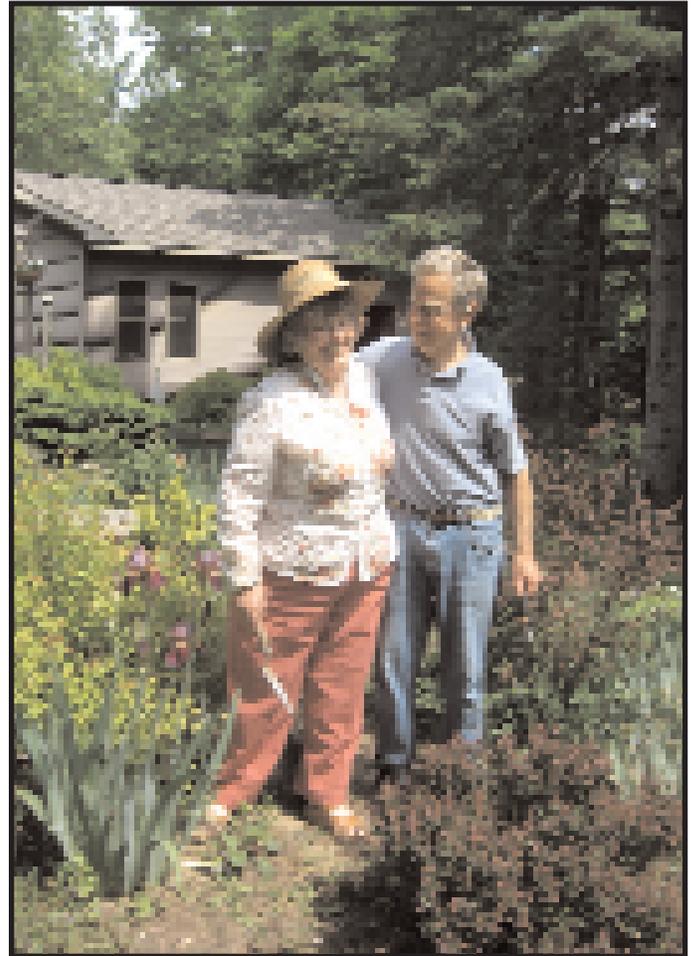
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Emergency planning, once the purview of safety professionals, has become a standard requirement for all businesses, residences, and locations due to global extreme weather patterns. Although Yogacharya had told us multiple times that our Retreat would be "a haven of safety in troubled times," still, to be responsible, we must plan for the safety of our homes and residents, as well as the staff and many retreatants that visit Song of the Morning Ranch.

In a Clear Light meeting held in April, the process was begun. Evacuation routes, communication systems, command centers, information gathering and storage, and emergency scenarios were discussed. A committee of three residents, consisting of Mike Wyman, Sam Gabby and Carol Armour, was appointed to flesh out the plan, with a goal of the first practice session to be held at our fall Clear Light meeting. Both Mike and Carol have extensive experience in emergency planning in their former employments, and Sam will be responsible for seeing that all information is in a practical and readily available format. Our goal is the safety and protection of all our residents, staff and retreat guests, as well as outreach to the greater community who live near the Retreat.

Come snow, or wind, or power outage, or flood, our Community and Retreat will be -- Awake and Ready!



Mary Ann and George Johnston welcome everyone to their home and garden on July 14 "Community Day."

Come and share the feeling of life in our spiritual community, from the perspective of our first residents.

## BUILDING YOUR HOME

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Economic times have delayed building plans for many of our leaseholders in the Clear Light Community. It is common for homeowners to owe more on their current home than they can sell it for, and selling is also difficult because of the number of "bargain basement" foreclosures on the market. The lease agreement signed by all leaseholders gives twelve years in which to build. The reason for this ruling was to assure that houses would be built, forming the spiritual community that Master, Yogacharya, and Bob Raymer envisioned for our Retreat.

In recognition of the economic and housing climate, the Clear Light Board has voted to grant a four year extension for building. Thus, if you are by lease required to build by 2013, you now have until 2017 to do so. We await with joy as each new home goes up in our Clear Light Community, and as each new resident becomes an integral part of the sacred life of Song of the Morning Ranch.

