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**H**ello and welcome to “Green” Hotel Association®’s exciting new publication, *IMPACT!* We’re tickled green to present information to you on our amazing successes, our fabulous hotel Members, and our stunning vendors’ products and services. We look forward to a stream of information in this and future editions that will encourage and support further positive impact on the greening of the hospitality industry.

This all began 16 years ago when GHA introduced our first towel card via a mailer to 220 Houston hoteliers. The very first day that anyone could have received the sample card, we received an order from a Best Western general manager. It was a major thrill and clear to me – and to thousands of hoteliers since – that asking guests to reuse towels made sense. It is still the absolute best way to begin a green program at any hotel. Soon a friend said, “If you have a towel card, you’ve got to have a sheet card.” My friend’s comment led to our next incredibly successful offering, the daily sheet card. We’ve since added a “between guests” sheet card, and either card is the next best way to get hotel guests involved in your green program. GHA went on to produce a small Catalog of Environment Products, which includes such items as showerheads, aerators, recycling baskets, books, etc. In 1995, we began Charter Membership, inviting the first 100 Member hoteliers to claim that esteemed position. Our very first Charter Member, Bucuti Beach Hotel in Aruba, continues 16 years later because of Ewald Biemans, Managing Director, to proudly value our relationship.

Media attention has always been spectacular for GHA: Editors and writers have always loved what we do and what we represent, and have always been exceptionally good to us. We are, of course, very grateful. The attention we’ve received in print, on the Web, radio, and TV has always lifted all of our Members and brought more guests and clients to the doors of our member hotels and vendors. As you know, greening has almost exploded in the media in the last 2 to 3 years, which has meant profound attention for GHA and its members.

Almost every day we hear from vendors offering new green products and services. I’ve always said, “None of us can be green without the vendors offering their green products and services. They’re a critical part of this circle.” It’s very important that we read their ads and Web sites, listen to their pitches and choose to purchase from those that help our green programs shine.

Encouraging hoteliers on the green path was sluggish in the beginning, but today every hotelier is aware of greening. The extent to which each hotelier takes their green program is really determined by guests and clients. If they press hoteliers with kind comments, notes and e-mails regarding greening, hoteliers respond. We at GHA have always felt that green hoteliers deserve all the business. We know that’s not the case now, but it’s certainly a very important way to see more guests arrive to patronize your green guest rooms and meeting facilities.

Greening hospitality programs are always very exciting. Green programs create camaraderie among staff because management is listening. Management loves the results of greening because use of resources, utilities and costs are being reduced. Guests adore green programs because their participation means our favorite destinations all over this world are being cared for and protected.

Greening is an incredibly positive process. Greening means saving money while living a healthier life and feeling good because we’re helping protect this beautiful planet! Let’s continue working together to impact the greening of the hospitality world. Make your next green step one of suggesting to a colleague that their property get on the environmental bandwagon by joining “Green” Hotels Association® TODAY! A membership application can be found at on Page 69 and at [greenhotels.com/memship.php](http://greenhotels.com/memship.php).

I wish blessings on each and every one of you every day as we take steps together to green our lives in every way possible.

– Thinking “green,” Patty Griffin,  
President and Founder, “Green” Hotels Association®





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"Green" Hotels Association®



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# TAKING A STAND FOR **SUSTAINABILITY**

“Green” Hotels Association® is the hospitality industry’s comprehensive source for environmental consciousness

BY TARA N. WILFONG

**I**n today’s overly consumptive society, where bigger often is seen as better and more is coveted over less, many consumers are starting to view the world through green-tinted glasses. In fact, this green revolution, which at one time conjured images of fanatical tree huggers willing to risk life and limb to save the planet, has evolved into a global phenomenon in which eco-conscious consumers are doing their part to minimize their impact on the Earth.

Programs such as recycling and water and energy conservation are readily adopted and efforts to reduce carbon emissions are quickly gaining public notice.





Participating in programs for air quality (such as providing a smoke-free environment and live plants in each suite), sustainable land use, energy efficiency (such as solar panels), waste reduction/management, recycling, resource conservation, water quality/conservation, and public education, Habitat Suites is a model hotel of environmental consciousness, a pleasant retreat for guests, and a more profitable business.

No longer is the general population wary of individuals' and big businesses' efforts to live and operate more sustainably; instead, they are embracing the change, propelling it to mainstream status.

As with any cause worth fighting for, numerous groups and programs – whose primary purpose is to educate the population on this global crisis – have championed this push toward environmental stewardship. In the hospitality industry, that beacon of hope is the “Green” Hotels Association® (GHA), an organization founded in 1993 to help both national and international hotels operate more sustainably. “In the early days of the association, the term ‘green’ wasn’t one to be bantered about readily,” said Natalie Marquis, general manager of the Austin-based Habitat Suites Hotel, a 14-year Charter Member of GHA. “We adopted the green philosophy early on, so we were searching for an organization that shared our views and our values when we discovered “Green” Hotels Association®.”



Founded on the principles of education, the association's mission is to promote and support the "greening" efforts of the lodging industry by researching and sharing information primarily on water and energy conservation and waste reduction. GHA also maintains an extensive vendor and environmental products catalog, allowing all hotels instant access to green goods and services. "The primary goal of the association is for our Members to educate themselves on the numerous – and oftentimes money-saving – practices that are friendly to the environment," said Patricia Griffin, president and founder of the association. "Many hoteliers don't have the time or resources to investigate all of the eco-conscious opportunities available to them, so we do it for them."

Upon joining the association, hotel Members receive the very thorough and extensive *Guidelines and Ideas*, a 150-plus-page document with tips and suggestions on how to make their property greener. In the beginning, when environmental stewardship was a trendy phrase batted around by an elite few and GHA was in its infancy, the now-hefty *Guidelines and Ideas* was simply a shadow of its current self at a mere 15 pages. But, as the times have changed and the industry's knowledge and acceptance of environmental issues has evolved, the document has continued to grow to include the newest green practices.

"Our hope is that Members initially go through the *Guidelines and Ideas* and mark off the conservation practices they've already adopted and note the ones they are ready to institute," Griffin said. "Then, 12 months later, at renewal, we encourage our Members to revisit the document again so they can check off the new green practices they've adopted and identify the next group they'd like to tackle."

### GREEN SENSE

For Partner Member hotels Habitat Suites and Golden Arrow Lakeside Resort in Lake Placid, N.Y., adopting many of the practices detailed in the *Guidelines and Ideas* was a natural progression of their operating procedures. When Golden Arrow became a Member of the "Green" Hotels Association® in 2005, the resort had already successfully implemented a non-smoking policy to improve air quality in and around the resort, and installed low-flow toilets and showerheads in all 166 rooms to conserve water.

Although it was operating above the curve, Jennifer Holderied, one of the resort's owners as well as its director of marketing, knew there was plenty of room for improvement. "From the beginning, we have always sought a balance on our property between guest satisfaction, operating sustainably as well as profitably, and offering a quality product," she said.

**"Partnering with "Green" Hotels Association® and scouring the *Guidelines and Ideas* helped us successfully move forward with our vision."**

**– Partner-Owner Jennifer Holderied,  
Golden Arrow Lakeside Resort**

"When we discovered "Green" Hotels Association®, we were looking for a differentiator. Going green fit in with what we always did, especially since we are located in one of the nation's greatest protected wildernesses, the Adirondack Mountains. Partnering with "Green" Hotels Association® and scouring the *Guidelines and Ideas* helped us successfully move forward with our vision."

As luck, or the green powers that be, would have it, soon after becoming a member of the association, Golden Arrow came face-to-face with a cost-effective opportunity to reduce its energy use. Having pledged to purchase greener alternatives whenever possible, Holderied's "Green Team" began researching compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs), an easy fix according to the *Guidelines and Ideas*. ENERGY STAR®-rated CFLs use 75 percent less energy than their incandescent counterparts and last about 10 times longer, making them a viable alternative. However, in 2005, CFLs cost about \$10 per bulb, so the Green Team couldn't monetarily justify changing every light in the resort.

Just when Holderied and her staff resigned themselves to putting their light bulb overhaul on the backburner, a local Boy Scout troop came to the resort selling CFLs for only \$1 each. "Their timing couldn't have been any better," she said. "When they asked if we'd be interested in purchasing any of their bulbs, we said, 'Yes,' and they asked, 'How many?' we replied, 'All of them!'" Snapping up about 350 bulbs from the local troop, whose fundraiser was subsidized by the city of Lake Placid, the Green Team began replacing burned-out incandescents with the new CFLs. Every year, the resort turns to the same Boy Scout troop to supply its CFL needs, simultaneously supporting a local effort as well as a greener alternative.

With 95 percent of the resort's lighting converted to CFLs, the Green Team was free to turn its sights on other areas in need of a verdant overhaul. Because water conservation is one of the edicts touted in the *Guidelines and Ideas*, and, in the







Just one of many greening initiatives in place at the Golden Arrow Lakeside Resort, the Member hotel installed an extensive stormwater-management system to help keep Mirror Lake pristine, preventing pollutants from entering the lake.

Lake Placid area, water is a hot commodity – it tends to be much more expensive than other utilities – the team pledged to make water reduction its next priority.

Focusing on the swimming pool, which hadn't been renovated in more than 20 years, Holderied's team had the plumbing and heating systems completely replaced, and converted the pool from chlorine to bromine, a more environmentally friendly agent. The following year, the resort embarked on a major aesthetic and eco change by transforming its flat, hot roof into a green roof. Now, instead of a common roofline, guests enjoy a colorful, blooming garden full of native plant species as well as birds and insects.

Aesthetically, it's a lovely change, but environmentally, the roof provides insulation in all seasons, keeping the resort cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter. Perhaps even more importantly, the living roof releases oxygen, which in turn reduces the resort's carbon footprint. Also of note, acid rain is a common problem in Lake Placid; the green roof natu-

rally filters the rainwater, allowing only clean water to flow into the lake below. "The green roof installation was very cost intensive, especially because it won't really save enough energy to offset the cost," Holderied said. "However, the environmental benefits, not to mention guest satisfaction, far outweigh the capital costs."

Today, the Golden Arrow has implemented a great number of the association's ideas for a greener property. Using the *Guidelines and Ideas* as a green bible, the resort's Green Team is constantly referring to it for new and improved ways to operate more sustainably.

At Habitat Suites, GHA's *Guidelines and Ideas* is the singular resource for the latest and greatest green practices. Having adopted a green philosophy in 1989, well before the push became trendy, the hotel was solely responsible for researching, implementing, and maintaining its eco-efforts. Today, however, Marquis said she relies on the document to do the initial research and vetting for her. "With my daily management



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The Golden Arrow Lakeside Resort's renovated lobby is as inviting as it is green. For the renovation, the resort purchased renewable materials, such as the bamboo flooring, used reclaimed wood paneling, and used non-toxic materials, such as the wallpaper glue.

duties, I don't have a lot of free time to research new products and services," she said. "It's nice to have one resource to consult where I know the vendors and products have been thoroughly screened, and their inclusion represents a philosophy that complements our own."

Before *Guidelines and Ideas*, Habitat Suites began its conversion to a healthier, greener property in small steps. Taking its lead from Managing Partner Eduardo Longoria, who was undergoing his own quest for enlightened self-interest, the hotel began by eliminating toxic pesticides in 1990. A bold move in the hospitality industry since conventional pesticides are not only used in landscaping, but also for in-room pest control and prevention, Habitat Suites opted instead for a natural, aerosol-free alternative. A few years later, the hotel took this philosophy one step further by eliminating harsh cleaners. Switching wholly to one brand of products for housekeeping needs, the staff soon learned that this green alternative wasn't right for their application.

"At Habitat Suites, we are very sensitive about educating our guests on our green practices, but we also maintain that our guests are an important component in our learning and refining process, too," Marquis explained. "We learned that naturally occurring phenols in some [...] products could cause an anaphylactic reaction in guests with multiple chemical sensitivity, and since we insist our property be safe and healthy for all guests, we immediately discontinued the use of these products."

In its quest for a safer and healthier solution, Marquis consulted the *Guidelines and Ideas* and learned of a local vendor with a product better suited to the hotel's needs. The benefits of the switch were threefold:

- first, the hotel began purchasing BioClean products from a local store, thus supporting a local living economy, negating the cross-country trek for its former products and eliminating the emissions associated with the journey;
- second, by purchasing from a local vendor, Marquis and her staff eliminated a waste string of 225 used 1-gallon containers each month, instead striking a deal with the local vendor to refill 5-gallon containers every time he made a supply run; and
- third, using a natural, environmentally friendly cleaner with no harsh side effects to any sensitive groups.

Habitat Suites' innovative solar hot water system – which reduces the hotel's dependence on natural gas by 60 percent by preheating the water – exemplifies how using solar technology saves money on gas bills.





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Habitat Suites installed 108 solar photovoltaic cells that reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 38,000 pounds each year. This adds up to the equivalent of removing 3.8 cars from roads or planting 5.3 acres of trees!

To keep the hotel's mission firmly in sight, and to help complement the tips and tools laid out in the *Guidelines and Ideas*, Habitat Suites hired a local permaculture expert, Patricia Michael, to address areas in need of an eco-boost. "Her philosophy was, 'When you do something, do it for as many right reasons as possible,'" Marquis said. "If it's good for you, it's good for others, and it's good for the planet." Earmarking landscaping, water and energy consumption, and human health aspects, Michael developed an environmental handbook for Habitat Suites that guests can take home with them to use as a practical, educational tool.

