

“Green” Hotels Association®

GREENING NEWSLETTER

SOAP AND WATER FIGHT DISEASE

Fear of swine flu is fading, but there are still plenty of reasons to wash your hands frequently. The list of infections that can spread via unwashed hands reads like the Biblical plagues, including staph, strep, salmonella, E. coli, hepatitis, MRSA (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*), colds, flu and norovirus—the infamous cruise-ship bug.

The importance of hand washing has been known since 1847, when a doctor named Ignaz Semmelweis suspected that maternity patients were dying in his Vienna hospital because med students treated them right after working on cadavers. When he instituted hand-cleaning, the deaths fell sharply.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says hand washing is the most effective way to stay healthy. But many people don't do it often enough, or long enough, to be effective.

Here's a guide:

When to do it: Wash your hands every time you use the bathroom. Every surface presents an opportunity for germs to hitchhike out. “Who thinks to clean the latch on the inside of the stall door? Try nobody,” says Jim Mann, executive director of the Handwashing for Life Institute (handwashingforlife.com), which advises food service providers around the world on best hand-hygiene practices.

Also wash your hands whenever you change a diaper, pick up animal waste, sneeze, cough or blow your nose; when you take public transportation, insert or remove contact lenses, prepare food, handle garbage and before eating. Few people are as conscientious as they should be. Mr. Mann recalls being in meetings to discuss hand hygiene: “Everybody shakes hands. You finish the talk, and everybody runs for the food line. Nobody washes their hands.”

How to do it: Soap and water is the gold standard. In a recent study in the journal *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, researchers in Australia doused the hands of 20 health-care workers with human H1N1 flu virus. Soap and water removed slightly more virus than three alcohol-based hand rubs. When volunteers didn't clean their hands, most of the virus was still present an hour after exposure.

It's the mechanical process of washing that's so effective. Soap molecules surround and lift the germs, friction from rubbing your hands loosens them, and water rinses them down the drain.

Experts recommend using warm water—mainly for comfort, so you'll wash longer. Use liquid soap if possible. Bar soaps can harbor germs.

Use enough soap to build a lather. Lace your fingers together to cover all the surfaces. Rub the fingertips of one hand into the palm of the other, then reverse. Keep rubbing for as long as it takes to sing “Happy Birthday” twice. (Some experts prefer

“Row, Row, Row Your Boat.” But any tune will do as long as it lasts at least 15 seconds.)

Rinse thoroughly. Residual soap can make hands sore. Leave the water on while you grab a paper towel and use it to shut off the faucet. Take it with you to use on the door handle as well.

Drying lessons: Many hand-hygiene experts are down on hand dryers—chiefly because few people have the patience to dry completely, and end up wiping their hands on their clothes. Air dryers can also blow remaining germs as far as six feet away.

Antibacterial soap? In 2005, a Food and Drug Administration panel voted 11-to-1 that antibacterial soaps are no more effective at keeping people healthy than regular soap. There may be some downside too. Some antibacterial ingredients like triclosan leave a residue on the skin that continues killing some bacteria. Critics worry that the remaining bacteria could become resistant, not only to soap but also to antibiotics. “To our knowledge, it's not happened, but it's theoretically possible,” says Elaine Larson, a professor in the schools of nursing and public health at Columbia University.

Hand sanitizers: It's not often that a personal-care product gets a presidential endorsement. Some drug stores sold out after Barack Obama echoed the CDC's recommendation that people use alcohol-based hand sanitizers when soap and water aren't available to help stop spreading the swine flu.

Experts say they must be at least 60% alcohol to kill germs. “Alcohol ruptures their cell membranes—it causes them to explode,” says Dr. Larson.

Curiously, the FDA does not allow over-the-counter hand sanitizers to claim they kill viruses. The CDC's recommendations are based on information published since the FDA ruling, says Nicole Coffin, a CDC spokeswoman.

Can you overdo handwashing? Yes. “Try to strike a balance between being obsessive-compulsive and being reasonable,” says Dr. Larson. “And if there is some kind of outbreak like with the flu or SARS, then there is reason for more caution.”

Further to Hand Washing:

Is it possible to pick up diseases from an ATM or those pens that we're required to use with a credit-card machine? Germs can survive on plastic for weeks. Surfaces that are touched frequently and cleaned infrequently can



pose a danger, particularly where finger pressure is required, aiding the germ transfer. You could carry your own stylus—or try a makeshift one, with a pencil eraser or the top of a pen. You also could put a tissue between your hand and the stylus or ATM keys.

