

Friends of Nityananda Institute

2006
Year End
Report

HOUSE AND GARDEN PROJECTS

O the home front, two major building projects were completed. Phase I of the stonework in the shrine area was finished in time for the summer retreat, and the area has been totally transformed. There are new stone steps around the perimeter of the shrine, as well as new paving stones throughout the main shrine area. The gold color of the new stone lends a much warmer and inviting feel to the location, and the even surface is much easier to walk on. What's better—and a bonus in Portland—is that it all looks spectacular even when it's wet!

The shrine area also received new lawn beds and a new statue: the goddess Lakshmi has been placed under the weeping cherry in the berm.

Work on the shrine will continue next year, and Phase II will include a new approach to the shrine from the direction of the East Wing, and a new stone floor and a new roof for the shrine itself. We owe thanks to Len Riegler, Kathy Dahlke and Al Dewitt for their backbreaking work.



HOUSE cont.



In early fall, attention was turned to the boiler room and the installation of a new heating system to replace the less efficient steam heat. Our existing boiler, affectionately named “Agnes” by Jim Brissette, is over 60 years old. Jim determined that we could reduce our fuel use costs by 25% per year by converting to a hot water system. Another anticipated benefit is the reduction in expenses of maintenance and repair, as well as water treatment, as the existing system is prone to corrosion.

In the first stage, new piping was installed in the boiler room and existing radiators converted to hot water. The goal was to beat the onset of winter. Jim and a crew of dedicated volunteers worked intensely for weeks to install new pipes and retrofit radiators. After 1,500 hours of labor, the heat for the house was turned on October 28.

We received a \$6,500 grant from the Oregon Energy Trust and \$30,000 in tax credits (retail value \$22,000) to help finance the boiler work. The next step in the project is to replace Agnes with four smaller, modern boilers at a cost of \$40,000.

Prior to the arrival of the Rudi statue in April, we made some adjustments in the meditation hall. Nityananda was moved to the other side of the teaching stand, to make room for Rudi. A matching base was constructed for the Nityananda statue, and Monica O’Neal created a second peacock canopy (matching the one over Nityananda),

which was installed over Rudi’s head. With Rudi and Nityananda flanking the teaching stand, the hall has a better balance visually and energetically.

On the south side of the house, we have a new site and a new base for the Jain Buddha, which was moved to the former location of the large poplar tree that was removed this spring. Jim Brissette spent days cutting up the wood from the tree, which was distributed to needy families. The poplar was dying, and we now have a beautiful dogwood in its place.

Some smaller scale projects have also helped to beautify and enhance our building and gardens. Theresa Smith oversaw a massive cleaning out of the attic that took several months. The basement hallway received a facelift: shoe shelves were constructed by Sam Yoder and Jon George for the



stair well next to the kitchen, the mailboxes were painted by Laura Modena, and Constance Monte redesigned the storage in the flower area in the basement.

Maggie Daly has taken on the management of the cutting garden and installed new drip hoses to make watering more efficient. In-kind donations included new leaf blowers, a new power washer for the shrine area, and a new raking/mulching attachment for the lawn mower. Sarah Mocas, Kathy Dahlke and Denise Goldberg continue to work very hard to keep our shrine and south lawn gardens as beautiful as they are.