Taking the points and suggestions laid out in the book to heart, Habitat Suites spent approximately seven years making them policy. Well versed in environmental stewardship, the hotel practices water conservation through the use of low-flow toilets and showerheads, guest participation in towel and linen reuse programs, and water-saving housekeeping practices, particularly with the installation of a recycle kit on its commercial washer that saves the final rinse water for use as the first wash cycle of the next load of laundry.

To conserve energy, the hotel has been retrofitted with CFLs and programmable "smart" thermostats that automatically adjust temperatures based on motion- and occupancy-sensing technology. In addition, Habitat Suites installed 108 solar panels on the roofs of its three buildings in 2004. This 18-kilowatt system now produces about 20 percent of the hotel's energy needs, simultaneously removing that load from Austin's energy grid. "We're constantly looking for that next big leap toward sustainability," Marquis said. "We follow the edicts of the *Guidelines and Ideas* closely, and in turn, Patty Griffin stays in close contact with our property, because she knows we are always doing something new."

This constant supervision, or championing, by Griffin and the association is another Member benefit. Besides offering the almost endless stream of resources detailed in the *Guidelines and Ideas*, GHA serves as a cheerleader for its Members by publishing articles about their latest greening efforts and providing moral support when it's needed most. Keeping an open line of communication, the association provides updates via its bimonthly newsletter and comprehensive Web page. "The newsletters are always full of great information and stories," Holderied said. "They're also a great source of inspiration, seeming to turn up when you need them the most."

Online, Members enjoy a detailed listing of their property with a link to their home page, as well as access to a catalog of environmentally friendly products. Everything from aerators to fill-cycle diverters is represented, and ordering information is clearly listed. Printed sheet- and towel-changing cards – the environmental initiatives that propelled Griffin to launch "Green" Hotels Association® in the first place – are readily available to new and existing members, offering a simple solution for water conservation.

For Partner Members – hotels or accommodations committed to environmental stewardship at the highest level – GHA provides a green logo flag for the property's exterior flagpole, as well as a small front desktop flag to announce membership and awareness of green issues. This unique advertisement attracts new guests based on the property's ecological awareness and serves as a viable public relations tool. As an added benefit, GHA provides referrals of all Partner Members to meeting and convention planners, business travelers, tourists, tour guides, environmental groups, and organizations seeking a more eco-conscious choice in the hospitality industry.

As the quintessential source of green practices for the hospitality industry, GHA is committed to actively reduce the impact of hotels on the environment. Through research and education, the association partners with hotels and guests alike to institute initiatives that reduce waste, harmful emissions, and the overabundant consumption of water and energy.

"In today's hospitality industry, most hotels are doing something to save the environment," Griffin said. "However, it's not enough to just have a green building; you have to have green practices inside that building, and that's where we come in. As a Member of "Green" Hotels Association®, properties receive our support, guidance, and knowledge of these ever-changing global issues. They also receive our proven techniques and educational tools. Through this partnership, we are committed to help them in their quest for environmental stewardship every step of the way."

# A HIGHER AUTHORITY

Bringing conservation initiatives to the hospitality industry, the “Green” Hotels Association® began with a noble notion and a clever card

BY TARA N. WILFONG



**I**t all began with a simple idea and one cleverly written card. The year was 1993, and Patricia Griffin had just returned from a trip abroad, where she encountered something she hadn't seen before. "I was staying in a hotel in Germany that had a guest card in the room requesting that patrons reuse their towels instead of ordering new ones," she explained. "Unlike the cards we see in hotel rooms today, this one was worded in such a way that the hotel appeared to be cheap, not environmentally savvy."

With card in hand, Griffin returned to the states with a seed firmly planted for a new and unique business venture, one that would propel national and international hotels to the forefront

of the budding green movement. But before she jumped head-first into uncharted territory, Griffin initiated her own form of market research. Contacting the American Hotel & Lodging Association, as well as her home state of Texas' Hotel & Lodging Association, Griffin asked to speak with the person in charge of environmental issues. The response she was given – that there was no such person charged with environmental initiatives – confirmed her notion that hotels certainly were in need of her particular brand of service.

Determined to take her research to even the next level, Griffin contacted a professor at the University of Houston's esteemed





School of Hospitality, asking him his opinion on the German card, and whether he thought this might be accepted among American hotels and guests. “He read the card and said he thought it was a tremendous idea,” Griffin said, “but he was concerned that it would be a tough sell to hoteliers, because, like my perception of the German hotel, guests could easily form a negative opinion, and thus be insulted by the request.”

Considering all of the feedback she received, Griffin soon had an epiphany. Since it was the guests who were at the center of the debate, it seemed only natural that her initial appeal be presented to the group in question. With the impetus to move forward, Griffin quickly founded an organization, coined it the “Green” Hotels Association® (GHA), and began her massive public relations appeal to the mainstream media. “The message was quite clear to me,” she said. “I had to reach the customers of the hotels I wanted to target, and ask them to partner with us for a greater cause. This was a groundbreaking moment for me, and it single-handedly influenced the direction in which the association would go.”

Bombarding the travel industry, especially the media that publishes vacation and travel-based articles, with the association’s water-saving idea, Griffin gently nudged consumers in the direction of sustainability. Instead of their hotel asking them to reuse their towels, taking the chance of appearing thrifty at the expense of the guest’s comfort, it was GHA making the request in such a way that travelers felt good about their decision. “It was really a win-win situation in which guests felt empowered, management saw a reduction in costs, as well as an improvement in guest satisfaction, and the association took its first step toward helping the hospitality industry reduce its over-consumption of natural resources,” Griffin said.



### A GREEN STEP FORWARD

Without a backward glance, Griffin continued to push forward, and her idea began to slowly take root, particularly among small, independent chains. Implementing different levels of membership, those first 100 properties that took a chance on the notion that hotels could be better stewards of the land became Charter Members of GHA. Soon, Griffin’s organization began offering Members even more benefits. In addition to the towel card that spawned a miraculous movement, a friend of Griffin’s suggested creating a sheet card as the next natural progression. Offering the newly devised sheet card to complement the towel card, the “Green” Hotels Association’s mission to educate, conserve, and save the planet was steadily growing – one property at a time.

As the idea caught on, Griffin expanded her repertoire to include the now hugely successful *Guidelines and Ideas* booklet. When she first published this bible to the hospitality industry’s greening efforts, it was a slim 15-page directory of tips, tools, and ideas. As her knowledge and research expanded, so did the *Guidelines*. “When I started this association, it was in response to many of the environmental atrocities I saw in

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- Paper bags  
(ripped into small pieces)
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receipts, documents

daily life, and I adapted them for this industry,” she said.

A native Texan, Griffin was raised in the country, and eventually, as an adult, purchased a 126-acre farm, complete with cattle, horses, and all the labor-intensive chores involved with this calling. While living off the land, she was horrified by many of the rituals performed in these rural areas – ones that city folk could never even imagine. “In the country, if a farmer needed to change the oil in his truck, he didn’t drive to the nearest oil change station because there were none around,” she said. “Instead, he would just drain the old oil right on the ground, letting it soak into and contaminate the Earth before pouring in the next quart. That was a real wake-up call for me.”

In addition to the negative practices she witnessed, Griffin is also quick to point out the positives. Instead of tossing food scraps into the garbage, most farmers feed the birds or other farm animals with the leftovers, or compost them, creating healthier soil for the next year’s crop. They also lovingly tend the land, nurturing it for its inevitable



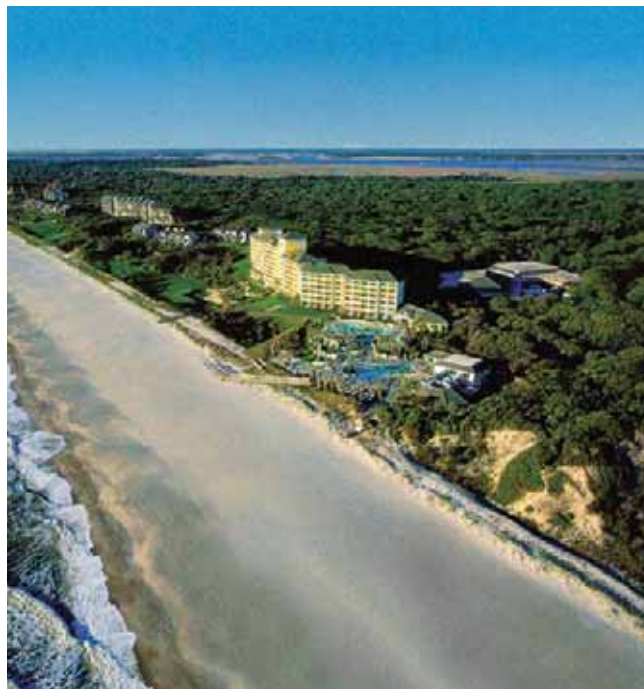
For almost two decades, GHA has helped guide the hospitality industry toward a more sustainable environment. Already an international organization with Member hotels in such locales as Mexico, Portugal, Switzerland, Indonesia, Peru, Vietnam, Greece, Italy, and the Caribbean, the “Green” Hotel Association® – and most importantly its environmental message – will continue to push forward and gain ground.

bounty. “Everything in the country is environmentally centered, whether it’s good or bad,” she said. “So this hard-won and firsthand education has really prepared me for my dedication to the “Green” Hotels Association®.”

Constantly thirsty for more green knowledge, and possessing the inherent need to share it with all of her colleagues, Griffin began communicating with Members of the “Green” Hotels Association® via the Internet. Creating the fledgling site in 1995 before it was popularized by big businesses and e-commerce sites, Griffin admitted it wasn’t savvy, but it got the point across by offering up-to-date information at the touch of a button. Today, the site is much more comprehensive and includes everything from links to Member properties’ Web sites and information on why hotels should make the move to greener operations, to a handful of tips from the association’s *Guidelines and Ideas* and a listing of products that has greatly expanded since it was created early in the association’s life. “The inclusion of vendor products as a Member benefit was a natural and necessary one,” Griffin explained. “We began offering products early on to help our properties reach their conservation goals because without the green vendors, not one of our properties can actually tout itself as being green.”

As new, useful products come on the market, they are consistently added to the products’ page on the Web site. And as the products that are deemed innovatively beneficial are unveiled, Griffin makes a special effort to announce them in the association’s newsletter. Created in 1996, the newsletter, which is printed every other month, stemmed from a need to communicate the association’s and its Members’ successes to everyone affiliated with GHA. Properties that have implemented new practices are often highlighted with uplifting stories on how the hospitality industry can make a difference to help motivate all involved.

Although it may seem contrary to the association’s purpose to conserve, the newsletter is printed and mailed to every



Situated along a sandy stretch of the Atlantic coast and surrounded by lush maritime forests and wildlife, GHA Partner Member Amelia Island Plantation is committed to taking the necessary steps to protect, restore, and conserve Earth’s natural resources.

Member of GHA. Griffin said she’s been asked why she doesn’t e-mail a PDF of the newsletter, thus eliminating the need for paper, ink, and shipping, all of which have an impact on our natural resources, and she said it’s a double-edged sword. “The newsletters are filled with important information that our Members should read, mark up, and reread,” she said. “If I e-mail the copies, I take a chance that many of our members, with their hectic schedules, will set it aside intending to read it later, only for it to get lost in the shuffle. Or worse, they’ll print multiple copies themselves to pass to other staff members, increasing the initial demand on resources.” Although distributing the newsletter as a PDF isn’t out of the question in the future, for right now Griffin prefers to disseminate her information the old-fashioned way.

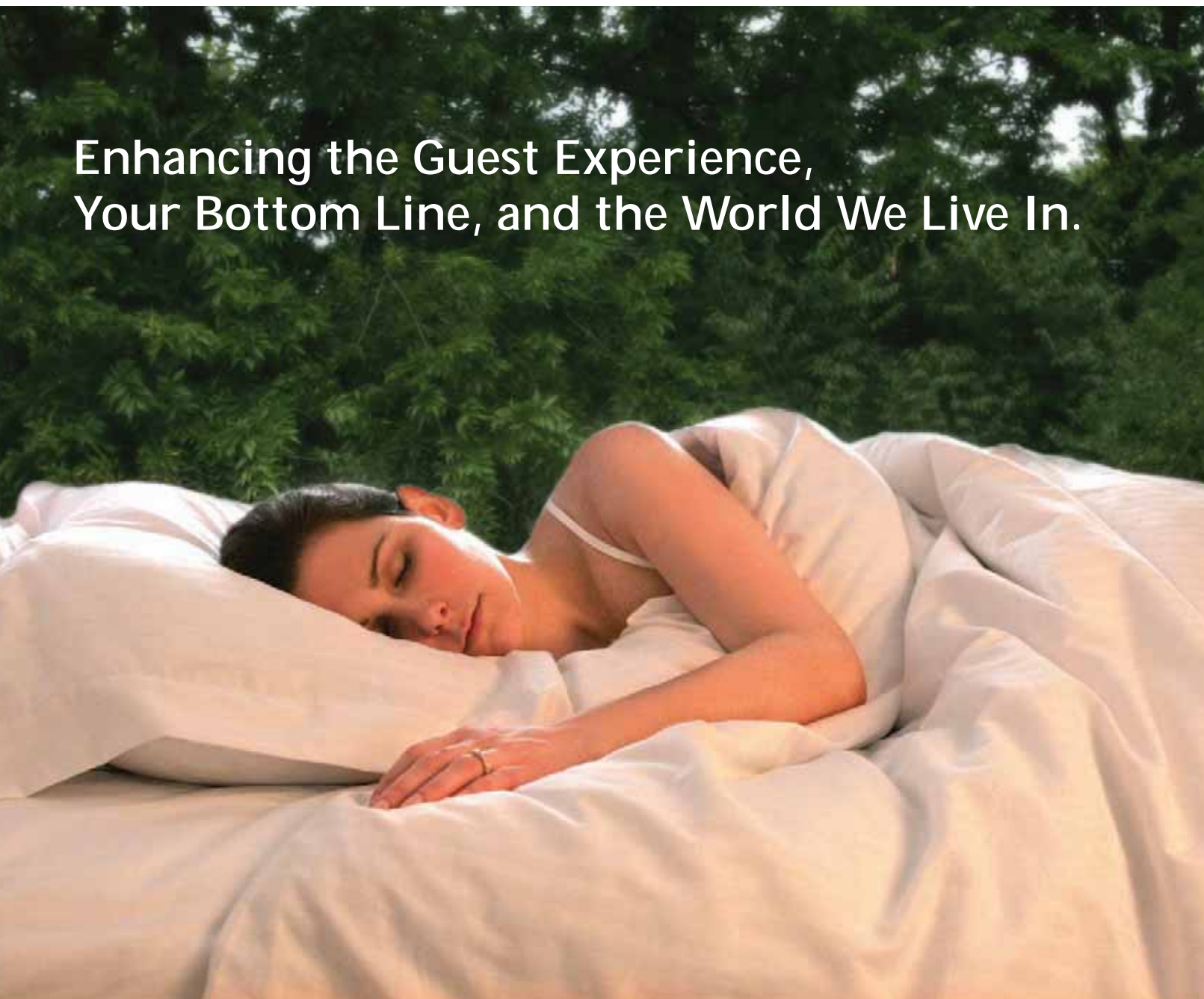
As the “Green” Hotels Association® embarks on its 17th year of eco-minded service, Griffin reflects on the association’s many successes. In the beginning, membership was a steady progression of owner-operated properties that were instantly sold on the merits of going green. Properties such as The Colony Hotel in Kennebunkport, Maine, aligned themselves early with the association for its array of Member services. “The “Green”