Can we acquire bacteria on our hands by handling currency? Germs can live on money, both paper and coins. How long they survive, and how easily they can be transferred, varies considerably. Germs survive longer in humid conditions, but some adhere more strongly to a bill's surface than to hands, so you'd have to really squeeze the bill to pick up germs.

Beck, Melinda, "Put Up Your Dukes: Fighting Disease with Soap and Water," Health Journal, The Wall Street Journal, May 12, 2009
Beck, Melinda, Health Mailbox, The Wall Street Journal, May 19, 2009

BIOSHIELD, INC.

ALLY MEMBER Bio Shield, Inc. is a green nanotechnology company whose goal is to super green-clean hotel guestrooms by getting rid of all odors, bacteria and organic issues organically with our **Hygienez™ green cleaning and sustainable purification technologies.**



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Butterflies Are Beautiful Bugs!

Nathaniel Hawthorne said, "Happiness is a butterfly, which when pursued, is always just beyond your grasp, but which, if you will sit down quietly, may alight upon you."

It's time to pursue butterflies, beautifully winged creatures that bring us a measure of happiness, even though they are insects. Charming insects, indeed, but still possessing an insect's anatomical structures. They have a three-part body: head, including the eyes and proboscis; thorax, holding four wings and six legs; and abdomen, hosting the heart as well as digestive and reproductive parts.

The thorax or central body part supports a pair of wings on

each side, with the front wings appropriately called forewings and the back wings called hind wings. The apex is the pointed tip of the forewing or hind wing, the margin is the edge of the wings, and cells are parts of the wings partitioned by the veins.

Wings often have colorful spots in the shape of eyes or in the shape of patches that are sometimes aligned in rows or bands. Conventional wisdom says eye-shaped spots serve to distract predators, but recent research finds the spots serve mating purposes. Whatever the case, the spots or bands of spots clue us to the butterfly's identification.



Identifying butterflies is less daunting if you start with the more common and flashy butterflies. Among the easiest of butterflies to see and identify are the palm-size swallowtails, so named for the protrusions called tails tapering off the back of their hind wings.

An example is the black swallowtail that flies on a 3-inch wingspan and shows up in a variety of habitats such as forest, gardens, brushlands and even around bustling city streets. On the male's upper wing surface is a wide submarginal yellow band matched by a row of yellow dots along the margin. He feeds with his wings held open or with wings fluttering as he skims the tops of flowers. One of his favorite flowering plants is thistle, on which he'll sometimes perch while basking with open wings facing the sun.

Another easy butterfly to recognize is the bordered patch that flies on an inch-and-a-half wingspan. The upper wing surface is dark brown with a variable wide orange or cream-colored band in the middle and white spots lining the wing margins.

Bordered patches hang around flowers to sip nectar. They also alight on mud in an action called "puddling" in which they sip minerals from the moist earth.

BUTTERFLY FACTS

Butterflies look like flying flowers as they brighten the coming months. But they are insects in the order *Lepidoptera*, which includes moths.

What: Cold-blooded creatures that derive body heat from the sun.

How: They fly on colorfully patterned, paper-thin wings

Types: 700 species in North America

Life Cycle: Begins as an egg attached to host plant. Tiny caterpillar hatches from egg in the larval stage and grows in size until it pupates to form a hard shell called a chrysalis. A winged butterfly emerges from chrysalis within days or months. Then the female mates and lays eggs to begin a new generation.

Life Span: An adult butterfly may live a week to several months, depending on the species.

Book: *Butterflies of North America* (Houghton Mifflin, \$22 by Jim Brock and Kenn Kaufman)

Clark, Gary, "What is happier than a butterfly?," Nature, Houston Chronicle, May 9, 2009

GARBAGE GETS FRESH LOOK AS SOURCE OF ENERGY

Times change, and yesterday's environmental problem starts to look like today's solution. That is what is happening with trash.

Over the past two decades, the US has shut down hundreds of pollution-spewing waste incinerators on the belief that burning detritus was a bigger environmental sin than burying it. Today, most American garbage is sent to landfills, some spanning hundreds of acres miles from the cities that generate the refuse. New York City, which tosses about eight million tons of nonindustrial trash each year, trucks much of it to mega-landfills in Virginia, Pennsylvania and Ohio.

