



SHAFTSBURY HOLLOW RETREAT

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Newsletter

February, 2016

"Everything you do should be done with peace. That is the best medicine for your body, mind and soul. It is the most wonderful way to live."

Paramahansa Yogananda, Where There is Light

Dear Friends of Shaftsbury Hollow Retreat,

It's been a while since you've heard from us, but quite a lot has been happening here. We thought we'd take this opportunity to update you.

Shaftsbury Hollow Retreat has for many years provided us with a peaceful place to retreat and feel the presence of God. Devotees have been coming here since the early 1970's to enjoy the beauty of rural Vermont and commune with the divine. While many have appreciated the historic and rustic nature of this beautiful place, it has been long overdue for restoration to preserve the building and bring it into compliance with modern codes for public buildings, including improvements to the interior of the building, to bring it up to code for safety and handicap accessibility.

Work was begun last summer to renovate and upgrade the main building and grounds, as shown below.

The photo top right was taken before work was begun.



As you can see in the photo at bottom right, work has been done on the outside of the retreat house as well as the grounds. The siding on the house has been replaced with state-of-the-art insulation. In addition, all the windows on the front of that part of the house have been replaced to improve energy efficiency.



The next stage is to replace the siding on the east and the north side of the main part of the house. At the same time we would insulate the walls and replace the windows with ones that would bring us up to code.



The slate/dirt walkway at the front of the main entrance has been removed and replaced with solid concrete, which was inlaid with the pieces of slate. The soil along the sides will be mulched or planted with grass.



The area to the left of the refectory was cleared, and a small berm was created at the rear of the parking area to reduce water and ice accumulation.

The photo at right, taken looking at the west wall of the refectory, shows the new concrete handicap access walkway leading from the driveway to the rear of the house. The rickety stairs leading from the second floor needed to be updated to meet building codes. A new exit door and sturdy deck were also added. The deck is just large enough now for one or two devotees to energize there.



And below are the views from the rear door, outside the kitchen, showing the new handicapped access ramp.



A beautiful new entrance door was installed this fall once the siding was in place. The rich color on the wood comes from a process used to preserve it for many years.

Meanwhile, indoors a modern fire alarm system has been installed and new wiring has been added to the kitchen. The office and library doors have been replaced with wider doors to allow wheelchairs access through to the chapel.

This winter, our big project is to cut a doorway from the Sewing Room area to the second floor of the Refectory in order to unite the entire second floor and to create fire exits that are accessible from both areas. The Sewing Room stairs are being removed and replaced with a closet. We are also replacing the bathroom on the second floor above the refectory with a new, larger, more modern bathroom.

We need your help to move this project forward. The estimated cost of continuing these improvements is \$145,000.00. While the retreat program at SHR brings in a little money, it does not generate enough income to maintain the property, let alone finance the major construction projects we hope to complete within the next year. Any contribution you can make would be greatly appreciated.



In closing, we wish to thank each of you for your contributions, whether monetary or otherwise, to The Shaftsbury Hollow Retreat.

To those serving others at the retreat, the monastics as well as the lay servers; to the retreatants who draw closer to God and Guru and who are better able to bring Him to others; to those who serve this work financially; and especially to those who serve spiritually through their prayers: A heartfelt "Thank You!"

Please contact us at shaftsburyhollowretreat@gmail.com for any questions you may have. Your prayers and gifts are deeply appreciated.

May God and Guru bless, guide, and protect each of you.

In Divine Friendship,
Shaftsbury Hollow Retreat

Donations we receive in response to this appeal will be deposited into our local Shaftsbury Retreat bank account and will be used as outlined above, and may also be used to cover any kind of maintenance expenses associated with the retreat's buildings and future meeting facilities, grounds, equipment, furniture, vehicles, fundraising expenses, and any potential future property purchases.

*To make a tax-deductible contribution, make your check payable to **Self-Realization Fellowship Church** and write "**Shaftsbury Hollow Retreat**" on the memo line of the check. Please send your check to: Shaftsbury Hollow Retreat, 631 Tinkham Road, North Bennington, Vermont 05257.*



While it is Self-Realization Fellowship's intent to use all designated gifts as outlined above, SRF reserves the right for the use of all gifts to SRF to be determined by the Board of Directors of Self-Realization Fellowship. In exceptional circumstances where the designated purposes are no longer feasible, or have been completed, or for other good cause, the SRF Board may redirect such gifts to other appropriate ministries or projects, including any project that comes closest to the basic original purpose of the designation.

Recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, Self-Realization Fellowship is a public charity under federal law and a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation under the Revenue Taxation Code of the State of California.



And finally, below are some photos of our most recent retreat, which was held in September, 2015: at top, retreatants are being led by nuns in the Energizing Exercises, and below is a group photo taken at the end of another sublime and uplifting retreat.



Some feedback we received from retreatants after this retreat:

From the guest book: *“When I imagine heaven on Earth, I think of Shaftsbury Hollow Retreat”.*

This one was sent via e-mail: *“What a blessed retreat. I’ll remember that one for the rest of my life as one of the most meaningful and moving retreats I’ve had.”*

Save The Date!!!

We are pleased to announce that there will be a monastic-led retreat on June 17th-19th. More information will be available in the spring.