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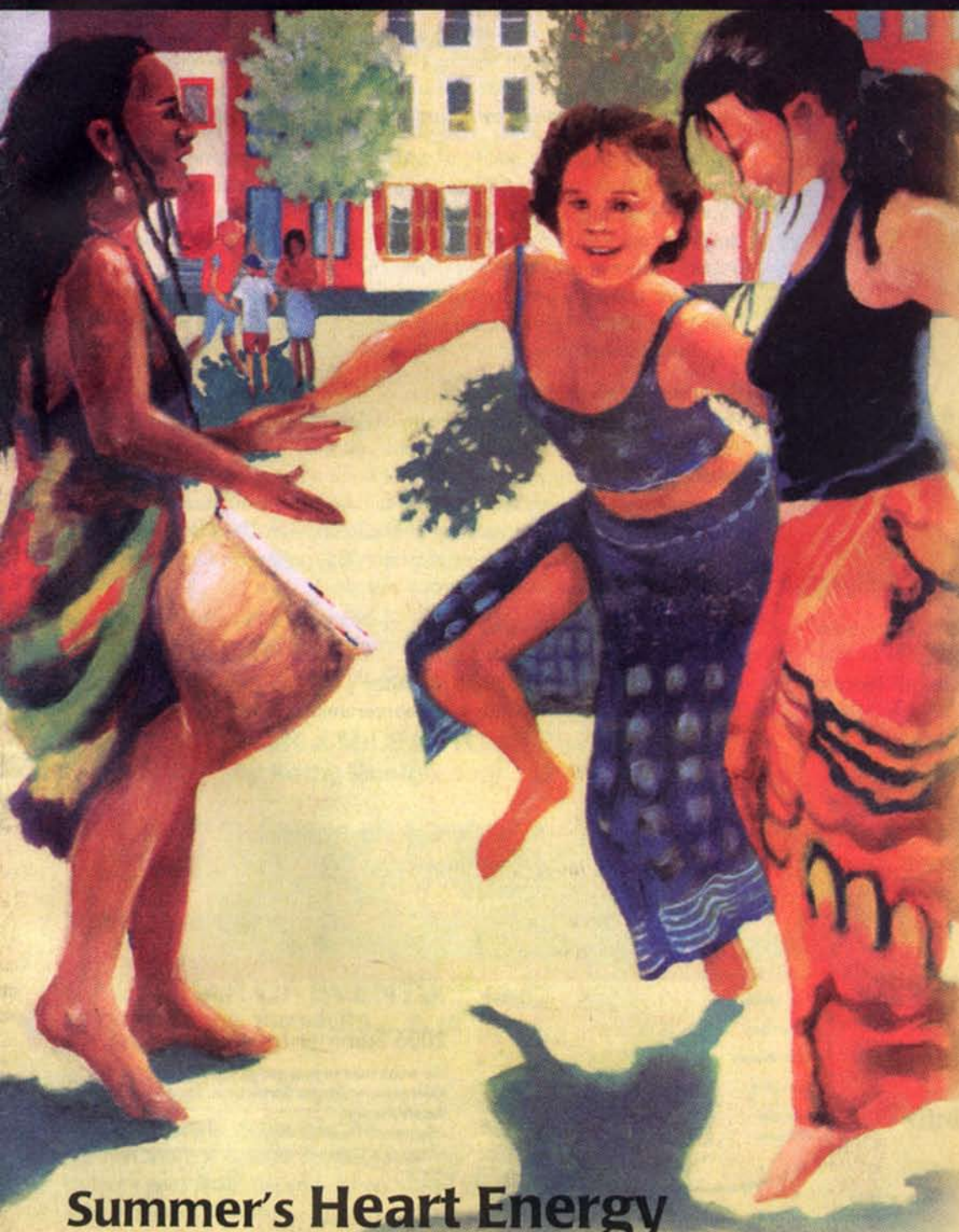


Central Pennsylvania

# Holistic Health NETWORKER

Quarterly Holistic Lifestyle Journal

Summer 2006 Vol. 8, Issue 4



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## HUNDREDFOLD FARM AN INTENTIONAL COHOUSING COMMUNITY IN CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA

By David Pierce

Just west of Gettysburg, on an 80-acre parcel that is part woodland and part Christmas-tree farm, is a co-housing community that is currently taking physical form, having been seven years in the making. Driving along the Lincoln Highway (Old Rte.30) you may notice where a winding single-lane road has been recently widened, and perchance you may see an oversize vehicle turning into the property with half of a modular home in tow. Only slightly less visible are the people themselves, some having been in community with each other for years, others recently joined or in the process of joining, and still others yet to make the discovery and the decision which later this year will bring this community to its planned total of 14 families. These families will share ideas and ideals, meals and lawn mowers, in forging and exemplifying a way of life all too uncommon but fast gaining in recognition of its value. This article describes more of that way of life, in general, and for Hundredfold Farm in particular.

**Cohousing** is a type of community housing that attempts to overcome the alienation of modern subdivisions without any sense of community, and often where no one even

knows their neighbors. Cohousing is characterized by private dwellings with their own kitchen, living-dining room etc, but also extensive common facilities. The *common house* may include a large dining room, kitchen, lounges, meeting rooms, recreation facilities, library, workshops, and children's space. This sharing both conserves resources and fosters an esprit de corps. Cohousing is gaining national recognition as an alternative housing and community approach. Cohousing construction is grounded in energy efficient and earth friendly practices.