Landfills have been convenient. But they are falling out of favor as improved technology and changing environmental priorities start to upend the old thinking about garbage. Past orthodoxy held that burning trash was bad because it spewed toxic substances into the air. In an era when the big environmental threat was localized pollution like smog and cancer-causing plumes, landfills seemed the lesser evil.

Dirty air is still a concern, but now it has been eclipsed by fears of global climate change. In that calculus of environmental harm, recent research suggests, burning trash is better than burying it.

The appeal of most modern incinerators is that they don't only torch trash. They also use the heat from the incineration to boil water which creates steam, which in turn generates electricity. Yet trash incineration produces just 0.4% of the country's electricity. Even if all US garbage were burned, it wouldn't produce anywhere near enough power to meet the country's energy needs. But as concern about climate change grows, any renewable source of energy—even a pile of garbage—seems appealing.

Landfills, too, produce potential fuel—in the form of methane, which can be captured and used to generate electricity. But a recent study by US EPA researchers said that most landfills fail to capture all of their methane, a potent greenhouse gas. The study concluded that incinerating a ton of trash emits at least 35% less greenhouse gas and yields ten times as much electricity as burying it.



Old incinerators were infamous polluters. They coughed out large quantities of soot, the components of acid rain and carcinogenic dioxins.

John Waffenschmidt, a 53-year-old New Yorker who is VP for Covanta Energy Corp., the country's biggest owner of waste-to-energy plants, recalls delivering newspapers as a boy in the city in the 1960s. "I'd go out in the morning and there would be little flakes coming down," he says, "because there were 4,000 or 5,000 apartment-building incinerators."

The energy crisis of the late 1970s prompted a push for plants that burned trash to make electricity. Today, 87 waste-to-energy plants are operating in the US, with the biggest clusters in FL, NY and MI.

Some 13% of US garbage is burned—far less than the 54% buried in landfills and the 33% that is recycled. The modern

plants turn prodigious piles of trash into ash, yet often sit in the middle of heavily populated areas. New York's Long Island has four incinerators, one of the densest concentrations in the country. Its biggest, a Covanta plant in the town of Hempstead, burns 950,000 tons of garbage a year, right next door to a strip mall. Its 39-story steam tower is the tallest structure on Long Island.

Trucks carrying trash from Long Island and the New York City boroughs of Queens and the Bronx roll into a cavernous room in the plant at a rate of about three an hour. The trash is pushed into another room, the "pit," where a crane operator tosses it around with a nine-ton steel claw. He is "fluffing" the rubbish—mixing in air to help it burn. After being fluffed, the trash moves by conveyor belt into furnaces, where it is incinerated at about 2,000°F., creating the heat that is used to generate electricity.

Today's incinerators are markedly cleaner than their predecessors, yet they still pollute. "One percent of a very toxic substance is still a very toxic substance," says Marchant Wentworth, a renewable-energy campaigner with the Union of Concerned Scientists, an environmental group.

Trash disposal of any sort is problematic. Ideally, society would produce less trash. Recycling is the next-best option.

In Congress and in many state capitals, lawmakers are considering whether to endorse trash incineration as a "renewable" source of power. A green imprimatur would be a boon to the trash-burning industry, which is lobbying feverishly for the move.

Covanta's Hempstead, NY, incinerator is applying for permission to expand and burn more trash. Meanwhile, Long Island's main highways, like the roads leading out of New York City, are filled with trucks ferrying the rest of the area's garbage to landfills in other states.

Ball, Jeffrey, "Climate Change: Garbage Gets Fresh Look as Source of Energy," Power Shift, The Wall Street Journal, May 15, 2009

ZEROWASTEUSA.COM

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California Seeks to Curb Appetite of Power-Hungry TVs

Estimating that televisions and their electronic accessories account for 10% of the electricity used in an average household, California's energy wardens want to put new flat-panel models on a diet.

The state's Energy Commission has proposed new efficiency standards (http://energy.ca.gov/appliances/tv_faqs.html) that would require televisions sold in California to use 50% less energy by 2013. The proposed rules, which the commission is expected to act on this summer, would affect televisions manufactured from January 2011 onward.

The Consumer Electronics Association is resisting the new standards, arguing that the industry could achieve the energy savings without the rules.

For starters, said Douglas Johnson, senior director of technology policy for the industry group, **consumers could adjust brightness and contrast settings, left at top levels by factories, and reduce the energy consumed by as much as 25%**. "There are much more savings to be had by what we're suggesting as alternatives," Mr. Johnson said.