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The idea that started it all: “Green” Hotels Association® Founder and President Patricia Griffin realized that encouraging guests to be more green was a simple task with a tremendous impact. Towel and linen reuse cards, often a hotelier’s first step toward eco-mindedness, benefit the environment in no small way.

Hotels Association® is a great resource for us,” said Donna Kabay, general manager of the hotel. “Of all the organizations we belong to, it has been one of the most useful and most in line with our mission. Because of that, we have been members for 14 years.”

Today, however, there has been a significant shift to larger, corporate properties accepting the challenge to operate more sustainably. “At the onset, it was much harder for us to attract the bigger properties,” Griffin said. “First, we had to prove ourselves, then we had to go through the many layers of management.” But her persistence paid off, and over the last three or four years, the association has secured membership with many flagship hotels and resorts known the world over. Industry mainstays such as the Westin, the Hyatt, and the St. Regis have pledged to conserve resources and mitigate waste in every area they can.

Perhaps even more telling is the addition of those properties that already operate with a green focus but seek an affiliation with the “Green” Hotels Association® for its proven track record on environmental initiatives. Amelia Island Plantation, on Amelia Island, Fla., has been an eco-minded property since its inception in 1971. Located on 1,350 lush acres of northern Florida’s Atlantic coastline, the resort and homeowner community has always existed in harmony with nature. By

providing this natural sanctuary for wildlife and a peaceful respite for guests and homeowners, Amelia Island Plantation stands as a shiny beacon for hospitality and eco-consciousness. But last year, the resort’s Green Team, led by Bill Di Stanisloa, who also is the director of the spa, wanted to do more.

Partnering with GHA, Amelia Island Plantation’s Green Team implemented “Project Planet,” its version of the association’s towel-reuse program. “Bill has really embraced his role as the leader of our green program, and he has sought out those organizations that he believes we should be aligned with in order to attain our goals,” said Leigh Coulter Beal, public relations manager at Amelia Island Plantation. “With the help of these organizations, particularly the “Green” Hotels Association®, Bill has started us on a path to our next level of greenness.”

Looking forward to even more affiliations with like-minded properties, Griffin has big hopes and dreams for GHA. In fact, there have been talks recently about organizing chapters of the association in different cities throughout the country and abroad. “I can’t think of a better prospect than to have all of these green hotels come together in one location to discuss their conservation initiatives,” she said. “Chapter meetings would be the ideal place for hoteliers from one specific region to discuss the efforts and concerns that impact them most, and to bounce solutions off one another.”

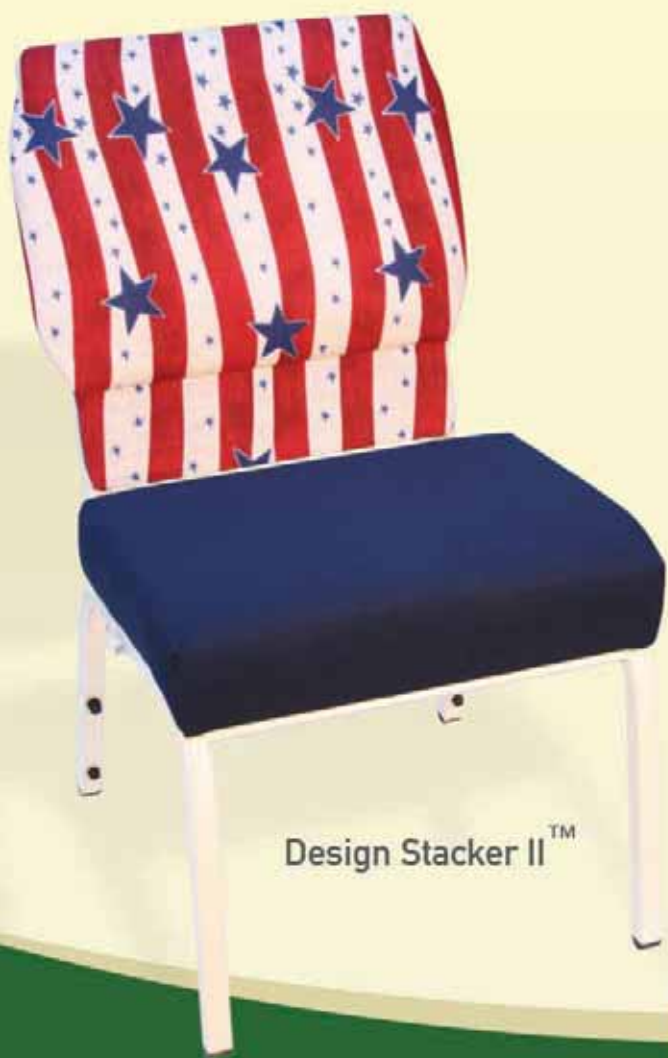
## ON THE HORIZON

As she continues to look to the future and envisions her plan for the association, Griffin said she’d also like to offer Web casts to Members. These Internet-based videos would highlight new products and initiatives, teach Members how to implement them, and feature selected speakers talking about environmental issues. In their leisure time, Members could log on to these 30-minute educational sessions, picking and choosing the ones that are most important to their property.

“Our Members are doing so much in the way of conservation – they’re taking a closer look at utility bills, implementing recycling programs, and switching to less-wasteful packaging – but we want to help them do more,” Griffin said. “By implementing new and diverse green programs and procedures, they’re not only protecting their property, but they are also making their hotel more appealing to guests. In the hospitality industry, where guests have a plethora of choices, those properties that are Members of the “Green” Hotels Association® stand taller amongst those that don’t offer environmental initiatives at all. In that respect, being environmentally savvy is not only good for our planet, but also our other precious resource, our guests.”



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# THE GREENER GOOD

Taking steps toward sustainability doesn't just save natural resources, it also boosts a hotel's bottom line

BY TARA N. WILFONG

Although there is an overwhelming push toward environmental stewardship in mainstream America, there are still those naysayers who question why they should make the conscious effort to go green. Whether their lack of enthusiasm is for financial reasons, an absence of eco-knowledge, or perhaps even sheer stubbornness, the "Green" Hotels Association® (GHA) and its worldwide network of supporters are quick to recite the beneficial reasons to make a permanent change. "Going green doesn't mean you have to spend a lot of money and implement every program out there," said Patricia Griffin, president and founder of the "Green" Hotels Association®. "On the contrary – if you're just starting out, you should know that going green is a series of small steps implemented over time. Beginning with one area and progressing to the next, as time and money allow, is the smartest way to make a long-term change."

In the hospitality industry, where resources are consumed at a staggering rate, conservation efforts are more important than ever. Programs aimed at water and energy conservation, recycling, and air quality are not only good





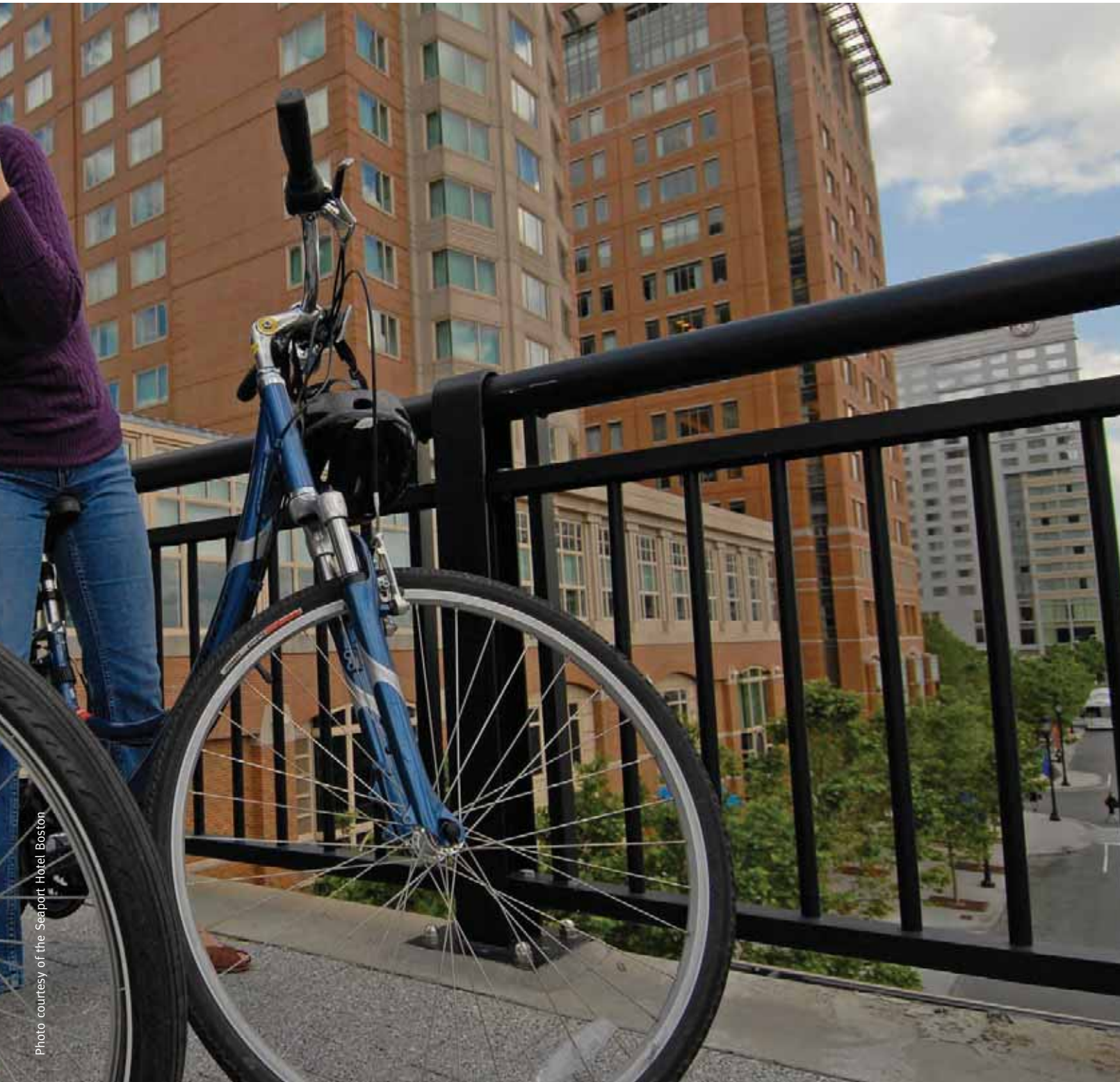


Photo courtesy of the Seaport Hotel Boston

The Seaport Hotel Boston knows that two wheels are better than four: It offers city maps and complimentary bicycles for guests to tour the city, emission free.



for the world in which we live, but they also boost a hotel's bottom line. And, more often than not, implementing specific facets of these programs requires little capital outlay on the front end.

### GREEN LINING

One of the most cost-effective programs is in-room recycling. Many hotels are quick to offer in-house programs where recycling bins are placed at advantageous spots throughout their facility. However, after researching the effectiveness of these programs, many hotels found that guests were more apt to throw their recyclables in the bin in their room rather than make the trip down the hall to dispose of recyclables.

By placing recycling bins directly in guest rooms, most hotels report overwhelming guest participation – often-times upward of 85 percent. “When we initially implemented our recycling program, we didn’t have much success because we didn’t make it easy enough for our guests,” said Jennifer Holderied, co-owner and director of marketing of Golden Arrow Lakeside Resort in Lake Placid, N.Y. “But, when we put the bins in their rooms, the response was amazing. Although this program isn’t a huge money saver, it has a much more important benefit: Annually, we divert about 460 cubic tons of waste from our local landfill.”

