

INDUSTRY WEEK

A Penton Publication

March 18, 1996

\$4.00



THE MANAGEMENT RESOURCE

When Les is More

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EDS focused on change—and profits**

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RENEW AND RECHARGE



Feeling a little empty lately? Jump-start your spirit with a personal retreat. ■ By Mary Mihaly

“GOOD MORNING,” SAYS THE intercom voice soothingly at the Heartland. “It’s 7 a.m. We’ll meet in the foyer for our ‘greet-the-day walk’ at 7:15.”

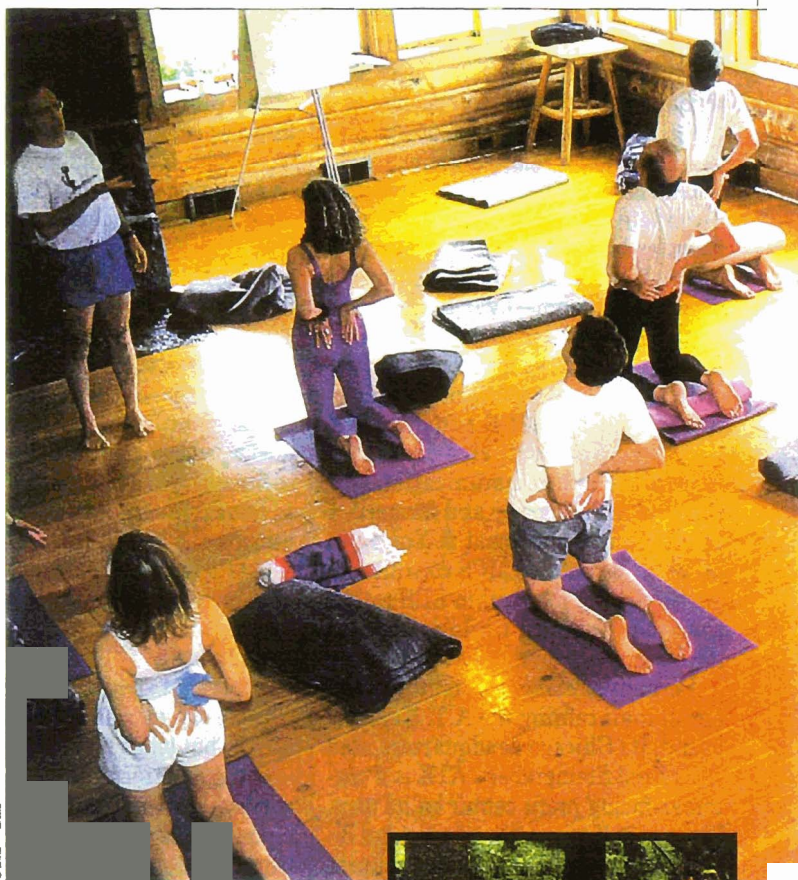
Wakeup at this northern Illinois retreat center is a deceptively gentle experience: That tender reveille was followed by two greet-the-day miles, an aerobic hour of calorie-burning, and half an hour of muscle-shaping with free weights—three vigorous sessions before lunch. Later in the day, classes in yoga and t’ai-chi ch’uan, an ancient art of meditation and movement, quiet the soul and facilitate contemplation.

Like the Heartland, most retreat centers offer far more than mere refuge—although, if solitude in a stress-free setting is your only goal, most centers will accommodate. Everyone has his or her own reason for seeking a personal retreat. If you know what you’re looking for, you can choose the right destination for your aims.

At the Spirit Rest retreat in the San Juan Mountains in Pagosa Springs, Colo., for instance, people come to be quiet. “Most are amazed by the experience of complete silence,” says Josie Sift, director, “so we’ll relax into it when they arrive Friday evening.” By Saturday morning, there is no speaking, phones, or television; meals are taken together, but in silence. “For some it’s very difficult,” Sift says, “a real challenge to spend two or three days in absolute quiet. I can hear them turn on the fans in the bathrooms, just to get a little noise.” There are diversions; guests are welcome to work in Spirit Rest’s organic gardens or visit the hot springs in town.

Another retreat site in the same area, the Tara Mandala Retreat Center, is even less structured. Located on several hundred acres between a Ute reservation and national forestry land, Tara Mandala stresses the practice of dzog chen, a Tibetan Buddhist tradition that stresses solitude and quiet. No experience in meditation practices is needed, but guests need to know they will be roughing it; most sleep in tents. And while the methods sound a bit left of mainstream, bookstore manager Richard Denner says he sees more business executives than you might expect.

“Dzog chen appeals to professional people,” he says, “because it’s known as a ‘short path.’ It’s a more intensified meditation view, and for many people at a juncture in



Exercise, meditation, and relaxation help visitors decompress at (top to bottom) the Heartland, Feathered Pipe Ranch, and Pendle Hill.

their lives, it's effective for creating change in a short time."

Dale Atkins, who heads continuing education for the Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, de-stresses at the Feathered Pipe Ranch in Helena, Mont.—and he enjoys the solitude so much he's been there four times.

"It's an environment where you get real slowed down," says the single parent of a nine-year-old girl. "I sleep in a teepee for a week. I don't call anyone, no one calls me, and being in Montana in July—well, you could do worse."

One need not travel to a mountain or ocean setting for isolation, however. Every major city's Yellow Pages contains the category "retreat facilities." Usually owned and operated by a religious organization, such facilities welcome any individuals who simply need to get away from their everyday surroundings for a few days and contemplate their lives.