But Adam Gottlieb, a spokesman for the California Energy Commission, emphasized that the new standards would not constitute a ban. "You're still able to buy the 60" that you want," Mr. Gottlieb said, "and it's not affecting what's in your house." He added that the proposed efficiency standards were "technically feasible and cost-effective."

Four million TV sets are sold in the state annually. **Plasma displays like Panasonic's, which can use up to 30% more energy per square inch than liquid crystal displays**, would be hit hardest by the standard. Plasma's market share has dwindled in any case to 10%, compared with 77% for LCD sets, according to industry figures.

Meanwhile, households that have held on to their cathode-ray-tube sets can rest easy knowing that those models are the most energy-efficient TVs around.

Barringer, Felicity, "California Seeks to Curb Appetite of Power-Hungry TVs," *New York Times*, April 17, 2009

GADGETS CALLED AN ENERGY THREAT

An energy watchdog is alarmed about the threat to the environment from the soaring electricity needs of gadgets like MP3 players, mobile phones and flat screen TVs.

In a report last week, the Paris-based International Energy Agency estimates new electronic gadgets will triple their energy consumption by 2030 to 1,700 terawatt hours, the equivalent of today's home electricity consumption of the United States and Japan combined.

The world would have to build around 200 new nuclear power plants just to power all the TVs, iPods, PCs and other home electronics expected to be plugged in by 2030 when the global electric bill to power them will rise to \$200 billion a year, the agency said.

Consumer electronics is "the fastest growing area and it's the area with the least amount of policies in place" to control energy efficiency, said Paul Waide, a senior policy analyst at

the agency.

Electronic gadgets already account for about 15% of household electric consumption, a share that is rising rapidly as the number of these gadgets multiplies. Last year, the world spent \$80 billion on electricity to power all these household electronics, the energy agency said. Most of the rise in consumer electronics will be in developing countries, where economic growth is fastest and ownership rates of gadgets is the lowest, Waide said. "This will jeopardize efforts to increase energy security and reduce the emission of greenhouse gases" blamed for global warming, the agency said.

Existing technologies could slash gadgets' energy consumption by more than 30% at no cost or by more than 50% at a small cost, the agency estimates, meaning total greenhouse gas emissions from households' electronic gadgets could be held stable at around 500 million tons of CO₂ per year. If nothing is done, this figure will double to around 1 billion tons of CO₂ per year by 2030, the agency estimates.

Televisions are one area where such improvement could be made, Waide said. The energy agency estimates the world will soon have 2 billion TVs in use—or an average of 1.3 televisions for every household with electricity. In addition to becoming more numerous, TVs are also getting bigger screens and are being left on for longer each day. The group predicts 5% annual increase in energy consumption between 1990 and 2030, just from TVs alone.

Waide said simple measures, such as allowing consumers to regulate the energy consumption of their gadgets according to the features they actually use, should be adopted to counter this growth. He said governments also need to encourage minimum performance standards and easy-to-read energy labels, so consumers can take energy efficiency into account along with price when buying home electronics.

Keller, Greg, Associated Press, "Gadgets Called An Energy Threat," *Houston Chronicle*, May 17, 2009

WELCOME SportsArt Fitness!

ALLY MEMBER SportsArt Fitness, an industry leader in the design, development and manufacture of premium quality strength and cardiovascular fitness equipment, is excited to announce the **ECO-POWR™ drive system**, available on the T680, T670 and T650 Club Series treadmills. The treadmills with ECO-POWR™ are truly the **first "green" commercial treadmill**. Not only does ECO-POWR™ conserve environmental resources, it can also reduce energy bills substantially. The ECO-POWR™ proprietary motor system **uses 32% less electricity** than traditional treadmill motors, while still delivering a **robust 5.0 hp of performance**.

Their FREE downloadable "**Go Green Guide**" provides tips for facility owners on how to be "greener" at their own facilities. Their web resource, <http://green.sportsartamerica.com>, allows calculation of savings with the ECO-POWR™ calculator.

