

POINT REYES LIGHT

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CALENDAR > Columbian film is among Oscar nominees that will show at the Rafael. /20



The Point Reyes Light wishes the people of West Marin a happy new year. May you have good luck and be blessed with loving relations, health and meaningful work. Photo by Justin Nobel.

1,000-year old redwood forest turns 100

by Justin Nobel

Muir Woods National Monument, a lush glen of old-growth redwoods on the slopes of Mount Tamalpais, will celebrate its 100th anniversary on Wednesday. The woods have provided an arboreal Eden for millions of visitors, including U.N. delegations, Bay Area school kids and tourists from all corners of the globe.

One hundred years ago, William Kent, a British sea captain and avid hunter, donated to the federal government a 295-acre belt of old-growth redwood forest. The remote trees had never been felled mostly because logging them had been too difficult. President Theodore

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Shoppers turn out in droves

by Jacoba Charles

Shoppers throughout the county spent less money than usual during the holiday season, but in West Marin most business owners were happy with their returns. The sun shone, restaurants bustled, and both locals and tourists came out in droves.

"The area seemed to do really well," said Julie Garagliano with the West Marin

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Park Service has dug a hole in the data

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New art arouses censure, even in arty Bolinas

ASK MISSY /10

Do you remember the Inverness flood of '82?

Local yogi raps the word

by Justin Nobel

On New Years Eve, three dozen bare-foot revelers grooved to the music of Nicholas Giacomini, a.k.a. MC Yogi, in a lofty San Francisco yoga studio.

"When I say 'jai,' you say 'ganesh,'" shouted Giacomini, who wore black jeans and an Adidas warm up jacket. "When I say 'om gum ganapateya namaha,' you say 'om gum ganapateya namaha.'"

A woman in turquoise yoga pants leapt into the air and kicked her legs like a cheerleader. A man with a shaggy mohawk launched into a back flip. Some break danced. Many chanted. A few did yoga postures.

Most of the party-goers that rang in the new year with Giacomini knew him from Yoga Toes, the studio he runs with his wife Amanda in downtown Point Reyes Station. Few knew that Giacomini could rap, or that it was even possible to rap about yoga. But based on broad local support, and aided by Shanghai producer Sean Dinsmore, Giacomini hopes his playful beats will blast a peaceful cap in the face of the rap world.

Giacomini began practicing yoga at age 18, when his father, Chris, invited

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Extended Sheriff's call /3

>> A person walking on Stinson Beach found bones that appeared to be a human's. The long leg bones were taken to the Coroner's office for inspection.



Nicholas Giacomini (left), a Point Reyes Station yoga instructor, and **Sean Dinsmore**, a Shanghai music producer, will spend the next two weeks in a recording studio cutting a debut album, which features playful raps about Ganesh (a Hindu god of wisdom), Mahatma Gandhi and enlightenment. Photo by Justin Nobel.

>> Yogi

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him to join a small group that held informal classes in a converted storeroom in the back of Toby's Feed Barn. He met Amanda at a studio in San Francisco. After a year of dating, the couple traveled to Mysore, India, to learn yoga from Ashtanga master Pattabhi Jois. They lived with an Indian family and spent six days a week in class.

"Everything is a little more intense in India," said Giacomini. He recalled taking tabla lessons from a man who had played the instrument since he was five. "The dedication and devotion goes back centuries," he said.

The trip inspired the couple to transform the storeroom in the back of Toby's into a proper yoga studio. In 2001, Yoga Toes opened. Giacomini and Amanda teach vinyasa flow, gentle yoga and meditation classes, and a small shop sells T-shirts and yoga videos.

India inspired the couple artistically as well. Amanda began using oil paints in

a manner practiced by yogis in caves in central India more than 2,000 years ago, and Nick got turned on by the sitar, the tabla and the tambora.

Homegrown

Giacomini played his track "Ganesh is fresh" at an Inverness dinner party last fall. Among the guests were Steve Costa and Kate Levinson, owners of Point Reyes Books. They suggested he try to raise money to produce a CD.

"To be able to hear a really powerful message about Ganesh or Gandhi is pretty refreshing," said Costa. "I think once he cuts this CD, it's going to catch on fire."

A few days after the dinner party, a Yoga Toes student stopped by Giacomini's home unannounced to drop off cash for the CD. "Within three days we had \$1,000," said Amanda, "it kind of blew our socks off."

Last month nearly 200 fans packed Toby's to listen to MC Yogi bust beats in a fundraiser for the album. To date, he has received about half of the \$25,000 needed to produce the record.

In the recording studio

Giacomini met Sean Dinsmore at Jivamukti, a well-known New York City yoga center, and several weeks later sent him a copy of "Ganesh if fresh" as an email attachment. Last Friday, Dinsmore flew in from China to help Giacomini cut his debut album.

On New Years day, after Giacomini's morning yoga class, I found the pair slouched on a bench outside Yoga Toes wearing hoodies and sneakers and listening to tracks on Dinsmore's laptop.

"I made this remix strictly thinking about the Italian market," said Dinsmore, as he clicked open a music file labeled The Dum Dum Project. A soothing dance beat filled the room.

"Such a dope sample," said Giacomini. They spent the better part of an hour sampling songs from a London rapper named Badmarsh, a Jewish kid from California called Govinda, and Bombay-born drummer Trilok Gurtu.

Giacomini reflected on the music he listened to as a kid: the Beastie Boys, Biz Markie and De La Soul. "I leaned more towards East Coast hip hop because it

was more soulful," he said.

"That was the best time of hip hop," added Dinsmore. Now, the genre has gone stale, he said.

"Hip hop is exactly the way rock was in the seventies," said Dinsmore, "overly bloated, self-indulgent and uninteresting. Somebody's gotta come along and take it back to a guy on the corner."

Dinsmore is hoping that somebody will be MC Yogi. I asked Giacomini how his rap was different than the hip hop of his youth.

"Singing about gods and goddesses puts [hip hop] in a good place that nothing can compare with," said Giacomini.

His goal is to expose Americans to the vibrant culture of India through music they can relate to.

"I want to demystify," said Giacomini. "We're all part of the same theme. I really hope that comes through in my music."

MC Yogi will perform again at Toby's in February. To donate money to help him produce his CD, send checks to: Nicholas Giacomini, PO Box 1083, Point Reyes Station, CA 94956.