With the help of the GHA, increasingly more properties are implementing this in-room recycling program. Guest feedback is overwhelmingly positive, and because of the in-room exposure announcing how this program impacts the environment in a positive way, more guests are checking out with a sense of pride and a desire to continue their stewardship at home. “Recycling is commonplace around the country



Switching to green cleaning agents – those that are biodegradable, non-toxic, and naturally derived – is a green step in the right direction toward preserving the environment.

and the world, and food composting is beginning [to] gain momentum at home,” said Matt Moore, director of rooms and environmental programs at the Seaport Hotel in Boston, Mass. “By educating our guests and offering a wide variety of innovative environmental programs, we in the hospitality industry are empowering the next wave of environmental stewards and helping to move the process forward.” Unlike other aspects of the hospitality industry in which new innovations and company secrets are heavily guarded, this green revolution, where properties seek and

learn about new ways to be conscious consumers, is one that is happily shared and oftentimes quickly duplicated.

Hotels and resorts proudly tout their successes and offer up their best initiatives in hopes that this trend toward environmental stewardship will be firmly embraced by others. Using the recycling program as an example, many hotels have taken this trend one step further and noticed a definite drop in their monthly loss statements. In addition to a decrease in waste hauling due to increased guest participation, these properties are noticing a significant





shrink in discarded hotel property, such as napkins, utensils, and linens, when they hire a green team specially trained to sort the hotel's recyclables.

When it comes to the use of individually packaged soaps, shampoos, and conditioners – perhaps one of the most wasteful, and in turn, environmentally destructive practices in the hospitality industry since these containers end up in landfills, taking hundreds of years to decompose – many hotels have looked for a greener alternative. Installing bulk dispensers in the shower or purchasing products in 100 percent recyclable and biodegradable packaging has alleviated this waste stream and diverted billions of bottles from our nation's trash. "In this industry, it's rewarding to find an environmentally friendly solution to a problem as impactful as this one," Griffin said. "We've found that these changes don't take a lot of effort, they just require a shift in your decision-making process."

Small changes, such as partnering with local vendors who supply everything from non-toxic cleaning agents to native fruits and vegetables, go a long way in the fight toward environmental stewardship. By purchasing locally, hotels not only support their fellow businesses, but they also mitigate the harmful pollution associated with the transportation of goods. In Boston, the Seaport Hotel has taken this idea of buying locally, thus supporting community initiatives, one step further by incorporating a unique laundry truck into its green repertoire. The truck, which was built to run on diesel fuel – one of the most intense polluters in the automotive industry – was converted to biofuel, instantly reducing its harmful emissions by 78 percent.

Cooking oil from the hotel's kitchen is donated to a local enterprise, Wachusett BIO-MASS, which processes the oil into biofuel. The hotel then purchases the



The Seaport Hotel converts its used vegetable oil into a renewable biodiesel fuel that fuels its laundry truck.

processed biofuel for use in its laundry truck. "This is one instance where the life of a product has gone full circle," Moore said. "When we were faced with buying a new truck for use on the property, we made a conscious decision to buy a vehicle that could be adapted to produce fewer emissions and have zero contribution to global warming. This way of ecological thinking really sets us apart from others in our industry, and it makes our guests sit back and take notice."

In switching to the ElectroCide System, a more scientific version of the typical green cleaning agent, Moore said they embraced the change when they realized their former, but also green, products contained warning labels with the word "toxic." "We felt we owed it to our employees, who sometimes use these products for eight hours each day, to seek a new alternative," he said. "This new product has really taken our

industry by storm, because it's so multipurpose and it cleans better than anything we've used in the past."

At Forever Resorts properties – a family of companies that owns and operates more than 65 vacation properties in or near national parks, recreation areas, and national forests – the Forever Earth initiative includes the reduction or complete elimination of those products that cause environmental damage, or health or safety hazards. Among them, cleaning products were deemed hazardous to our environment, so management implemented the use of naturally derived, non-phosphate, non-toxic, biodegradable, concentrated, and animal-friendly cleaners in all of its locations.

In the Caribbean, where guests flock for the clean, salty air and the beautiful beaches, conservation initiatives





by the hotel industry are necessary to keep up with demand on the environment. At Bucuti Beach Resort in Aruba, a 15-year Charter Member, the mantra, “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle” is a way of life, not a trendy slogan meant to attract eco-minded visitors. When the resort began operations in 1987 on the sugary sands of Eagle Beach, Ewald Biemans, owner of the resort, had a vision for an inviting, relaxing retreat that would pamper guests in a clean, natural environment for generations to come. To accomplish this quest, he created a Green Team, and began researching ways to mitigate consumption without affecting service.

“One of the most important aspects of becoming more environmentally savvy is creating a green team that is charged

with keeping your hotel in check,” Griffin said. “By monitoring the property’s consumption, this team of environmental experts can make sure you’re eliminating waste and consuming products as minimally as possible.”

### SMALL STEPS, BIG IMPACT

Quick fixes, such as swapping incandescent light bulbs for more energy-efficient compact fluorescent ones and retrofitting guest sinks, showers, and toilets with aerators and low-flow devices, have made a huge impact. In fact, according to ENERGY STAR®, the average CFL is six times more efficient, rated at 10 watts each versus its 60-watt counterpart, and uses 75







Across spread: Aruba's Bucuti Beach Resort, a GHA Charter Member located on 14 acres of sugary white sand, has implemented myriad green practices. As one of the Caribbean's greenest properties, Bucuti utilizes energy-efficient lighting and solar-powered water heaters, supplies guest amenities in a dispenser (rather than individual packages), actively composts, and participates in beach-wide cleanups, to name just a few.

percent less energy than the standard fluorescent bulb. By the same token, sink and faucet aerators reduce water flow on average from 4.5 to 2.0 gallons per minute (gpm), while low-flow showerheads reduce the flow from 5.0 to 2.1 gpm. Water-saving toilets account for a decrease in water usage from the standard 3.5 gallons of water per flush to 1.6 gallons per flush. With such staggering statistics, for hotels such as Bucuti Beach Resort – with 63 rooms and an average 90 percent or greater yearly occupancy – the energy and water savings from these miniscule changes can be enormous: tens of thousands of dollars in decreased energy consumption and more than 2 million gallons of water saved annually.

And that is just the beginning. Many resorts have reported a decrease in energy consumption by installing smart and motion-detecting sensors in public areas and guest rooms. Amelia Island Plantation on Amelia Island, Fla., is a newer Member of the "Green" Hotels Association®, but its dedication to conservation initiatives are among the best. As a natural haven for wildlife and a protector of ecosystems, this massive property ensures its stewardship by paying close attention to its operations inside its facilities.



With guest satisfaction among its priorities, Amelia Island Plantation found a balance between comfort and conservation by installing a computerized HVAC monitoring system. The system allows guests to set an enjoyable temperature inside their room, but, once they vacate the premises for an extended period of time, the temperature automatically resets to an energy-saving level until the guest returns. Complementing this system is a pre-programmed unit that automatically shuts off the HVAC system when a sliding glass door is left open. "Since our inception in 1971, Amelia Island Plantation has strived for a balance between nature and man," said Leigh Coulter Beal, public relations manager for the resort. "With the implementation of our Green Team, and our affiliation with the "Green" Hotels Association®, we have taken that next practical step toward environmental stewardship by evaluating our consumption and initiating programs to reduce it."

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Photo courtesy of Amelia Island Plantation

With so many hospitality properties implementing green standards, these hotels and resorts are in a unique position to effect change on the greater traveling population. Education initiatives, in which these properties detail their eco-programs and ways in which their guests can implement them at home, stand as the first step toward conservation. In turn, by developing environmentally conscious programs, these properties, which are stewards of GHA, experience the added benefits of greater exposure among business and vacation travelers, increased respect from eco-minded travelers, and return patronage due to cleaner and healthier buildings.

"In this day and age, everyone seems to be looking at their business operations and analyzing how they can accomplish the same things, but in a more environmentally sensitive way," Moore explained. "If you do the research, ask the right questions, and align yourself with the right people and organizations to share best practices, you will be able to make significant changes. Those of us in the hospitality industry are in a unique position to make a positive environmental impact, and set a positive example for society at large. The innovation approaches and initiatives tested at Seaport and generally in the hotel industry will be the proving ground for residential applications that follow. At that point, we will be able to reverse the negative environmental trending and begin to reduce our impact on our precious resources worldwide."



In addition to water-saving toilets and showerheads, all used shower, bath, and sink water is collected in a graywater recycling system, cleaned via UV lamps, and then reused to irrigate the grounds at Bucuti Beach Resort.

Photo courtesy of Bucuti Beach Resort

## Amelia's Green Initiative: REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE, AND RE-INVENT



Implementing the "4Rs" is one of several "Green Initiatives" in place at GHA Member hotel Amelia Island Plantation. It has adopted the following practices:

- Buying perishable and non-perishable supplies in bulk when feasible
- Purchasing items that are made with recycled materials
- Donating excess food from dining outlets to Second Harvest Food Bank and a Fernandina Beach church that houses the homeless
- Recycling ink and toner cartridges
- Creating scratch notepads for staff use from discarded paper before it is recycled
- Distributing its monthly Resort Guide (formerly printed and mailed) electronically
- Providing Web site e-cards for staff, client, and guest use to communicate with vendors, clients, friends, and family
- Marketing campaigns via bulk mail have been replaced with electronic distribution
- Participating in a resort-wide recycling program for newspaper, plastic, glass, and aluminum
- Encouraging guests to participate in recycling via in-room receptacles and property-wide recycling containers located in conference centers and other locations accessible to resort guests, owners, and the public
- Expanding the recycling program to include homes and condos located on the Amelia Island Plantation property, resulting in tons recycled monthly
- Using recycled paper for resort printing
- Using take-out containers made from corn or potato products in all dining outlets
- Participating in a linen and towel "reuse versus replace" program
- Recycling electronic devices on a quarterly basis for staff, resort operations, and owners and residents of Amelia Island Plantation





The Solage Calistoga in California





# “GREEN” HOTELS MEMBER FOCUS

BY DAVID A. BROWN

The tapestry of sustainability woven by “Green” Hotels Association® (GHA) Members is one of diverse design. Many bold ideas form the pattern of this ever-growing fabric, but the common thread is innovation – the tireless pursuit for a better way. Better for the environment, better for the guest’s experience, and better for the bottom line; this objective trinity works in concert for a collective good.

To this end, GHA Members take the key components of green knowledge, apply these practices to their particular properties, and develop methods with a deep impact that affect both the day-to-day and the long term. Constantly perfecting their balance between guest comfort and environmental sustainability may seem like a daunting task, but most enjoy the challenge, along with the ensuing rewards of seeing their properties achieve sustainable success.

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Here’s a look at what some of the leading green hotels have been up to lately:

## SOLAGE CALISTOGA

Location: Calistoga, Calif.

Guest Rooms: 89

**Description:** A masterful blend of exquisite design and environmental sustainability, this indulgent resort sits nestled in the sun-drenched splendor of Northern California’s Napa Valley.

**Awards & Achievements:** Ranked 11th in *Travel + Leisure’s* World’s Best Awards for Resorts, 2009; *Hospitality Design* magazine award for Green Design, 2008

**Greening Examples:** Leveraging its natural surroundings for energy savings, Solage Calistoga harnesses the warm waters of an on-site geothermal spring and then pipes this invigorating flow into the soaking pools and full-plunge pools of its luxurious Spa Solage treatment building and bathhouse. Geothermal water also keeps the family pool warm for year-round swimming, while carbon-filtered drinking water from the resort’s

natural source serves guest rooms, Solbar restaurant, and Spa Solage.

Solage’s signature spa treatment – the “Mud Slide” – uses an organic mixture comprising California clay and volcanic ash mixed with geothermal water and blended with a selection of organic oils. Guest rooms, public areas, and Spa Solage use locally sourced, handmade bath amenities dispensed through bulk containers to minimize waste.

“Being part of an organization that is putting the green movement front and center helps us think about what we’re doing here and how we can improve.”

– Director of Membership and Local Markets Renee Risch, Solage Calistoga

### The Solage Calistoga



Architecturally, Solage boasts eco-friendly features such as rooftop solar panels, tall windows, and open spaces that permit unrestricted air flow for a passive cooling effect that eliminates the need for air conditioning. Low volatile organic compound (VOC) paints, bamboo flooring, and natural materials, such as hemp, wool, jute, stone, and reclaimed timbers, used in guest rooms help minimize the environmental impact.

**Management View:** Renee Risch, director of membership and local markets, noted that while Solage Calistoga is modest in size, management and staff have the utmost concern for their environmental responsibility. “Many hotels have more rooms [than our 89], so that equals a lot of waste. But anything we can do, even on a small scale, makes a difference. We’ve tried to touch every part of the resort that can make a difference.”

Risch said that Solage guests typically harbor common green commitments. In many cases, individuals and groups arrive at the resort following careful scrutiny of various environmental policies.

“A lot of not only leisure guests, but also corporate guests, have green initiatives as part of their preferences,” Risch said. “In a time when everyone is looking closely at where they spend their dollars, these guests look more closely at [facilities] that fit their expectations.

“At Solage, since we were built eco-friendly from the ground up, we’re able to meet the requirement that many guests are looking for in their green philosophies.”

### THE SEAPORT HOTEL BOSTON

Location: Boston, Mass.