The ECO-POWR™ system is virtually maintenance free and carries a lifetime warranty. It contains a self-regulating, brushless drive system that runs more cleanly and efficiently than traditional motors. All SportsArt Fitness Club Series cardio equipment offers the choice of two screen options, a traditional dot-matrix/led display or an amazing entertainment-ready 15.4"

Liquid Crystal Display (LCD) screen. The Club Series also features convenient contact heart rate points and are HR telemetry compatible. In addition, SportsArt Fitness offers many self-generating cardio units that require no external power at all. For more information on the SportsArt Fitness Club Series or ECO-POWR™ motors, call Director of Marketing, Amber Maechler, at **425/481-9479** or visit **sportsartamerica.com**.

EPEAT AND GREEN ELECTRONICS

EPEAT (epeat.net) is a program of the Green Electronics Council (greenelectronicscouncil.org). GEC was founded in 2005 to bring focus to the special issues of electronics and sustainability, and to find constructive paths forward. Soon after GEC's founding, GEC was selected by stakeholders to manage EPEAT, the green electronics "certification" and purchasing system that has created a \$60 billion market incentive for greener laptops, desktops, and monitors.

EPEAT was developed for "institutional purchasers" such as hotels—organizations that buy IT equipment on large purchase contracts—so participating manufacturers have focused on registering business-line products that are usually bought by these organizations. EPEAT is a required specification for Federal purchasers and is increasingly used by state and local government purchasers and private sector IT managers to 'green' their electronics purchasing.

However, EPEAT may be used by anyone, including individual consumers, as an effective way to identify environmentally preferable electronic products.

GEC is a program of the International Sustainable Development Foundation, a non-profit based in Portland, OR. GEC is overseen by a multi-stakeholder Board of Councilors.

GEC is not now a membership organization. We are considering how best to enlist others in our common interest in "redesigning society's relationship with electronics."

GEC Mission: We inspire and support the effective design, manufacture, use and recovery of electronic products to contribute to a healthy, fair and prosperous world.

GEC Goals: Through constructive partnerships with the electronics industry and other interested stakeholders we:

- Implement market-driven systems to recognize and reward environmentally-preferable electronic products.
- Build the capacity of individuals and organizations to design and manage the life cycle of electronic products to improve their environmental and social performance.

EPEAT's environmental criteria are contained in a public standard, IEEE 1680, that was developed through a stakeholder voluntary consensus process. To purchase a copy of IEEE 1680, visit <http://shop.ieee.org/ieeestore/> and search for 1680. The criteria are also summarized on www.epeat.net.

EPEAT evaluates electronic products in relation to 51 total environmental criteria, identified in the Criteria Table below and contained in IEEE 1680—23 required criteria and 28 optional criteria. To qualify for registration as an EPEAT product, the product must conform to all the required criteria.

Products are also ranked in EPEAT according to three tiers of environmental performance—Bronze, Silver, and Gold. All registered products must meet the required criteria, and achieve Bronze status. Manufacturers may then achieve a higher level EPEAT "rating" for products by meeting additional optional criteria, as follows:



Meets all 23 required criteria

Meets all 23 required criteria plus at least 50% of the optional criteria

Meets all 23 required criteria plus at least 75% of the optional criteria

More than 1,200 desktops, integrated desktop computers, monitors, notebook and workstations have been registered and graded. **EPEAT's criteria address all life cycle phases of products; and thus are more demanding and comprehensive than EPA's Energy Star, which addresses only energy expended while being used.**

Most EPEAT criteria refer to environmental performance characteristics of the specific product, and must be declared for each product registered. Some criteria relate to general corporate programs, such as a Corporate Environmental Policy or Environmental Management System. These Corporate Criteria apply to all of a given manufacturer's EPEAT registered products, and participating manufacturers declare to these criteria annually.

EPEAT is a system to help purchasers evaluate, compare and select electronic products based on their environmental attributes. The system currently covers desktop and laptop computers, workstations and computer monitors.

[Epeat is currently working with stakeholders toward standards for imaging equipment \(printers, etc.\) and television sets.](#)

MEMBER NEWS

Matthew Moore, Director of Rooms and Environmental Programs at PARTNER MEMBER Seaport Hotel, Boston, was awarded Earth Day honors by the regional EPA. The merit awards honor individuals and groups who have shown particular ingenuity and commitment in their efforts to preserve the region's environment. Matthew is one of the individuals chosen from 49 nominations from across New England.

In 2005, Matt developed an environmental program for his hotel named "Seaport Saves." The program enabled the hotel to increase sustainable practices throughout.