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# MANAGER'S REPORT

By Richard Armour, Project Manager

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Dear Members,

In Paramahansa Yogananda's writing "World Crisis" he states, "Man has to go back to the land." He encourages people to grow their own vegetables, to conserve money, to become more self-sufficient, and to practice brotherhood -- to help look after those around us in need. Our community members are living as He recommends.

Members come from on and off the property to work in the community and retreat gardens, ever increasing their expertise and enjoyment in watching creation unfold under the influence of their hoes and hoses. The community is presently building a root cellar for food storage under Michael Wyman's supervision. As well as storing their own grown food, members can save by buying food in bulk and storing it in the root cellar. Shortly, we will provide a place for storage of garden tools and supplies. Also, we plan to enhance our children's playground near our community garden.

Sam Gabby is working to bring broadband Internet service to our retreat and members. We are also always ready to help people with the intricacies of building in the community, of finding reliable contractors, or to assist if you choose to build your own home.

We will move ahead with our "Cottage Industry" area when interest is shown and we have a few applicants with sound business plans.

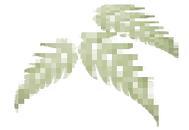
In the past months, we have received calls from as far away as Los Angeles, California, from devotees who have heard of our community and tell us that is what they are looking for -- a place to support a spiritual life while following Master's teachings as a householder disciple. Devotees are willing to uproot their lives and move thousands of miles, to find a setting that is conducive to the most important goal of their lives. We in the Clear Light Community will do everything we can to see that no one who does so is disappointed. We hope you will come up and visit, and decide if this style of life is for you.



Karen Epperson is delighted with her new porch, deck and other improvements added to her home on Golden Lotus Trail.

## A letter from Master (taken from East-West Magazine 1933)

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### To My Friends,

To my friends, in all lands and in all worlds, greetings and good will! Wherever you are, whoever you are, of whatever color, race, or creed, I send you my love and the pledge of my loyalty. You, who for thousands of years, or for only a day, have worked and fought for justice, freedom, and Truth, receive my gratitude and devotion.

You who dwell in palaces or hovels, in cities or jungles, in mansions or dungeons - if in your hearts there is the urge toward higher, better living and loftier ideals, believe me when I say I am your friend and that I count you blessed friends of mine.

Many of you I have known in the past, and some of you I have never seen, but I think that in God's appointed time I shall meet each one of you face to face and give you proof of my affection. However, it matters little that we are not together now, nor does it matter that time and space may separate us by almost infinite distances. The only thing that counts is that we are friends, working together in a common cause, the cause of righteousness and the expansion of the consciousness of the children of the Most High.

Although I see you not, I often feel your presence near, or thrill with the noble thoughts which you send out to find their home in minds attuned to yours. Although you may never read the words which I am penning now, I declare to you that you shall feel the vibrations of tenderness and kindness which emanate from me to all of you.

Our work, our love, our purposes are One. March on, dear friends, to higher, brighter goals! Continue in your dreams of happier days and in your deeds of service to your kind. Protect the torch of faith from winds of doubt, and let no storm disturb your peace of mind. Farewell, dear friends of mine, until we meet.

**S. Yogananda, EAST-WEST, November 1933 VOL. 6-1**



**Root Cellar under Construction.** The ladder in the center gives an idea of the size of the underground storage area for our home grown produce. Come and see the finished product at the July 14 Member Meeting.

# **Annual Clear Light Community Meeting**

*Everyone Welcome!*

**July 14, 2012**

**Saturday, 11:00 a.m. - 3 p.m.**

*"Through willing hearts, God can accomplish miracles."*

Paramahansa Yogananda

Everyone is invited to join in the conversation as we look to the future development of our community. Kaye Thomas-Hogan, member of the lease holder association, will lead the discussion of the development of the Association. You are encouraged to bring ideas and suggestions on how we can best serve our community and how we want to design our Association and our future.

Following the meeting, we will inaugurate the new Root Cellar, on the Temple site opposite the Community Garden.

The afternoon will end with refreshments at the home and garden of "first residents" George and MaryAnn Johnston.

Please join us, whether you have a lot, are considering one, or are part of the larger community who know the Ranch as a Spiritual Home.