Guest Rooms: 426

**Description:** Located within the dynamic Seaport District along Boston's scenic waterfront.

**Awards & Achievements:** Boston Green Business Award, 2007; Massachusetts Lodging Association Good Earth Keeping Award, 2007; Boston Green Business Award – Bike Friendly Business, 2008; Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection WasteWise Innovation Award, 2008

**Greening Examples:** Among Seaport's newest achievements is the use of green cleaning fluids produced by an electrolyzed water system that combines tap water and a saline mix with positive and negative electrical charges to create a powerful and natural cleaning agent. Also, the hotel has installed an ozone system, which uses high-voltage electricity to split oxygen atoms into highly unstable groupings of three oxygen atoms called “ozone gas.” Mimicking a natural chemical transformation that helps clean the atmosphere of pollutants, this man-made alteration works as a powerful oxidizing, cleaning, and bleaching agent for Seaport's laundry. Faster and more effective cleaning reduces the amount of detergent, water, and energy needed.

Energy conservation comes from smart thermostats and smart meters that control the building's HVAC and electricity use. Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) installed in all guest rooms, public-space fixtures, and the parking garage use less energy and last longer than incandescent bulbs. (Seaport recycles used bulbs to keep mercury out of the environment.) Also, flat-screen TVs in guest rooms are part of GHA Member Phillips' EcoVision initiative and use up to 50 percent less energy than other models.

“The GHA allows us access to products we might not have known about. Also, it allows us to share some of our best practices on what has worked for us and see what has worked with other hotels.” – Director of Rooms  
Matt Moore, the Seaport Hotel Boston





## The Seaport Hotel in Boston



Meanwhile, an EnergySmart Roof® system on all buildings on the Seaport World Trade Center (WTC) campus conserves energy by reducing atmospheric heat. A green roof, similar to that of the Golden Arrow Resort, covers the Seaport WTC's East Podium building.

The hotel extends its mandatory staff recycling program to a voluntary guest room program that allows guests the option of separating their trash and recyclables. For its food services, Seaport uses a Bio-EZ commercial composter to transform its solid waste into liquid slurry that flows through sewer pipes. This reduces garbage collection/hauling expenses, along with the associated fuel use, and minimizes Seaport's landfill burden.

**Management Views:** Along with his role as director of rooms, Moore also coordinates Seaport's green initiatives, organizing staff and hotel managers and addressing questions and suggestions from guests. Moore said that since Seaport formally launched its greening initiative "Seaport Saves" in 2005, the central premise has been: Can we do it better?

"Seaport is committed to making our operation as sustainable as possible," Moore said. "We firmly believe that you can operate a luxury hotel and still operate sustainably. Most of our initiatives are seamless to our guests. In the last decade or so, sustainability has always implied a compromise to your guest.

But I think the technology has evolved so you're not compromising quality for environmentally sustainable initiatives."

As Moore pointed out, guests take note of how hotels handle environmental issues and the consumer's scorecard weighs heavily on bookings.

"Surveys indicate that people are making decisions on where to stay based on a company's environmental position," Moore said. "A lot of people are putting their money where their philosophy is. They're making decisions based on who shares their

"[GHA] is an internationally recognized organization and by being a Member, we're aligning ourselves with the same philosophy. I think every hotel in that organization is among the world's most committed to environmental sustainability." – Director of Rooms Matt Moore, the Seaport Hotel Boston



beliefs on sustainability. Just like you wouldn't ignore the quality of food or the size of rooms, you also don't ignore the sustainability factor."

For example, Moore said that Seaport gets 50 to 70 percent of its business from large groups with green preferences. Whereas Request for Proposals (RFPs) once focused on such details as banquet facilities, room rates, and multimedia equipment, RFPs now include inquiries about energy conservation, solid-waste management, and poured water.

"That's not to say that these groups would not have stayed with us otherwise," Moore said, "but we've been able to satisfy the environmental language in their RFPs."

In Moore's opinion, the hotel industry should be pressing the developmental horizon of green practices. "What we do has a very large carbon footprint, so we have a tremendous responsibility to lead the way in sustainability. These initiatives may or [may] not be [immediately] appropriate for the residential sector, but with testing and development in the hotel industry, maybe some of these ideas will evolve into something that will be appropriate for the home."



The Seaport Hotel



Photo courtesy of the St. Regis Aspen Resort

## HOT TIMES IN ASPEN

In other notable Member news, summer 2009 saw the St. Regis Aspen Resort debut its cutting-edge solar project. The resort expects to dramatically reduce its natural gas usage by harnessing the sun's energy for an environmentally friendly heating source.

A system of 3,000 solar e-tubes, called "heat pipes," was mounted on the St. Regis Aspen's roof. These vacuum tube arrays can heat water to temperatures above 400 degrees, after which the heated water is pumped to storage tanks and dispersion loops. Tied into the resort's main domestic water loop, this system provides heated water for sinks and showers, as well as the spa and heated pools.

"The St. Regis Aspen and our parent company, Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, made a large capital investment in this project as part of our green initiatives," said General Manager Senih Geray in a company release. "We are committed to significantly reducing the energy used by the hotel because we believe in working toward a more sustainable and ecologically sound future." With its pumps, valves, and water quantity digitally controlled for optimal temperature range, the solar-powered system takes the place of natural gas-heated water until tank temperatures fall below a set minimum. After sundown, or during cloudy conditions, the system reverts to natural gas operation until the sunlight returns.

Photo courtesy of the Seaport Hotel Boston



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## THE COLONY HOTEL

Location: Kennebunkport, Maine

Guest Rooms: 125

**Description:** A 14-year Charter Member of the GHA and Maine's first green hotel, The Colony Hotel sits on the rock promontory overlooking the Atlantic Ocean and the mouth of the Kennebunk River, within walking distance of Kennebunkport.

The Colony's self-description captures the essence of its environmental stewardship: "We acknowledge our interdependence with all living things, and we operate with the belief that ecological, economic, and cultural sustainability require equity and balance among all parties."

**Awards & Achievements:** "2001 Conservation Award," Business Category, Kennebunk Conservation Commission; Best Practice Champion, "Guest-Friendly Environment & Recycling Practices: Becoming a Green Hotel," Cornell University School of Hotel Management, the American Hotel Federation, American Express (1999); Historic Hotels of America Certification, National Trust for Historic Preservation (1998); "Recycling Hero Award," Maine Chamber and Business Alliance (1998); Florida State University "Green Business Award" for environmental ethics in business strategy (1996)

**Greening Examples:** The Colony Hotel Ecology Group, made up of a recycling chief, a director of environmental programs, and a manager of environmental operations, was created to research, develop, and implement environmental programs and operations, and help ensure environmental sensitivity in all hotel operations.

As Maine's first U.S. Backyard Wildlife Habitat, The Colony reuses leftover food for its bird-feeding program. Other



organic kitchen waste is composted and used as soil amendment in ornamental and herb gardens. To minimize water needs, hardy native plants are used for landscaping. Treating fungus and insects with botanical controls eliminates chemical contaminants.

Maximizing its resources, The Colony converts retired guest room bedspreads and curtains into gift shop collectibles, dog blankets, and baby crib quilts. Retired room sheets get another round of service as kitchen staff aprons. When shipments arrive, their packing materials are harvested for reuse. All

of this minimizes the hotel's garbage hauling and lessens the local landfill burden. In The Colony offices, both sides of a blank page are used when making photocopies and cutting up used office paper yields notepads.

On the educational side, the hotel developed a self-guided scavenger hunt called "Eco-Visit to The Colony Hotel," which encourages environmental awareness in children. For an older audience, The Colony targets business meetings and retreats by distributing its Green Meeting Guide ("Eight Steps to Greener Meetings") to potential clients.

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## GOLDEN ARROW LAKESIDE RESORT

Location: Lake Placid, N.Y.

Guest Rooms: 153

**Description:** Set amid the stunning scenery of Adirondack Park – the largest protected area in the contiguous United States – the stately Golden Arrow Lakeside Resort is located directly on the shores of Mirror Lake and in the heart of Olympic Village.

**Awards & Achievements:** Four-leaf rating in Audubon International's Green Leaf Eco-rating program for hotels; New York's Department of Environmental Conservation Environmental Excellence Award, 2008; New York State Hospitality & Tourism Association's Good Earth Keeping Award 2009

**Greening Examples:** In June 2008, the Golden Arrow installed a "green roof" with soil hosting local plants and herbs that create a living, breathing presence atop the building. Covering the flat area between the hotel lobby and its independently owned restaurant, Charlie's, the Golden Arrow's green roof enhances the view of Mirror Lake, but the benefits extend well past aesthetics. For starters, this undertaking will extend the hotel's roof life while creating a super insulator that keeps the building warm in the winter and cool in the summer – a serious energy saver.

The green roof also helps protect Mirror Lake by filtering stormwater and catching pollutants that drain off the roof. Oxygen released by the plants helps reduce the hotel's carbon footprint, while the herbs end up in many of the dishes prepared at Charlie's.

Golden Arrow also employs a stormwater-management system and oil separator to further prevent lake contamination. And during icy winter weather, the hotel replaces environmentally harsh road salt with the 100-percent soluble SafeStep™, containing no harsh chemicals. Furthermore, Charlie's collects its grease and donates it to a local farm with an engine that runs on biofuel.

To minimize energy use for water heating, the resort employs heat-recovery systems that utilize heat from various internal water sources to warm incoming town water. This leaves the new water 10 to 20 degrees warmer before any energy is used to heat it. Furthering the resource conservation are tools such as low-flow showerheads and energy-management systems that turn down heating or air conditioning in unoccupied rooms.

Golden Arrow's meeting facilities are ideal for business conferences, government retreats, or social gatherings. Whatever the event, green is the standard. All paper goods and pens come from recyclable post-consumer content; banquet meals use locally sourced produce; and water is served only in pitchers or carafes – no plastic bottles. CFLs minimize energy use throughout the hotel.

Valuing guest participation, Golden Arrow places recycling bags in each room. Return guests receive gift bags made of recycled material that contain various green items, such as locally made wooden coasters and soy lip balm. Kids receive environmentally informative coloring books featuring "Mr. Green," the resort's mascot created by a staff member.

Another interesting way for Golden Arrow to share its environmental message is its ongoing Green Quiz. Throughout the



hotel, framed art panels made of reclaimed roof slate and created by a local artist contain environmental fun facts about the resort. Guests are given a quiz and encouraged to seek answers in the various fun facts. Green prizes reward successful efforts.

Moreover, the hotel encourages its guests to travel, but to travel lightly on the Earth. Those who arrive at Golden Arrow by foot, bicycle, cross-country ski, or hybrid vehicle receive an "It's So Easy Being Green" gift bag. Premier parking spots reward those driving hybrid vehicles. Involvement in green programs, such as a local Eco-Fair, Kids Earth Day Celebration, and the annual Lake Placid Village Clean-Up Day, solidifies Golden Arrow's green commitment.

Golden Arrow extends its green encouragement to staff by awarding a monthly gas stipend to those who live more than 10 miles from work and chose to carpool at least four days a week. Also, employees living within 10 miles receive a free lunch each day that they walk or bike to work.

**Management Views:** Jennifer Holderied, who owns and operates Golden Arrow with her siblings, Heidi and Peter, has seen many positive returns from Golden Arrow's greening efforts. For one thing, the property has secured several conferences from state government groups following a New York initiative aimed at finding green conference sites.

"The biggest unforeseen benefit of greening has been the staff involvement," Holderied said. "As it turns out, the majority of great ideas that we have implemented have been staff-generated. This gives them a bigger challenge and also it raises morale by giving them a bigger sense of ownership. We kind of

"I find the GHA a great resource. One of our big challenges is procurement – finding vendors that are truly green and have more than just one green product. The GHA is helpful in that regard because they do the research for you." – Partner-Owner Jennifer Holderied, Golden Arrow Lakeside Resort

expected that the guests would love [our greening efforts], but this was a pleasant surprise."

Ultimately, Holderied said, prudent business judgment comes first. "I'm not always going to choose the green route. I try to find a balance between the cost, the environmental benefit, and the guest's experience. Whatever we do has to enhance the guest's experience."

Modeling this principle is the Golden Arrow's private beach. Each spring the hotel trucks in crushed limestone to renourish its lakefront property to help balance the pH and counter the effects of acid rain blown in from industrial areas beyond the Adirondacks.

"This is a good example of something that enhances the guest experience while benefiting the environment," Holderied said. "This is a win-win situation, because it is so beautiful and it helps protect our lake."

## ENDEARING & ENDURING MESSAGE

One of the most effective strategies for maximizing the benefits of greening is to actively promote the facts to hotel guests. Even if the efforts have been in place for years, and even if their existence bears economic advantage as well as environmental benefit, the message often resonates with profound impact.

"A lot of the green things that we did were not new ideas, but what we've done is put an emphasis on communicating better with our guests," Golden Arrow's Holderied said. "We've done this through a green section on our Web site, we have binders explaining our green elements in every guest room, and we do green tours of the property for anyone who asks it."

Holderied said guest feedback commonly indicates appreciation for Golden Arrow's greening efforts, but

occasionally appreciation turns to interest and that leads to imitation. "Shortly after we installed our green roof, a lady called me and wanted one for her home. She got the information on who installed our green roof and had one installed."

Considering the number of consumers that pass through hotels and given the multiplier effect from each person's sphere of influence, missing the chance to advance green thinking would be a regrettable loss. Of this, Holderied said: "I think, in the tourism industry, especially hotels, we have a tremendous opportunity to touch a lot of people and influence the way they view greening. We have over 100,000 guests coming through here every year. If we can influence a guest to change one habit in their life, then that's a great thing.

"In tourism, greening is a responsibility and an obligation, but it's also an opportunity to educate and inspire people."