Under Matt's leadership, the hotel reduced electricity use by 1.3 million kilowatts, purchased RECs for their guestroom electricity use and achieved a 43% recycling rate. Seaport's Green Team encourages their guests, team members and vendors to embrace and practice environmentally-friendly lifestyles as well.

Since 2005, the Seaport Saves program has undertaken 24 green initiatives—many of which are groundbreaking for regional and US hotels—and received numerous awards and recognition.

Matt's dedication to the environmental movement goes beyond being the eco-ambassador for Seaport. He also is an important member of Boston Green Tourism, serves on the Advisory Board for PhilaGreen Hospitality Association, and has influenced many hoteliers across the country to green their facilities.

Applause, please . . . Matt definitely deserves it!

SWIMMING POOL WATER TREATMENT

The Seaport Hotel, Boston, under the direction of Matthew Moore, has chosen to add the Grander® Technology (granderwater.com) water treatment system to its 27,000-gallon indoor swimming pool. The chlorine-reducing system is a unique technology that is said to enhance the swimming experience because skin and eye irritation as well as the chlorine odor

is reduced with less chlorine usage. Matt says, "Chlorine use has been reduced by 50% at The Seaport Hotel, resulting in improved water taste and appearance and improved air quality as well."

The electro-magnetic system reportedly improves the structure of the water through molecular resonance. Water apparently easily picks up the molecular structure of nearby structures. In

the case of The Seaport Hotel's pool, 2 sealed immersion units were placed in filtration drains at the bottom of the pool. The system is offered with both inline and immersion units. Inline units are used when the water is intended mainly for drinking. As the pool water passes over the immersion units, it picks up information magnetically which changes its molecular structure and improves the quality of the water. The molecular structure of the improved water stimulates beneficial bacteria growth while simultaneously limiting the development of pathogenic populations. The Seaport units cost \$3,500 and are expected to last 15 years.

Michael Mark (C 603/498-0998, 888/333-6616), Water Revitalization Ltd., is the licensed distributor's rep.



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Mienviron is our trusted label for certified organic household products to benefit you and the environment. **MiVi-**

tality is our nutrition label that currently features Fast-Tract as well as In-Liven, the first certified organic probiotic superfood available in the world.

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THE GREEN GARMENTO

Inspiration to reduce the 350,000,000 pounds of single-use dry cleaning bags in our landfills resulted in Ally Member THE GREEN GARMENTO (TGG), a **reusable garment bag** that eliminates the need for single-use dry cleaning bags. The TGG starts out as a hamper bag for dirty clothes, transforms into a duffel bag to carry dirty clothes to housekeeping or the dry cleaner, then morphs into a hanging garment bag to protect the clean clothes; alleviating the need for single-use poly.



Be fantastic...use less plastic! 

Along with the clear 'green' benefit, TGG can better its buyers' bottom line. Most eco-friendly products require added cost. The hospitality professionals who implement The Green Garmento system see an almost immediate return. Hoteliers using TGG for staffs' uniforms are reducing, sometimes eliminating, the need for single-use poly bags, laundry bags, garment covers and twist ties/rubber bands. For properties that put TGG in guestroom closets, it also becomes a profit center when guests decide to take the bags home. And because the bags are personalized with the hotel's logo, the property's brand is cemented into their mindsets.

For hospitality professionals who choose to make their businesses greener and more profitable, THE GREEN GARMENTO is a perfect fit. For a free sample, call **866/681-6659** or visit thegreengarmento.com.

RUBBER STAMP GUNKED UP AFTER YEARS OF USE?

Set the stamp in a small container of vinegar. The gunk will dissolve and an old toothbrush can be used to finish the cleaning.

Desalination Plant Clears Final California Hurdle

The biggest seawater desalination plant in the Western Hemisphere, north of San Diego, can begin construction by year's end after a six-year effort to win regulators' approval, the developer said recently. The San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board voted unanimously to approve permit revisions for the \$300 million facility, which will produce 50 million gallons of drinking water daily, enough for 110,000 households.

That volume represents about 10% of the drinking water needs of San Diego County, home to roughly 3 million people in a region facing freshwater shortages due in part to a prolonged drought. "The vote of approval brought to a close the six-year regulatory process" for the plant, said Scott Maloni, a vice president for the privately held project developer, Poseidon Resources, based in Connecticut.

"We're on schedule to break ground on construction by the end of the year," said Maloni. He said the company expects the plant to be operational by the first quarter of 2012. The project is to be built beside a power station on a coastal lagoon in the city of Carlsbad, just north of San Diego and about 90 miles south of Los Angeles.