For accommodation and meals, please contact the retreat  
at: 989-983-4107



## **CLEAR LIGHT COMMUNITY LEASING INFORMATION**

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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**

About current payment plan, or a tour of the community, please contact:

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

9534 RAJASI CIRCLE, VANDERBILT, MI 49795

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

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### **DISCOUNTED LOTS AVAILABLE**

Two of our leaseholders are willing to sell their leasehold interest in their lot in the community at a discount. The purchaser 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 #34 on Golden Lotus Trail, in Phase I of the Community, the residential area closest to retreat activities, and Lot #61 on Anahata Court, accessed from Krishna Trail. For further information, please contact Joyce or Roger Fitzgerald at 515-457-7986 for Lot 34 or Rita at 989-705-1222 for Lot 61.

## **THE RANCH IS MY SECOND HOME**

**By Amy Pfluecke**

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I have considered the Ranch to be my second home for as long as I can remember. I have fond memories of sitting with my parents in the dimly lit lodge after meditation, listening to Yogacharya speak. My childhood ambition was to be a mountain climber – the hills across from the main house were mountains to me. I participated in many Jump for Joys in the lower domes and stood under the waterfall on hot summer days. My parents took my brother and I canoeing around the lake – our launch was the boat-house. I remember the delicious turkey dinners every Sunday at the Main House. Sunday school was filled with hikes, playing musical instruments, and learning about Yogananda and the masters. Most importantly, the people I have met over the years have watched over me – and they continue to do so. I feel so safe and loved at the peaceful place that is Song of the Morning Ranch. It is a place where I can go to relax, reflect, and recharge.

Thank you, Song of the Morning, for being that place for me.

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# DRAMA AT THE LAKE

By Karen Epperson

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Better than going to the movies, is a visit to our own exquisite lake. It is an astral scene of idyllic beauty which changes dramatically, moment by moment. No matter the weather, the lake is a tonic to soothe the nerves, heal the spirit, entertain, and enjoy.

The wildlife, ever present and abundant, amazes with its unceasing activity. We never know which characters will take the lake stage in God's daily drama there. Our binoculars bring highlights to this intrigue.

Basking in the shimmering sunlight on a glorious morning, we are thrilled by the painted and snapping turtles in tidy rows atop the logs in the marshland. We hear their plops into the water at our approaching footsteps. An occasional otter paddles hurriedly by, intent on his mysterious business. Of late, the abandoned beaver dam is showing signs of activity. In evening, the spring peepers can approach deafening decibels.

Perched at the highest point of a withered pine trunk which piercing through the water is a kingfisher scanning for dinner. A neighboring red-winged blackbird enchants us with her creative tune as does the warbler upon a cattail. We delight in a rare glimpse of a hummingbird as it hovers and darts. And a flash of yellow indicates that an oriole is enjoying the afternoon sun.

We consider the day blessed when we've spotted one or more of our family of three bald eagles-in-residence, often floating in harmony, wingtip to wingtip above the treetops. Their former nest holds allure for us and we wonder if we've spotted their new home across the lake in the pines.

Lately, gulls with black-tipped wings have soared above us. And of course, the ducks and geese abound in various colors and sizes. A trio of white ducks with black painted wings shoots like a bullet just above the water. They appear to be mergansers of some variety. Who is not charmed by the waddle and fluff of the baby goslings and ducklings, too precious for words? But the incessant honks of the mama and papa geese, can border on annoying. Do they not know the tranquility that they are shattering?

Of greatest majesty, are our six trumpeter swans whose beauty lure us magically and daily to the lake's shore. The splendor of these magnificent creations is indescribable. They offer a living reminder of our great Master, Paramahansaji, whose Sanskrit name translates as *param*, highest and *hansa*, swan. Noted in the *Autobiography of a Yogi* at page 400 is the following:

*The white swan is mythologically represented as the vehicle or mount of Brahma the Creator. The sacred hansa, said to have the power of extracting only milk from a mixture of milk and water, is thus a symbol of spiritual discrimination.*

Ahan-sa or 'han-sa (pronounced hong-sau) is literally "I am He." These potent Sanskrit syllables possess a vibratory connection with the incoming and the outgoing breath. Thus with his every breath man unconsciously asserts the truth of his being: I am He!

How clever and compassionate of God, Guru, and Yogacharya to gift the Ranch with the exquisite swan as a sacred symbol, not only of their constant presence, but of our true nature, *I am He!*

As only God is Changeless, our lake will soon undergo a transformation at Lord Shiva's touch. Like the creatures that inhabit here, we will adapt. We pray that some habitat, by God's grace, will be preserved for our wildlife and steps are in process to ensure that.