Cleveland's Jesuit Retreat House is a good example of these urban centers. Set in 20 wooded acres in the heart of the metropolitan area, the Retreat House has dozens of dorm rooms—which often are booked months in advance—and several miles of walking paths.

Most retreat centers offer some programming, and guests can choose to attend as many as they like or none at all. At the Quaker-sponsored Pendle Hill study center outside Philadelphia, the most popular programs are single-focus weekends addressing contemporary concerns such as "Beyond Management," "Drawing and Meditation," and "Finding the Light Again."

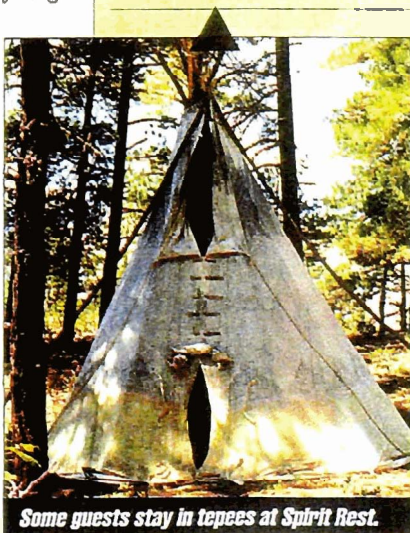
Foxhollow in Crestwood, Ky., takes a different approach. Like the Heartland, it is much more wellness-oriented. In addition to fitness instruction and stress-reduction techniques such as yoga and meditation, Foxhollow offers sessions in sound therapy, nutrition, and special weekends on topics such as chronic pain, allergies, and longevity.

Programs at the Feathered Pipe Ranch are even more specific: "Every workshop centers on the connections between body, mind, and spirit," explains Kim Schleicher, head of research and development for the center.

"It's very one-on-one. We're sur-

Some Leading Retreat Centers

- **Pendle Hill**, 338 Plush Mill Rd., Wallingford PA 19086. 800-742-3150.
- **Feathered Pipe Ranch**, P.O. Box 1682, Helena, MT 59624. 406/442-8196.
- **The Heartland Spa**, RR #1, Box 181, Gilman, IL 60938. 312/357-6465.
- **Foxhollow**, 8909 Hwy. 329, Crestwood, KY 40014. 502/241-8621.
- **Tara Mandala Retreat Center**, Box 3040, Pagosa Springs, CO, 970/264-6177.
- **Spirit Rest**, Pagosa Springs, CO, 970/264-2573.



Some guests stay in teepees at Spirit Rest.

HarperSanFrancisco, 1995). • *Connecting with Nature: Creating Moments That Let Earth Teach. Workbook for "armchair retreat-goers,"* Dept. of Integrated Ecology, Box 4112, Roche Harbor, WA 98250, 360/378-6313.

rounded by the Helena National Forest, so we talk often of the natural elegance here on our simple, uncluttered ranch. We teach natural health, natural healing."

REASONS FOR SEEKING A personal retreat are as varied as the centers themselves. Tom Schaub took his first retreat at the Zen Mountain Monastery in upstate New York because, as a process consultant for Conflict Management Inc., Cambridge, Mass., he says, "My work was draining me. I parachute into some pretty hot situations, and I needed to get away—not to a resort, but to engage in some regenerative activity."

"I was scared to death it would be a bunch of flaky people hiding from the world. I was prepared to walk out." What Schaub found, however, was Zen, a meditative practice he carries into his business life: "I take in more information, see more clearly, listen more attentively. It allows me to be very centered."

At the Heartland, one guest was a

RETREAT RESEARCH

These guides and directories provide information that will help you pick the retreat that's right for you:

Transformative Adventures, Vacations & Retreats: An International Directory of 300+ Host Organizations (John Benson, New Millennium Publishing, 1994, \$14.95). • *Catholic America: Self-Renewal Centers and Retreats* (Patricia Christian-Meyers, Beacon Point Press, 1989, \$13.95). • *Sanctuaries: A Guide to Lodgings in Monasteries, Abbeys, and Retreats of the United States* (Marcia and Jack Kelly, Bell Tower/Harmony, Northeast edition 1991, West Coast 1993, Southwest 1993, \$15). • *Retreat: Time Apart for Silence and Solitude* (Roger Housden, HarperSanFrancisco, 1995). • *Connecting with Nature: Creating Moments That Let Earth Teach. Workbook for "armchair retreat-goers,"* Dept. of Integrated Ecology, Box 4112, Roche Harbor, WA 98250, 360/378-6313.

minister writing a book about money and values in modern society; he was there to escape from his computer for a few days. A couple, both independent business consultants, were there to explore their mind-body connection. Two guests never emerged to speak to other guests at all.

Sifft reports that the majority of Spirit Rest's guests are women. "We do get groups here for board meetings, that sort of retreat," she says, "but it seems that as individuals, more women are willing to take that time for themselves. Men are still caught up in the pressure of what they're doing every day."

Costs of retreats vary widely. While visitors to Spirit Rest pay only \$200 per week (\$350 with meals), Foxhollow charges up to \$295 for a weekend program including food; as at most wellness-oriented centers, many services such as special massages are offered a la carte. An all-inclusive six days at Feathered Pipe Ranch costs \$1,100, while the per-person double occupancy rate at the Heartland is \$280 per night. ◀

Retreats will be featured on "IW's Management Today" on CNBC, at 10:30 a.m. (ET) Saturday, Mar. 23, and Sunday, Mar. 24.