The Carlsbad project ranks as the hemisphere's biggest, and the first of a new wave of such plants expected in California, where about 20 are in various stages of development. Environmental activists who have fought the project vowed to appeal the decision to state water authorities. Advocates

of desalination tout its potential for limiting strain on scarce water supplies, and easing the environmental consequences of diverting freshwater from rivers and streams and pumping it long distances to urban centers.

But critics cite major environmental drawbacks—namely the harm to marine life from intake pipes that suck water into desalination plants and from the highly concentrated brine byproduct that gets discharged back into the ocean.

Under the permit approved this week, Poseidon is required to create 55.4 acres of wetlands in Southern California as a breeding ground for fish and other organisms to offset the marine life killed by the plant's operations. The plant also must keep its brine discharge below toxic levels.

Desalination is common in parts of the Middle East, but large-scale plants are rare in the Western Hemisphere.

Gorman, Steve, Reuters, "Desalination plant clears final California hurdle," ENN Daily Newsletter, enn.com, May 15, 2009

HOWDY ATLAS PAPER MILLS!

A GREEN COMPANY SINCE DAY ONE, ALLY MEMBER Atlas Paper Mills is one of the leading US manufacturers of recycled paper products. Our mission is to **produce 100% recycled tissue products** which help our customers meet and exceed their environmental stewardship and value needs. Atlas has not recently gone Green—we have been a **Green company producing 100% recycled products for over 27 years**. We were truly "Born Green."TM



Atlas carries a **full line of Green-Seal-certified tissue products** to help ensure customers that products chosen are better for their health and for the environment. Together with Green Seal, Atlas Paper Mills is committed to creating a more sustainable world through products that help safeguard the environment. Today Atlas produces over 36,000 tons of recycled tissue products each year and converts approximately 3 million cases of eco-friendly towels, tissue and facial tissue for use in the away-from-home and retail markets. These products are made from **100% recycled paper**, are **100% chlorine-free** and are all **made in the USA**. Atlas products have won wide acceptance in hotels, hospitals, schools and office buildings throughout the country and have expanded to include toilet tissue, facial tissue, kitchen roll towels, hard-wound towels, center-pull towels and folded towels.

Using Atlas products can help companies qualify for **LEED certification points**. To learn more, call Jennifer Perillo at **305/636-5740x1448** or visit atlaspapermills.com TODAY!

Plastic Bag Makers Aim for 40% Recycled Content in 2015

Plastic bag manufacturers working with the American Chemistry Council have set a goal to increase the recycled content of plastic bags to 40% by 2015.

The Full Circle Recycling Initiative, developed by the Progressive Bag Affiliates of the American Chemistry Council, would require a \$50 million investment from industry members to increase the collection of bags and update manufacturing processes.

The Initiative also aims to have 25% of that 40% content come from postconsumer recycled plastic. To achieve the two goals, plastic bag makers would need to use 470 million pounds of recycled plastic (300 million pounds of which is postconsumer) annually, the equivalent of 36 billion bags.

In 2007, the latest year there are figures available for plastic bag recycling, 830 million pounds of plastic bags and plastic wrap were recycled.

Progressive Bag Affiliates plans to work with grocery and retail stores to increase in-store plastic bag drop-off programs for customers to use. The American Chemistry Council (ACC) runs PlasticBagRecycling.org, which lists locations that have collection bins for plastic bags, plastic wrap from items like paper towels, newspaper bags, dry cleaning bags and other #2 and #4 plastic bags and wrapping. Plastic bags are overwhelmingly not accepted through curbside recycling programs or at drop-off centers.

While the ACC tries to increase recycling of bags, many companies like IKEA and Whole Foods have eliminated their use entirely, and various cities in the US and other countries have set or proposed bans or fees for using plastic bags.

Greenerdesign Staff, <http://www.greenerdesign.com/news/2009/04/22/plastic-bag-40-percent-recycled>, April 22, 2009

Other Ways Companies Celebrated Earth Day

Wheeland, Matthew, GreenBiz.com, April 22, 2009

At the dawn of Earth Day 2009, after more than six weeks of being inundated with press announcements solid and silly, from companies large and small, we decided to take a look at what companies are actually doing on April 22 and beyond, as opposed to what they're talking about.