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# GREEN FOCUS

## Unraveling the hype

BY HEIDI BOHI

As green hotel certification programs pop up like spring shoots poking their heads up through the earth, hoteliers, resort owners, bed & breakfasts, and lodge operators worldwide are considering this next greening craze with the idea that by dedicating time and money to these costly and time consuming programs, it may make potential guests see them as being more eco-savvy than their competition.

Every year, properties are lured by hip green jargon and organic-looking logos and marketing materials that may lead them to believe they're doing the right thing to become "green certified." They may write checks for thousands of dollars a year depending on the size of their facility. Beside the sizeable dues for many properties who have small margins – especially in the current economy – the application and renewal process can mean hours of paperwork, on-site visits, and annual eco-audits required by the organization to pass its muster.

Are these certifications helping their green marketing efforts? Possibly, because guests and clients are just as confused as they are about what's green and what's hype and may be likely to think that a sticker in the window means something. Are certifications helping the planet by doing business sustainably? Not likely. Being told what to do is one thing. Doing it is quite another.

Typically, green hotel certifications offer premiums that range from being allowed to use the certification logo in marketing materials, to green guidelines, newsletters, eco-

plaques and awards, signage, Web site links to the business, posters, and videos. But if hotel properties want to really make a difference, Patricia Griffin, founder and president of the "Green" Hotels Association® (GHA), said, "They are better off investing their time and money on greening their operations in practical ways that fit and grow with their business model, are sustainable from year to year, and most importantly, improve the quality of the guest's experience so they will come back again and again. Because when it all comes down to it," she said, "The No. 1 goal is to stay in business," and the best way to do that is by implementing actual green steps and amenities into operations that guests see value in, and at the same time reduce the environmental impact of the business.

"Most of the members of these organizations don't even know what the certification means. They spend thousands of dollars to have these organizations tell them what to do, when instead, management and staff should be educating themselves and looking ahead to see what they can do to update and continue their greening efforts every year," Griffin said.







As a dedicated GHA Member, the historic Lenox Hotel provides eco-plaques in every guest room to share its best-practice eco-facts regarding electricity efficiency, water conservation, and recycling.

"It compares to having someone come into your kitchen and tell you what to do: You're still the one who has to know how to make it all come together."

The greening process is not the same for every hotel, though green certification programs offer one standardized approach for all properties regardless of their size, location, and the demographic they attract. Instead, Griffin said, the

key to effectively greening a hotel property is to adopt measures that are flexible, realistic, reflective of the local culture and environment, supported by staff, energy efficient, and that will contribute to strengthening the bottom line of the operation.

"There's no reason for hoteliers to sit around all year waiting for some inspector to come and tell them what to





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do,” Griffin said. “Instead, they should educate and enthuse management and staff regarding greening. Greening is simply looking for waste, seeking ideas for reuse of resources, and suggesting ways to lower costs while maintaining the quality of the guests’ stay.” Instead of spending money on certification, property owners should be working to improve their green program every day by using resources like the GHA *Guidelines and Ideas* and newsletters that teach, suggest, guide, advise, and inspire more creative ideas that can be tailored to any green property.

Although Griffin does see the value in the U.S. Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design® (LEED) certification, a green building rating system that provides standards for environmentally sustainable construction, she said that to have new construction that is sustainable and operations that aren’t is pointless. Currently, only 13 hotels in the United States have LEED certification of 48,000 properties and another 400 are in the process of becoming certified.

GHA is the longest-standing, most experienced green hotel association in the world, and Griffin was one of the first to become aware of the positive impact hotels could make on the environment 16 years ago when she was traveling in Germany and, for the first time, saw the idea for suggesting to hotel guests that they chose to re-use their towels. At the time, it was a simple sign pasted on the wall, but for her “it was like lightening.” Using her desktop publishing background, she came home to Houston, Texas, and designed and printed her own towel cards and mailed them to 220 Houston hotels. The very first day they arrived in mailboxes, a Best Western® property called and placed an order. Griffin expanded the linen card program so guests could volunteer to not have their sheets changed daily.

From there, she developed a catalog of green products suitable for hotel and lodging properties that includes everything from microfiber cleaning towels, books, refillable hair and skin care product dispensers, to environmentally friendly plumbing parts that reduce water consumption, and several different styles of cards suggesting guests help contribute to properties saving money and protecting the environment. The linen cards alone, she said, save properties more than \$6.50 per occupied room, per day, and hoteliers report saving 5 percent on utility costs resulting from about 80 percent guest participation.

When she started the GHA membership program in 1995 – she has about 500 Members today, which means this component alone has exceeded even the popularity of her hotel products – Griffin sensed there would eventually come a time when other organizations would begin to mimic hers. She and



The Lenox Hotel works to proactively conserve energy and water, reduce waste, and eliminate toxins, as well as educate guests, vendors, and team members about environmental concerns. The hotel has also purchased renewable wind energy to offset 100 percent of the global warming impact of the hotel’s electricity usage.

her Members know the difference between frivolous certification programs and GHA, which is why she continues to grow.

“A hotel is a living, breathing entity that changes all the time and requires dynamic knowledge and practices and operations that can flex with it, not a static certification process that is renewed every year. That time and money is better used on greening operations,” she said, adding that, at the very least, each property should start by forming a green team of staff, then conducting a basic energy, water, solid waste, and clean air audit to see which simple green measures are already in place that can be built upon. Then, instead of wasting time renewing certifications, use that time to update the property’s list of green accomplishments and modify the plan accordingly. The current economic downturn presents the perfect opportunity to work on developing or improving a green program, Griffin said, because business is slow and management and staff can use the extra time to research and implement the best green practices for their property.

In addition to using GHA as a resource, she also recommends state green lodging programs, because they are generally free or very inexpensive. There are now at least 16 states that have some type of green lodging program, with more than 1,200 properties participating and 500 others applying. The Missouri



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Located in Arkansas, the historic Mountain Thyme Bed & Breakfast, a 13-year GHA Partner Member, is active in its greening initiatives. The B&B grows its own organic herbs and purchases organic produce, coffee, and tea; utilizes organic fertilizers and pest controls in yard and all gardens; purchases phosphate-free, biodegradable cleaning supplies; is involved in recycling programs for staff and guests; has installed low-flow sinks, showerheads, and toilets; and has a successful change-only-when-needed linen policy.

Hotel and Lodging Association recently launched its program, and in New York, more than 10 state organizations are working together as part of the New York State Governor's Initiative to put together a program. The California Green Lodging Program, established by the California Integrated Waste Management Board, is run by the Department of General Services as part of the State Travel program. Another example, Travel Green Wisconsin is a voluntary program that reviews, certifies, and recognizes tourism businesses and organizations that have made a commitment to reducing their environmental impact by evaluating operations, setting goals, and taking

specific actions toward environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

The Lenox Hotel in the historic Back Bay of Boston is a luxury boutique property that started its green program in 1992 and considers its ongoing relationship with GHA valuable for sharing sustainable knowledge and supporting the organization's approach to greening, said Elaine Strunk, director of green for the 214-room property. One of the original Members of GHA, Strunk said today it has a multi-tier green program that includes more than 95 initiatives that continue to result in measurable results. A new boiler saves 30 percent on its energy bill, its single-stream recycling program tripled recycling efforts and made them more user friendly, and installing waterless urinals saves 180,000 gallons of water every year.

One of the biggest values in being a Member of GHA, she said, is the exposure they get, as guests use GHA to find green hotels, relying on this affiliation to direct them to properties that actually have results-oriented green programs in place. "It's good business," Strunk said of their GHA support and sustainability in general. "It doesn't make sense to have waste be a part of business. By working to create a business that incorporates sustainability, we are working on these issues while improving the bottom line and efficiencies, and also getting great guest response."

Smaller properties especially see the value of working with GHA rather than spending money on costly certification programs. Mountain Thyme Bed & Breakfast Inn, an eight-room property near Hot Springs National Park in Arkansas, has been working with GHA for 13 years. In addition to the benefit of guest referrals, Rhonda Hicks, co-owner, said the principles on which the organization is built have been important to her since the '80s – she and her husband also owned a green home – and she enjoys the "bragging rights" that membership gives her. GHA Guidelines are also beneficial because she can hand-pick the ones that are consistent with her business model and, where necessary, those that are in keeping with Arkansas environmental regulations.

For a small business, Hicks pointed out, certifications are simply not in the budget, as the fees are typically more than her annual revenues. "It's not the kind of thing I can afford to do, especially in this economy," she said. "I don't bring in \$2,000 of business in a year as it is," which is often how much annual registrations cost. Instead, she said, she would rather focus on implementing what she can do and what improvements guests see the value in, such as using fluorescent and mini fluorescent light bulbs; low-flow control plumbing modifications on sinks, showers, and toilets; unbleached, undyed towels; and 100-percent Pima cotton sheets, which require replacing less often.

# SUSTAINABLE RESULTS FOR GREEN HOTELS

BY JUDITH A. STOCK

In the hospitality world, green hotels strive to be more environmentally friendly by saving water, reducing energy consumption, and diminishing solid waste. Hotels have consistently profited from their green efforts, which in turn has led to more hotels opting in for green programs nationwide.

To find out which best green hotel strategies work for three hotels across the country, we asked "Green" Hotels Association®

(GHA) Member hotels – St. Regis Aspen Resort, A.G. Thomson House Bed & Breakfast, and the Westin New York at Times Square – what they've learned and saved in the process of managing their successful green programs. We'll look at specific front-of-the-house and back-of-the-house areas including guest rooms and baths, parking, landscaping, meeting rooms, housekeeping, and kitchen areas. Read on to discover a number of innovative ideas to make any hotel greener.

## ST. REGIS ASPEN RESORT

St. Regis Aspen is situated at the base of Aspen Mountain in downtown Aspen, Colo., with ski lifts on either side of the hotel and only 220 miles west of Denver. St. Regis formed a Green Committee in March 2008, made up of 16 employees representing each department, which meets monthly to brainstorm innovative ways to increase the hotel's efficiency and staff awareness of environmental issues.

"Our corporate leadership is very sustainable-minded," David Twitchell, director of engineering, said. "We want to meet the expectations and needs of our customers."

One innovative green program is the solar evacuated tube technology that enables the resort to decrease its dependence on natural gas. Using the sun's energy, the 1,300 solar e-tubes mounted on the hotel's main building roof heat the liquid solution in vacuum tubes to temperatures above boiling point at the tips of the tube. The tubes are copper and glass torpedoes and look like something out of an old Flash Gordon movie. The water circulates around the tops of the tubes and ties into the resort's domestic water preheat loop through the use of heat exchanges. The tubes provide water for sinks, showers, heated pools, and whirlpools, while excess water is stored in a storage tank and can be dispensed as needed by an electronic mixing valve.

**Guest Rooms:** The property is made up of 179 guest rooms, 25 two- and three-bedroom condos as part of the property, plus 98 guest rooms converted into high-end rented condos.

Each room is outfitted with three-way CFLs that allow the hotel to use 600 percent less lighting energy. Less popular is the

"don't change my sheets" program, where only 20 percent of patrons who stay longer than one night opt in for this program.

Low-flow toilets and water conservation showerhead restrictors are standard in all guest bathrooms. The low-flow toilets use only 1.28 gallons per flush (gpf), one of the most water conscious available today, as opposed to 3.5 gpf before the retro fit, resulting in almost two-and-a-half times less water and sewage costs than before.

**Parking Facility:** "We have converted all the garage lighting to long-life tubular lighting or T8 fluorescent bulbs that replaced the older T12," said Twitchell. "We know we use less electricity here, but it's difficult to track because the cost of electricity is always changing."

**Kitchen:** The hotel uses fair-trade coffee and sources its food from local vendors. "We have better control of the quality of our food when our chef can pick herbs grown on property. If more produce is needed, we buy from local organic farms," said Twitchell.

To minimize waste, used kitchen grease is sent to a local company and remanufactured into bio-diesel fuels. The staff dining room is stocked with reusable cups instead of disposable ones, which can choke landfills.

**Housekeeping:** The cleaning staff uses green products – those without chlorine or bleach – to clean guest rooms. Windows are cleaned with Ecolab cleaner. In terms of laundry, a sophisticated ozone-generation system that's proven to be an effective germicide enables 90 percent of the loads to be washed in cold water, which results in huge energy savings, benefitting the environment as well as the hotel's bottom line.











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The Thomson House B&B sits on 2 acres of land in the historic east end of Duluth, Minn. Built in 1909, the inn is just seven blocks from Lake Superior, the largest of the five Great Lakes.

"We do as much as we can to cut down on the impact our hotel has on the environment by having a small footprint," said Tim Allen, who co-owns the inn with his wife, Angie. "Each guest gets a tour of the facility upon arrival where we explain our green policies."

**Guest Rooms:** "We use CFLs in all seven guest rooms, but since this is an old house with built-in fixtures, we can't use them in every outlet," said Allen. "But most of the guest room lighting is on dimmers."

Each room has individual climate-control features and each guest receives a remote control for air conditioning and heat. However, since the property is in Northern Minnesota, Allen encourages guests to use the "natural air conditioning" provided by opening the windows.

Cotton towels and sheets are provided instead of those made from polyester, which isn't a biodegradable material. There is also a bin in the common area of the inn for recyclables. Plastic ware and paper napkins aren't an option; instead the B&B provides flatware and cloth napkins that can be washed and reused. These efforts keep items out of landfills and save on purchasing disposable items. In Duluth, residential and business customers contract to have their recycling and garbage picked up and are only charged for the amount of garbage. By recycling most of its items, the Thomson House saves on these extra hauling fees.

"We use glasses made from [recycled] glass in the guest rooms and we have some of the best water in the country, so we encourage our guests to use our water, not bottled water," Allen said.

