



## A case in point

THE RECENT Eastern Conference in southwestern Pennsylvania offered the perfect opportunity to help kick off a new series of articles in *Scantlings* about sustainability. For many of us, our businesses and daily lives revolve around sustainability. Whether we restore older structures, harvest timber from managed forests, use reclaimed timber for new construction, or manufacture or distribute other sustainable products for the construction industry, sustainability is the key to the future.

At the 2004 conference, Friday's dinner was provided by the Pennsylvania Association of Sustainable Agriculture (PASA). PASA supplied locally-grown food for this meal from 15 regional farmers. With our existing focus on community building and education, community-based agriculture and forestry dovetail well into the Guild's existing structure and mission. When we search out venues for events, projects, and conferences, we should expect and support sustainability.

Thanks to the collaborative efforts of PASA, the Guild, and Seven Springs Resort, Friday evening's meal consisted of a plethora of local fare such as marinated mushrooms, succulent leg of lamb (nothing left but scraps!), local greens, mouthwatering dressings (ginger vinaigrette, anyone?), and desserts.

We nourished ourselves with local-farm-grown organic products. The irony of a global economy was not lost on us. Seven Springs normally procures their lamb from New Zealand; that night it arrived from a farm somewhere close by in Penn's Woods. From pasture or garden to our round tables, the journey involved far less processing, chemicals, and shipping (thus, oil) than many of today's outsourced meals.

As we all strive to improve the quality of life in our communities, both locally and globally, PASA reminds us how possible sustainable development can be. While flying home over one of the most fertile regions on the continent, a passage from Mark Roseland's *Toward Sustainable Communities* brought many of these ideas together for us. "Sustainable development is a program to change the process of economic development so that it ensures a basic quality of life for all people and protects ecosystems and community systems that make life possible and worthwhile."

Both PASA and the Guild share this philosophy of community building, improving the quality of life through education, awareness, and healthier lifestyles. During the conference, Summer Beam Books carried Roseland's and other fine titles on sustainable lifestyles and communities.

As with timber frame carpentry, sustainable development does not happen without patient, deliberate effort. Just as many of us have been drawn to alternative house

building for conservation reasons, so too are the farmers of organic or naturally grown products. The nearer its origin the product is, whether apple crisp or structural timbers, the healthier the planet and her inhabitants.

—Rick and Laura Collins