Some of the company efforts we encountered this year just didn't fit any easy description. Whether they were not-quite community-building projects, not-quite award projects, or just so innovative as to be outside of any category, there were a handful of companies pushing the envelope in different ways.

Most unique of all was the plan from real estate management software company **Tririga**. On Earth Day, the company said they would **"go dark" in all three of its offices**. President and CEO George Ahn and the 200 other Tririga employees in Pleasanton, CA; Las Vegas, NV; and Philadelphia, PA, were at work—but it was strictly lights off.

"We used daylight instead of electric lights to show employees how easy and effective it is to use daylight on more of a regular basis," said Ahn, who came up with the idea.

Cisco launched a **"Think Green, Act Green"** project on Earth Day, a pledge-oriented activity based on a model that emerged from Cisco in Canada called "One Million Acts of Green." The pledge's underlying premise is that **individual acts have the power to better the environment and that human engagement helps fuel that change**. The goal of the program, which Cisco Canada opened to the broader community and invited public participation, involved obtaining pledges for a million acts of green within six months. The program hit the target in just 90 days, Gianola said. "It's an inspirational activity," said Gianola, "that will hopefully be just as viral here." In the past, **Sun Microsystems** used Earth Day as an educa-

tional opportunity for its employees, but this year the company decided to take the event one step further.

"This year we really wanted to focus on engagement and get employees thinking about what they can do," said Marcy Scott Lynn, Sun's director of corporate social responsibility. "We're really trying to bridge the gap between people at home in their personal lives and at work."

For Sun's Earth Day challenge, called "**Change (Y)our World**," the company partnered with EarthLab to create a [custom online calculator for employees to measure their environmental impacts and make pledges to change a type of behavior](#). Two weeks before the close of the challenge, the initiative had employee participation in 40 of the 48 countries in which Sun has offices. Three of the most popular pledges included [refraining from dumping used cooking oil down the drain, using leftover plastic bags as garbage bags, and recycling newspapers and encouraging others to do so, too](#). The challenge began on March 20, Global Earth Day, and concluded April 22.

And in a post on our always engaging LinkedIn group, Bruce Klaffer, **Applied Materials'** senior director of corporate responsibility and sustainability, explained his company's events. "We are very conscious that Earth Day can be too crowded a day or week to get everything scheduled that we would like to do. One new thing we're doing this year is sponsoring an employee challenge called '**Do One Thing**.' We've [asked employees to do at least one thing for the environment in the month of April and then to record it on our sustainability intranet so fellow employees can see what everyone is doing](#)."

At the conclusion of the challenge, the company will plant one tree for each employee that logs an activity—and after two weeks 774 employees had pledged to take actions.

GETTING AND GIVING FREE STUFF

Several online websites allow you to get a wide variety of used items free of charge—and give away things that you can no longer use. **thegreenumbrella.org** provides a comprehensive list of independent "fee-sharing" sites across the US.

freecycle.org is one of the most popular of these sites and is

broken down by city—you join the listserv for your community at the main site, keeping all exchanges locally based. Members post unwanted items to the listserv, and responses asking for those items go directly to the e-mail box of the person making the offer, so pickup arrangements are kept private. Members can also request specific items they need.

freesharing.org and **reuseitnetwork.org** operate in a manner similar to Freecycle, and **craigslist.org** has a "free" section for giveaways.

throwplace.com allows individuals and businesses to list goods they wish to give away to US and international charities and nonprofits, which will pick them up or pay for shipping. Any 501(c)3 organization can register with ThrowPlace for free.

The site also includes an "Up for Grabs" section that functions much like Freecycle, where individuals and businesses can get and give away items for free, and a "business" section where individuals and businesses can get higher-quality items for a small fee that supports ThrowPlace. Any items that are not taken from other portions of the site after one month filter through to the "Up for Grabs" section.

In California, **ireuse.com** connects nonprofits with free and low-cost furniture, office supplies, computers and many other items that have been donated by for-profit companies that no longer need them. Individuals can donate or recycle large unwanted items by requesting a quote to have items removed from their home through iReuse Hauling at www.ireuse.com/haulingpage1_now.aspx.

Remember these sites when your property is being renovated. Instead of paying to send replaced items to the landfill, put them to good use by giving them away! GHA recently had a call from a woman who was involved with refurbishing 3 large hotels and had lots of stuff to give away.

"Finding Used Items Online," RealGreen, Green America, Spring, 2009

Final Words . . .

"Joy is not in things; it is in us."

Richard Wagner

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