



Song of the Morning

Annual Letter

from the Golden Lotus Board

2024

"Sing songs that none have sung,
Think thoughts that ne're in brain have wrung,
Walk in paths that none have trod,
Weep tears as none have shed for God..."
from "The Noble New," by Paramahansa Yogananda



Dear Ones,

Heartfelt pranams to our community, friends and members whose combined efforts and support are making the increasingly vital work of Song of the Morning Ranch possible. This letter represents the commitment of our Board to staying in touch with our ever expanding community and membership; to expressing, again and again, our heartfelt gratitude for your commitment to walking alongside us in service to Song of the Morning, Yogacharya Oliver's legacy to each of us, and to living and sharing the teachings of Paramahansa Yogananda and the path of Self-Realization.

What follows is a brief recap of 2023 and the direction our Board and Retreat have set for 2024. As we step more and more deeply into the stream of service to God and Gurus in 2024, we find ourselves continuing to draw on the theme of last year's Yogacharya Birthday weekend - **MANIFESTING THE NOBLE NEW**. We invite you to "come closer" to help bring our shared noble intentions to fruition.



Board Direction for 2024

Our focus in 2023 was on bringing our mission-centered, community-supported retreat model into fuller expression. Last September, in continued commitment to this direction, we affirmed at our Annual Planning Retreat the following priorities for 2024:

1

Outreach and Promotion
of our retreat and
programs

2

Communication and
Collaboration with our
membership

3

Engaging our membership in supporting
the growth and expansion of the Retreat
through Fundraising



A Mission-Focused, Community-Supported Retreat

Our Spiritual Life Council (SLC) continues to serve in collaboration with the Golden Lotus Board, our Retreat Manager, staff and community in countless ways that are impacting the spiritual life of Song of the Morning. SLC initiatives in 2023 included:

Our community-led Guided Personal Retreats, renamed Inner Peace Retreats in 2024, which became a meaningful way to invite newcomers to immerse themselves in the spiritual life of our retreat and community.

Last summer's launch of the Spirit & Nature Festival, which served to welcome like-minded souls to experience Song of the Morning in a creative, vibrant new way. The weekend featured our community and the Golden Lotus Yoga Teachers Association, a benchmark of SOM's and GLYTA's growth as companion organizations.

2023 came to an inspiring close with our community-led 12 Days of Christmas, which culminated in a deeply devotional, community-wide celebration of Master's Birthday.



In 2024, under the leadership of our Spiritual Life Council in collaboration with Retreat Manager, Justine Markey, we remain committed to developing increasingly fresh new programming that features the teachings of Paramahansa Yogananda and Self-Realization Fellowship as well as retreats on various "Spiritual Living" themes.

We hope you'll join us for any of our upcoming offerings, featured on our website at songofthemorning.org and in our monthly e-newsletters.





Renewal & Expansion of Our Retreat Facilities

In response to the growth of our retreat and community, renewal of our Retreat continues to be at the forefront of our priorities. We are pleased to announce that in 2023, thanks to the generosity of our members, the mortgage on the duplexes constructed in 2021 was paid off, a stone was installed on our retreat roads, and our Domes accommodations continued to be updated and refreshed. We are looking forward to construction of new Wheelhouse decking this spring to complete structural improvements begun in 2023.

Thanks to the skilled hands of our growing community and staff and your generous support, the Retreat looks and feels cared for.

Our commitment to upgrading the existing retreat will continue in 2024. With an eye to the future, Justine Markey, Joshua Clark and Bruce Malnor are heading a task force that will evaluate facilities needs with plans for renovating our historic buildings on the way to new construction in the not so distant future.

Toward that end, plans are underway for expansion of the Retreat. Last December, our Golden Lotus Board announced its decision to build Paul Gordon's "Garden Court", a retreat complex that will add long awaited private guest accommodations and a new assembly hall to our retreat. Feel the excitement that is in the air!

We invite you to join us for a Golden Lotus Town Hall Zoom call at 1pm on April 27 when we will share updates on these plans and invite your input and questions. Stay tuned for more details!

Retreat Staff & Karma Yoga Program

As we step more fully into 2024, we would like to give special mention to our wonderful staff, whose dedication to the path of Self-Realization matches their commitment to serving guests in the highest tradition of our "yoga retreat of excellence". Our Karma Yoga Program, a spiritually infused expression of our former work-exchange program, is proving to be another remarkable success, providing an opportunity for spiritually minded souls, living and working alongside our staff, to immerse themselves in yogic living and selfless service.

The commitment by Song of the Morning to nurturing the spiritual lives of those who serve us has been made possible thanks to leadership by members of the Spiritual Life Council and the spiritual guidance and support of our community. We extend our love and gratitude to all of you.

Marketing & Outreach in 2024

In service to our commitment to attracting fuller participation in our retreat programs, our Retreat Manager has put together a talented marketing team committed to implementing a variety of strategies for spreading the word about Song of the Morning and our exciting new programs. This includes the rollout of a new website in the coming weeks that beautifully reflects this time of growth and expansion throughout our retreat and community. Again, stay tuned!



In closing...

We send heartfelt pranams to each of you, grateful for your continued friendship and support. We hope you will join us for our Zoom Town Hall on April 27th - and here in person sometime (or many times) in the coming year.

Please know: you are an integral part of all that is unfolding at Song of the Morning. We invite you to “come closer” and to get involved.

In divine friendship and service,

Linda Gabby

on behalf of the Golden Lotus Board of Directors - Carol Armour, Joshua Clark, Michael Krumpelt, Dorothy Stingley, Mike Wanger, Ian Wiley, and myself - along with Retreat Manager, Justine Markey

February 2024





Upcoming Events ~ Please join us!

March 7 ~ Community-led commemoration of the mahasamadhi of Paramahansa Yogananda

- See the Song of the Morning website to register.

March 8-10 ~ Guru Bhakti Retreat: Honoring the Life of Paramahansa Yogananda

- See the Song of the Morning website to register.

April 27 ~ Golden Lotus Town Hall

- Details forthcoming. We hope you'll join us for further updates including details about our plans to renovate and expand the retreat.

Visit the Song of the Morning website at songofthemorning.org to learn more about our calendar of programs and events in 2024.