**The Hundredfold Farm Cohousing Community** is an effort of several families to create a rural co-housing community in the Gettysburg, Pennsylvania area. The members of this multi-generational community are learning together as they explore the art of living in a sustainable way. It is a collaborative housing project that offers an alternative to alienation and isolation exacerbated by most other housing alternatives. Hundredfold's cohousing model is characterized by private dwellings, clustered housing, pedestrian friendly design, and extensive common facilities.

Hundredfold's design is intended to

foster the many beneficial aspects of living in community. Community spirit best emerges not just from holding meetings and building consensus on necessary decisions, but also from small, daily and spontaneous encounters with each other that occur while walking from the car to the house, picking up the mail in the common house, chatting together in the laundry room, preparing a community meal or building a tree house together. The cornerstone of the common vision of the Hundredfold Farm families may be expressed as *Caring, Paring, & Sharing*.

**Caring.** Working in partnership with the 80 acre piece of land, the members of Hundredfold Farm are committed to keeping the interests of this land foremost in all decisions. For example the homes are clustered on six acres, located on the steeper portions of the property that is less suitable for gardening, and laid out along the natural contours of the land. Much thought has been given toward where to site gardens and activities. And caring at the personal level for Hundredfold members involves honoring each other's perspectives in their community decision making by consensus, and accepting each other's foibles while-

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(Continued from page 21) *Hundredfold Farm* nurturing each other's strengths.

**Paring.** Reducing one's ecological footprint – this value underlies Hundredfold's decisions about incorporating active and passive solar power into the homes, a system which recycles waste water for reuse as flush, laundry and irrigation water, growing their own food, or vigorous recycling of everything from banana peels to beer bottles to batteries. Ways are continually sought to reduce consumption of non-renewables and to live more lightly on the land.

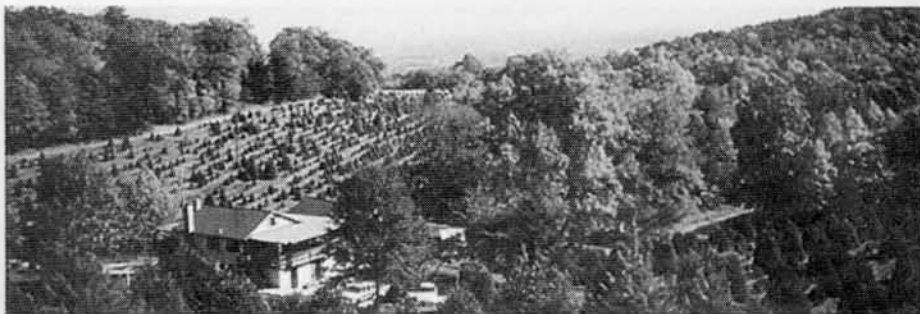
**Sharing** – An ethic of finding ways to community as it naturally arises from living lives that consciously intersect with the lives of others. The families will live in detached, single-family homes – consistent with the zoning in the township – but they are equally excited about creating those spaces that will be used together – the modifications of the existing farmhouse that will form the common house, community buildings like sauna, gazebo, meditation garden or woodworking space.

**Sustainability, Stewardship, and Self-Sufficiency** are closely aligned with caring, paring, and sharing. Hundredfold's goal is to live in a sustainable and renewable way, taking care of the planet that houses us all. Growing significant amounts of their own food is an increasing reality at Hundredfold, with plans for expanding a community organic garden that has existed for several years.

*Conservation* is a major community tenet. Homes are built into the hillside, accessing the natural protection and heat of the earth, and additionally contain walls and rooftops with high "R"-values for insulation. Water recycling will help to cherish an increasingly scarce planetary resource.

*Renewable energy* is also becoming increasingly necessary. While wind energy and other renewable forms will receive attention, a particular emphasis so far at Hundredfold has been utilizing energy from the sun – "Passive" solar energy will heat everyone's homes, while solar cells on rooftops will provide much of their needed electric power and hot water. (And less is needed, resulting from the conservation measures adopted.)

**The Housing Cluster.** The houses at Hundredfold Farm are being clustered in order to preserve agricultural land, optimize solar access, minimize environmental impacts, and to encourage resident interaction. A common house exists on the property that will be expanded to include office space, quiet sitting areas, a large eating/meeting area, guest bedrooms, and a pro-



fessional grade kitchen. The single-family houses will be built into a south-facing hillside thereby providing shelter from northerly winter storms, while maximizing views, solar gain and the thermal buffering of the earth. The six-acre housing cluster is surrounded by 74 acres of open space, native woodland, and agricultural land.

**Integrated Water Conservation Strategies.** One of the most serious problems for the planet today is maintaining an adequate supply of drinkable water – surface and groundwater are being degraded in almost all regions of the world by intensive agriculture and rapid urbanization of an ever-growing population. An indication of how seriously Hundredfold Farm takes its responsibility as an environmental steward is its decision to be a showplace of available technologies in the areas of water conservation, treatment, recycling and disposal.

**Seven Springs Tree Farm.** When Hundredfold members acquired the 80-acre parcel of land for their community in 2000, this land was home to an ongoing business, Seven Springs Tree Farm. As this enterprise was seen to be of high potential value to the community, it was continued in operation (switching to organic practices) by the members of Hundredfold, who are also partners in the business. Besides consistently turning a profit (which has assisted Hundredfold's finances), the Tree Farm has provided employment to a founding member of Hundredfold as its manager, helped the cohousing project in several less tangible ways, and served as an interface to the larger community, where many families look forward to an annual outing to choose and cut a Christmas tree, partake in some form of entertainment provided, or hang out in the shop and café. Recently the cohousing members / business partners completed the planting of 3000 new trees.

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