What more can be said but, "Long live the Lake!"



The new bench at the end of the lake, overlooking the swan nesting area, eagle's nest and beaver dam, is a popular destination for nature lovers. Karen Epperson draws on the inspiration and energy of the location to perform Master's Recharging Exercises.

# EXPERIENCES WITH MY MASTER

By Yogacharya Oliver

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Yogacharya Oliver would take any opportunity to visit Master in California. In his own words, here are experiences he had when visiting Lake Shrine and Encinitas:

## Lake Shrine

At the Lake Shrine, when He (Paramahansa Yogananda) was walking around the edge of the lake, the fish would come up and they'd swim around the edge of the lake with Him. There were thousands of them in there. I've done that with Him several times and it happened every time. He'd call them.

I was with Him one time... He had somebody who had come out to visit Him and had done a nice thing for SRF-- a gift of some kind, which He appreciated deeply. Well, this fellow -- I think he was of German descent -- he was an avid fisherman, and he happened to have his fishing tackle along, so he asked Master if He'd permit him to go fishing out there to catch some fish. Master didn't know what to do with him -- didn't know how to handle him, so finally He decided to let him fish. So, he got his tackle and got one of the boats out there.

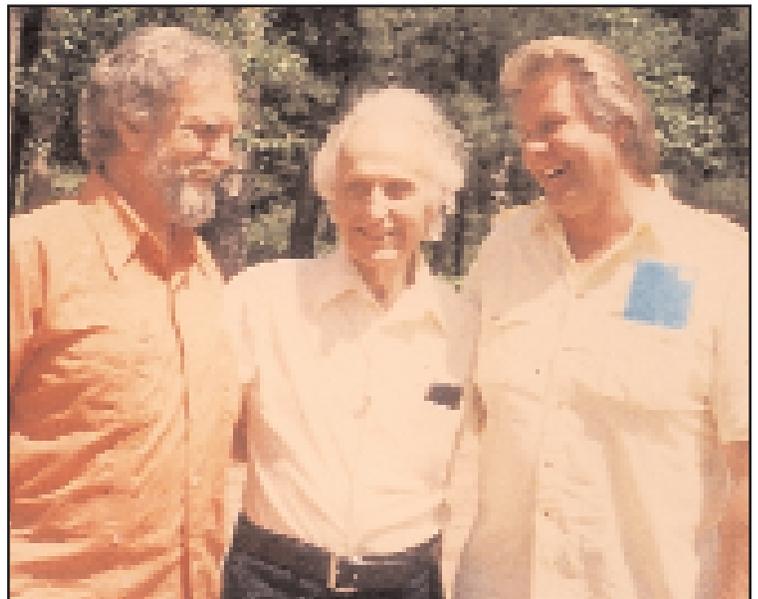
In the meantime, Master prayed to Divine Mother that none of them would get on his hook! The man was out in the boat flinging his line and those fish are out there, but not a single one ever got on his hook. He couldn't understand that, when there were thousands of them out there!

Many times I'd walk around that lake with Him, enjoying conversation, but He's teaching you something all the time -- by everything He ever did! He could teach you by the way He'd look at you -- whether He'd look sideways, whether He turned around, sat down ... I never saw such a culture behind that.

## Encinitas

One time, on one of my visits to Encinitas, He had me use Mr. Lynn's room, and then He left. So, I looked around -- I didn't touch anything-- but I looked around and then I walked around a little bit and I looked out the big glass window and watched the ocean and this and that and the other, just passing the time away. Then, all at once the intercom bell rings. I said, "Hello?" and He said, "I put you in there to meditate!!" And that was all He said and then hung up. Well, I sure started to meditate in a hurry!

Well, when I went back the next year, He put me in the same place again; but, instead of looking all over the place and out the window at the ocean, I started to meditate right away. All at once, before I knew it, He was sitting right beside me, with our arms touching each other. And while we were meditating, He was making (short) circuits between our chakras. I could feel them going across from Him to me -- back and forth, like that -- from the top to the bottom. I never had anything like that happen before! It's the only time I ever realized that anything like that could be done.



Brother Achilananda, left, current Vice-President of Self-Realization Fellowship, and Brother Parmananda on a visit to Song of the Morning Ranch and Yogacharya in August of 1984. Yogacharya in turn visited Mother Center and attended Convocation in California whenever he was able.

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