Guest bathrooms are outfitted with low-flow showerheads and toilets with dual flushing features. "The manufacturers say you can save 25,000 gallons [annually] because you are only flushing half the toilet," explained Allen.

**Lawn Maintenance:** Of the 2 acres, only 15 percent is watered and mowed. The rest of the land, covered by native prairie flowers or forest, doesn't require regular watering.

To feed flowers in the beds surrounding the inn, Allen buys natural mulch distributed by the local Western Lake Superior Sanitary District. "We garden organically and don't use pesticides or herbicides. The savings come in the form of less water needed and less water evaporation due to the mulch."

**Housekeeping:** Sheets and towels are changed every third day to save energy and wear. Once sheets and towels are well-used, they're donated to the local Goodwill along with any old or used books and magazines. Instead of disposable cleaning materials, housekeeping uses green cleaners and cotton rags. A smart choice, the Allens subscribe to one copy of four newspapers and leave them in the public area for guests instead of one for each room. Like the books and magazines, the newspapers also are recycled.

On the horizon for the Thomson House this fall is a geothermal system that will produce hot water for kitchen use, laundry, and heating the inn. Already in the planning stages are solar panels that will produce a good portion of the electricity for the property.



### THE WESTIN NEW YORK AT TIMES SQUARE

"We tell people we are at 'the center of the universe,' at the corner of 43rd Street and 8th Avenue," said Gerard Wider, general manager of the Westin New York. "Historically speaking, the Times Square area is named for *The New York Times* and its landmark building."

Close to Broadway and the theater district, it's also home to a number of celebrated restaurants as well as the Hell's Kitchen area with its unique eateries. Built in 2002, the Westin New York is the largest newly built hotel, a towering 45-story skyscraper.

**Guest Rooms:** With 863 guest rooms, there's a lot going on here. This hotel had its waste-management company complete a review of the refuse guests produce. Turns out, 95 percent of





the trash can be composted or recycled. Once the waste-management company sorts everything (so guests don't have to), the hotel is considered to be in a single-stream recycling program.

An automatic linen-reuse program is in place for guests staying more than two nights. To opt out of this program, guests can place a card on the bed requesting fresh sheets.

Thermostats are preset with summer and winter settings to maximize efficiency. At night, with turn-down service, only the entrance light is left on in order to conserve electricity.

"We also participate in the Consolidated Edison program," Widder said. "When they ask us to shed our electricity back to the grid, we shut down our consumption and switch over to our own generator."

Guest bathrooms, outfitted with low-flow toilets, restrictors, or aerators, conserve water resources. Public area bathrooms have automatic toilets and in the associate areas, forced hot air dryers are used, with only some paper towels. Back-of-the-house bathrooms are equipped with light sensors. All ice machines have been put on sensors/timers to make ice only at low-demand hours to save electricity. "It's hard to quantify the savings, but we are definitely saving money," said Widder.

**Meeting Rooms:** This hotel has 34,000 square feet of meeting spaces and offers green meeting packages to its clients. A table at the back of the room holds needed supplies for meeting attendees. The hotel stopped providing disposable water bottles on the tables at each place and instead offer New York City water and ice in pitchers. Skirtless tables save on linen and laundry usage.

The audiovisual package is energy efficient with ENERGY STAR®-rated equipment while flip charts are made from post-consumer materials. Lights in the meeting rooms are on dimmer switches and security walks the area to turn off lights when not in use, saving further on electricity usage.

An added plus, the Westin New York offers vegetarian and vegan meals; meals are served on plates made from recycled leaves that are biodegradable and compostable.

**Kitchen:** All food waste is composted and produce comes from the local farmers' market. Food not consumed is either used to feed staff or donated to organizations such as Meals on Wheels or City Harvest. Kitchen grease is recycled and used for bio-fuel. Instead of using condiment jars that are expensive and wasteful, they use ramekins.

All kitchen equipment is ENERGY STAR rated. Wooden pallets and cardboard get reused or picked up by the recycling company.

**Housekeeping:** Only environmentally friendly cleaning products that meet the EPA's GS-37 industrial cleaner guidelines are used, keeping harmful toxins out of our delicate ecosystem.



Recycling and reusing materials, such as buffing or smoking scratched glass tabletops to look like new and reupholstering chairs and sofas, gives new life to slightly worn furniture and keep them out of landfills.

Simply put, green hotels continue to green up their bottom line. And, in addition, the hotel guests and the environment benefit from all the eco-friendly programs in place at green hotels across the country. Doing all we can to be as green as possible is the answer.



A hotel guest rises early for breakfast and turns on the bedside lamp. Does he know the lamp uses an energy-efficient compact fluorescent bulb? Maybe not, but the hotel knows that bulb will last 10 times longer than an incandescent and use 82 percent less energy.



# CONSERVING RESOURCES

BY DAVID A. BROWN





For hoteliers, going green – conserving energy, minimizing waste, and saving water – appeals to eco-conscious guests, equates to greater budget savings, and helps protect the Earth. It's a win-win-win decision!

After dressing for the day, our guest draws the curtains and basks in the gilded warmth, unaware that the room's lights automatically dimmed in response to natural light. The change was subtle, but not the energy savings.

Strolling along the hotel's exterior walkway after breakfast, our guest admires the vivid colors of a manicured lawn and ornamental flower garden. Unknown is the fact that this landscaped artistry comprises only a small percentage of the total grounds. The rest holds hardier turf grass and plant species requiring little, if any, irrigation. Where water is required, weather sensors ensure prudent use.

Ready for a day of local sightseeing, the guest starts toward the parking garage, but recalls a mention of free bike rentals. Armed with the hotel's local sightseeing map, he sets out for a day of leisurely exploration that consumes no fuel and emits no pollutants.

Later that evening, our guest needs his car for a quick trip to the local mall. The parking garage is dark, but lights in his specific area instantly illuminate when sensors detect his

motion. Thirty seconds after he drives away, the lights shut off, thereby conserving energy until the next guest enters the garage.

At the dinner table, neatly folded napkins and shiny flatware modestly conceal the hotel's green effort – a move that saves material costs/energy use and lessens landfill burden. During the meal, the work of a computerized HVAC system that maintains a pleasant room temperature while optimizing energy efficiency goes unnoticed, but no less appreciated.

Back in the guest's room, a relaxing shower before bedtime provides all the expected comfort with less water, thanks to the low-flow showerhead. Likewise, the high-efficiency toilet (HET) flushes as it should, yet it uses 20 percent less water than a standard model.

Prior to exiting the bathroom, the conscientious traveler decides he can get one more use out of his bath and hand towels, so he hangs them on their racks, rather than tossing them on the floor for housekeeping to collect. That move, along with skipping a day of new bed linens, saved the hotel several



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No doubt, today's savvy travelers frequently possess a clear understanding of, if not a personal conviction for, all things green. That being said, many may not notice the less-than-obvious measures hotels take to conserve resources and minimize environmental contamination.

In truth, green hotels are typically proud of their position and the proactive measures taken to emancipate their property from the clutches of wasteful and otherwise environmentally irresponsible practices. Still, many of these measures blend smoothly into daily operations, so guests feel no limitations, no inconveniences – only the pride in knowing that their choice of a green hotel means their leisure time levies minimal toll on the planet's resources.

Conservation is central to the premise of greening and exciting technological developments of recent years have been rapidly changing the ways in which the lodging industry operates. No habit is above scrutiny and no product or service is immune to replacement should a more environmentally friendly option fit the need.

#### WASTE WITHOUT THE WORRY

Our mothers may have taught us to clean our plates, but in reality, food items often go uneaten. Handling such waste has always been a logistical challenge marked with peripheral expense and environmental concerns. Within hours of movement to the hotel loading dock, rotting garbage cooks up a foul odor that offends human noses, while tempting those of the vermin kind. Moreover, trash pickups and landfill tonnage fees increase the burden.

Fortunately, options exist. Disposers, which grind food waste, use water to transport the pulverized matter to a wastewater treatment plant where its processing yields biosolids that are often used as fertilizer. To conserve water, disposer controls limit the flow while the machine sits idle.

Taking the process a step further, organic waste decomposition systems utilize water, heat, agitation, and microorganisms to break down food items and dissolve them into liquid slurry that can be released into the sanitary sewer line. Once released, the microbes also benefit municipal sewer lines by providing a free cleaning service.

Bones and pineapple crowns are about the only food items too dense for decomposition. Everything else ends up liquefied and may eventually fertilize agricultural lands. Call it a farm smoothy, this nutrient-rich flow fosters crop growth while reducing the number of trash bags that end up in landfills.

Hotels also save on deodorizing systems and pesticide treatments for their loading docks.

#### LIQUID LOGIC

The inherent viscosity of water makes it highly susceptible to waste, and inefficient toilets are the leading offenders. High-efficiency toilets combat waste by using at least 20 percent less water than standard 1.6 gallons per flush (gpf) toilets. Essentially, toilets that use 1.28 gpf or less earn the HET designation.

Another water-saving design is the pressure-assisted toilet. As pressurized water enters a closed vessel inside the tank, air is compressed at the top. Upon flushing, the water is released, the air expands rapidly, and a high-velocity jet pushes waste through the trap. Far more efficient than gravity toilets, pressure-assisted models use less water, require less maintenance, and improve sanitation and hygiene by blasting the bowl clean with each cycle.

One of the main causes of wasted toilet water is a leaky flapper – the rubber piece that opens and closes the tank's drain. Wear and tear along with occasional misalignments can allow unused water to trickle away unnoticed. For older toilets, replacing the standard flapper with an early closure flapper will reduce the water used in each flush. Fill diverters further help this cause by diverting water to the tank and less to the toilet bowl, thereby saving about three-fourths of a gallon of water per flush.

Flapperless toilets eliminate this problem by eliminating flappers (and other flexible seals) and holding tank water in a tipping bucket. When flushed, the toilet inverts the tipping bucket for a gravity-flush action that uses a static amount of water.

GHA Ally Member Waterless Co., LLC produces urinals that do more than conserve water – they eliminate its use altogether. The patented No-Flush™ urinals use an EcoTrap®, a proprietary version of a vertical trap in which liquid waste flows into a drain insert and passes through a floating layer of liquid called BlueSeal®. This barrier prevents sewer vapors from reaching the restroom atmosphere.

Beneath the BlueSeal, liquid waste overflows into a central tube and continues through the conventional drain line. Requiring minimal maintenance – simply replace the EcoTrap insert – a touch-free No-Flush urinal saves on average up to 45,000 gallons of water a year.

Also important for water conservation are low-flow showerheads and faucets augmented by aerators that inject air into the water flow to lessen the amount used – 2.5 gallons per minute (gpm) or less for showerheads, 2.75 for faucets. Another



low-flow shower option – the non-aerating head – uses a pulsing flow that yields a massaging effect. Non-aerating showerheads typically maintain water temperature longer, while aerating heads produce the fullest flow.

In addition to hardware developments, creative thinking continues to provide innovative ideas for water conservation. For example, hotels can use discharged washing machine water to flush toilets, potentially saving thousands of gallons of water per day. Recycled wastewater can be used for irrigating landscaping and golf courses, vehicle washing, street and sidewalk cleaning, cooling towers, fire suppression/protection, and construction activities. The cost savings equal millions of dollars annually, while the environmental benefit speaks for itself.

Throughout the lodging industry, few initiatives have generated more widespread enthusiasm and participation than the “Green” Hotels Association® Towel Cards and Sheet Cards, which ask guests to consider using their towels and bed linens for more than one use before laundering. According to national averages from the American Hotel & Motel Educational Institute, hotels can save 30 gallons of water and 34 kilowatt-hours of electricity per guest per day by encouraging reuse of towels and linens. Galvanizing a deep-reaching conservation effort, the GHA Towel Cards and Sheet Cards have made a huge impact by providing guests with a compelling yet non-intrusive suggestion toward green thinking.

“A hotel here and there had asked guests to reuse towels, but it usually came off as cost-cutting and cheap on the hotel’s part rather than for the environment,” said GHA President Patricia Griffin. “Hotel managers have told us that they love it that GHA is doing the asking. It involves guests, it saves water and energy to heat the water, it keeps detergent residue out of our waterways, there’s less wear and tear on equipment and on linens, and certainly there’s reduced labor.”

Ally Member Cypress Bath & Bed contributes to the water conservation picture by producing its Green Earth towels. Made of super-fine, extra-long staple cotton, these towels are said to be 160 percent bulkier, yet much lower in mass than traditional towels made of combed cotton. Greater surface area means more absorption, while lower mass requires less water consumption and less energy use through shorter drying times.

#### **WATCH THOSE KILOWATTS**

It’s a common mistake, but one with a rapidly decreasing level of excusability. A hotel guest walks into the room, flips on all the lights and leaves each one illuminated for hours,

regardless of which part of the room they are using. The U.S. Energy Information Administration points to lighting as the largest point of hotel energy use. Left unchecked, this wastes kilowatts.

A great source of preventing energy waste is the dimmer switch – a key component of the Stanza lighting control system from Lutron. Dimmers manage energy use by enabling guests to alter lighting levels throughout their room for ambiance or practical purposes such as watching TV or reading a book in bed. Dialing down a dimmer uses less energy, so when guests realize that they can customize their experience, hotels save.

Bedside keypads enable guests to control reading lights, open and close window treatments, dim certain lights, and shut off all room lighting. With the nightlight button, guests can even leave a dimmed bathroom light on for late night visits. Such control and convenience makes it easier to use lighting more conservatively.

Central to the Stanza system, a universally designed, ADA-compliant keypad controls a room’s lighting and window treatments. A room-key switch located near the guestroom door acts as a master on/off switch for room lights and window treatments. The entry keypad provides “welcome” and “away” options with a dimmer switch for the entrance light. And to ensure energy savings, Stanza keypads can be programmed to recall preset light levels once a guest departs.

Elsewhere, energy-saving innovation also appears in areas of air conditioning and water heating. Some properties showcase the latter with solar-powered hot water systems as an alternative to liquefied petroleum gas. This process involves a system of evacuated tubes in panels that soak up the sun’s radiance and then transfer it to copper coil heat exchangers. Plumbing and electric pumps bring water into contact with the heat and then shift it into a large storage tank.

Proving that air temperature is not a one-size-fits-all deal, a computerized energy-management system greatly reduces energy consumption by allowing engineers to program the heating, ventilation, and air-conditioned system to serve different needs throughout the hotel. Convention center meeting rooms offer a good example: The hotel monitors each room’s occupancy, allows the HVAC system to start up 30 minutes before clients enter the room, and then shuts off 30 minutes after a meeting concludes.

By adjusting the speed of the ventilators, the hotel can reduce the amount of energy used by the system while reducing the amount of heating and air conditioning needed. An energy-management system also allows energy-saving modifications to hot water temperatures in guest rooms.





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Many points of energy conservation stand glaringly obvious. Others hide amid the day-to-day. For example, the Environmental Defense Fund says that a hotel using 1,000 disposable spoons will consume more than 10 times more energy and natural resources than it takes to manufacture a single stainless steel spoon and wash that spoon 1,000 times.

This illustrates the need to examine every area of hotel operation and ask the simple question: Can we do it greener?

### MAKING IT POSSIBLE

Assisting with that objective, GHA Ally Members play an integral role in the lodging industry's efforts to conserve natural resources. Griffin noted: "None of us can be green without green vendors. We need to purchase from and support these green vendors."

One such vendor is EO® (Essential Oils). Headquartered in Corte Madera, Calif., organic ingredients are a key element in the company's natural line of personal care products. Elevating the formulation of beneficial herbs, essential oils, and natural ingredients to an art form, EO sources its raw materials from small and sustainable vendors who share the company's aversion to synthetic colors, fragrances, harsh chemicals, and animal testing.

Insisting upon authenticity, EO also undertakes the sowing and harvesting of its own proprietary botanicals. Products ranging from eucalyptus and rosemary oils to coconut milk hand lotion, wild peppermint lip balm, and sweet orange shampoo are packaged in containers made of post-consumer resin obtained from recycled beverage, food, and liquid packaging.

"We develop innovative formulas based on researched herbal and aromatherapy knowledge," said EO Marketing Director Emma Mann. "We choose to source packaging with recycled content to lessen our carbon footprint on the planet. The end result is that our products are truly green and not simply for the sake of label copy."

Mann said that EO's business model proves that companies can produce consumer-pleasing products while upholding their commitment to environmental stewardship.

"The message that we will feel is most critical is that as a company, there are choices that can be made that not only define your public perception but set a standard for imitation," Mann said. "If we – by our purchasing and selection of raw materials – can raise the standard of what is the norm, then we have contributed to this movement greatly. Before long we hope to see a supply and demand chain where the growing and



Green vendor EO®, an Ally Member, creates a line of personal care products that are – from their natural ingredients to their innovative recycled packaging – void of harsh chemicals, synthetic fragrances, and harmful toxins.

processing of ingredients and materials that meet the green ethic are the norm and no longer a novelty."

Of the GHA, Mann said: "It is no understatement that there is strength in numbers and one is really defined by the company they keep. The GHA has had a tremendous effect on getting the word out to green properties and helping them to realize that they can offer their guests a higher quality experience.

"We are honored to be aligned with the GHA with shared vision on what is possible. We have realized that since we have brought our offering to more of the green properties that the response has been overwhelming. It's an incredible thing to do work you love and find that that vision is shared by others so readily. The GHA has not only been a huge ally pushing forward the green ethic on behalf of consumers but also an incredible source of validation for the work we choose to do."

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“The GHA has had a tremendous effect on getting the word out to green properties and helping them to realize that they can offer their guests a higher quality experience.”

– Emma Mann, EO Marketing Director

Mark Stanland, vice president of marketing for Green Seal™-certified Wausau Paper agreed, adding that the GHA's influence has been instrumental in raising awareness within the lodging industry for this Ally Member's 100-percent recycled paper towels, tissue, and toilet seat covers.

“We try to keep new and innovative product solutions in the marketplace for our clients,” Stanland said. “The more truly green products that we have in the marketplace, the more we help reduce the lodging industry's carbon footprint.

“The GHA has done a terrific job of informing consumers about the green movement and educating them about green products. Consumers are much more informed today and they are incorporating more environmental factors into their decisions.”

#### COMMUNICATE & EDUCATE

As educators of the world's travelers, hotels introduce guests to many of the latest technologies and greening is often central to the message. This works to a hotel's advantage through the intuitive premise of expertise – the greater the knowledge and application displayed, the greater customer confidence earned.

To maximize this potential, hotels must take proactive steps to communicate their greening efforts to prospective customers, as well as professional groups and the media. Simply labeling yourself as “green” has actually become rather passé – the novelty has worn off. Today's global awareness has compelled many travelers to examine not only their individual eco-impact, but also their corporate contribution through the businesses they patronize.

Hotels should have well-constructed Web pages that detail the specific practices and products that make them green. Videos, photo galleries, and testimonials complement standard descriptions and provide real-world examples for prospective guests to consider. Griffin said that, while environmental responsibility should remain the sincere focus, there's



Light dimmers are great for ambient lighting and are very efficient, considerably shrinking power consumption when turned low.

nothing wrong with hotels leveraging their conservation and preservation achievements as business drivers.

“Hotels are looking at greening as a marketing tool and they are looking at how it influences their guests,” she said. “If it's a property that gets a lot of their business from meetings, they will want to promote green meetings. If it's a smaller property that specializes in weddings, they can educate their customers on how to plan a green wedding from the food selection to the lighting.”

Moreover, suggesting local green activities further instills the environmental message. Lastly, offering tips for green living will help guests maintain eco-friendly practices at home, while maintaining a perspective that will likely lead them back to green hotels for future business.

# GREENING: FUTURE PREDICTIONS

BY DAVID A. BROWN

“Waste not, want not.” Wise words that the *Random House Dictionary of America’s Popular Proverbs and Sayings* traces back to 1772. Much has changed since that time – notably the genesis of green technology, which yields excitement for today and encouragement for tomorrow.

Standing at the forefront of greening developments is the way we handle food waste. Despite best efforts to project needs, unused items are inevitable. Food banks are the common outlet for edible leftovers, but what about table scraps, kitchen mistakes, and the shrimp that sit too long on a banquet buffet?

Fortunately, new technology will enable hotels to conveniently dispose of their unused food items while minimizing solid waste management costs. Convenience and cost containment are good, but here’s the real bright spot – the potential establishment of an ongoing revenue stream.

It all starts with the BioX, a computer-controlled decomposter built by South Korea-based BioXSolutions (see “Conserving Resources” article). Users simply load their food waste into the machine where water, heat, agitation, and organic microorganisms reduce it to a liquid form. The resulting slurry

can slide through standard sewer pipes, but as Korean farmers have discovered, it also does great things for agricultural lands where crops benefit from the nutrient-rich flow.

“Green” Hotels Association® President Patricia Griffin sees a strong motivator for hotel managers: “This is an absolutely fabulous thing that is happening. Soon hotels will be selling their food waste instead of having it sitting on their docks attracting roaches.

“This will be fantastic organic fertilizer, as well as a food source for livestock. I would think that it may come down to transporting this [slurry] through a pipeline from the cities to the [agricultural areas].”

Sounds like a new way of looking at food waste – once a burden, now an asset.

From thrift shops to garage sales to the cultural phenomenon of online auctions, folks have found cash in practically every

## Green Lining

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- **Distiller:** Boils the water and then condenses the purified steam, filtering out heavy metals and other pollutants.
- **Cation-exchange Softener:** By a process of trading positively charged minerals with those of a lesser charge, calcium, magnesium, fluoride, selenium, and sodium are filtered out.
- **Activated Carbon Filter:** Highly absorbent, positively charged carbon filters attract and contain hazardous contaminants – such as heavy metals, parasites, pesticides, radon, and other volatile organic chemicals – filtering out bad tastes and odors.

unwanted item imaginable. If it works for old records, baseball gloves, and porcelain ponies, why not food?

“One man’s trash is another man’s treasure” applies here.

For hotels, Griffin said the current application for food waste slurry could be just the tip of the iceberg. She’s optimistic about a greater humanitarian possibility. “I think that there could also be a way of converting this [liquefied food waste] into an edible food source for people. This could be a way to feed the world.”

Stay tuned.

## FIELDS OF GREEN

As new green innovations prove their merit, increasing application will spur even more advancements. Key areas to watch include:

• **Go with the Flow:** Water use comprises one of the key areas in which hotels can learn to save money while conserving a valuable resource. The hotel industry will see more faucet and showerhead designs that enable staff and guests to turn on the specific amount of water pressure needed – possibly with a click system similar to windshield wipers or a bicycle gear shifter.

Aerators, which lessen water use by infusing a faucet’s stream with air, should see widespread use as more low-flow options become available. Low-flow toilets will further decrease water use.

• **Night Moves:** Guest safety and convenience will always necessitate lighted parking garages, but these lights needn’t stay on 24/7. New developments in motion sensors and/or heat sensors will enable hotels to greatly reduce their energy use by illuminating only the sections of their parking garages in which people are detected. Such systems will turn off the lights a reasonable period after motion or body heat is no longer detected. Inside, hotels will find growing uses for sensor-controlled lighting in staff areas such as linen closets.

“This technology is going to change everything about our lives,” Griffin said. “There will be a day when we’ll walk in a door that we open with our fingerprint and the lights will come on. We will also see a day when the air conditioning will only be coming into designated rooms.”

Griffin is particularly keen on the use of dimmers, which can be set to reduce electric lighting levels during periods of lower need. “These things are going to blossom. The dimmers are





In its efforts to create a more sustainable travel future and reduce its impact on the environment, Coho Oceanfront Lodge in Lincoln City, Ore., a GHA Member, has a variety of eco-initiatives in place for the back-of-the-house as well as guest areas. Here are just a few of the eco-measures currently in place at the lodge: a hydronic heating system and fluorescent lighting for better energy efficiency; low-flow sink aerators and low-flow showerheads for better water conservation; guest and staff recycling programs to minimize waste; and utilization of biodegradable and non-toxic cleaning products for keeping the environment safe.

going to make things so efficient because they can work with natural light.”

In the rooms, giving guests greater lighting convenience will increase their propensity for energy conservation. An example of this growing trend is personal lighting controls that enable a guest to turn all room lights on or off with a single button. No more bathroom lights left on all night, plus guests will be more apt to shut off all of the lights when departing.

- **Meter Readers:** Facilitating energy management, “smart” meters provide real-time information on energy use so hotels can immediately see how everything from air conditioners to office computers affects their energy usage and then make the appropriate adjustments. Evolving meter data-management software paired with broadband communication will deepen the control and response capabilities.

Boston’s Seaport Hotel, for example, has reaped the benefits of installing a capacitor bank that helps manage the load shedding of electricity within the hotel. By monitoring various zones during peak energy use periods, this smart meter reduces the hotel’s overall electricity consumption. Seaport also employs an INNCOM smart thermostat in guestrooms that reverts to its predetermined core setting after 14 minutes of

inactivity. Such devices will contribute greatly to future energy savings through heating and cooling control.

- **On the Move:** Tough economic times demand constant cost-cutting and often these money-saving measures net green benefits. Case in point: Boulder, Colo.-based Furniture, Fixture and Equipment purchasing firm Benjamin West found that shipping casegoods from China to an East Coast project and foregoing some 3,000 miles of domestic trucking saved the company more than \$100,000. That’s great for the bottom line, but there’s also a huge green benefit in reducing the fuel consumption and fumes of unnecessary trucking.

Likewise, travel industry developments influence the manner in which guests arrive at hotels. Thrifty travelers will find bus companies luring their business with more comfortable, if not luxurious, designs and generous amenities. April 2009 saw Greyhound Bus Lines, Inc., launch 102 new motor coaches boasting leather seats, additional legroom, Wi-Fi® access, and power outlets in every row. More bus patronage means fewer cars on the road, which means less fuel consumption and carbon monoxide production, which means a healthier planet.

Likewise, jet fuel is the top expense for airlines and therefore a constant subject of cost containment. Prudent gate





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Above: “The Certified Organic Massage Oil and Vegan Massage Lotion we’ve begun using during our spa treatments have been received well by the guests making use of these services. They consume less natural resources to produce and have virtually no negative impact on the planet.” – Innkeeper/Owner Paul Blank, Casa Laguna Inn & Spa

Left: GHA Partner Member Casa Laguna Inn & Spa is dedicated to using fresh, locally grown, organic ingredients. The inn has even taken this a step further by using vegetables and herbs that are grown on property.

management and taxiing with only one engine improves fuel savings on the ground, while a tactic known as a Continuous Descent Approach (CDA) saves greatly in the air. Also called “green landings,” CDA’s replace the old full speed, stepped descent by beginning a constant low-degree angle earlier than a traditional approach and landing the plane with its engines at idle. The result is significant fuel savings and decreased fumes.

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# GOING GREEN:

## For the Greater Good and a Greener Bottom Line

By Michael A. Robinson

**S**ocial scientists and political pundits love to bandy about a term that reflects a sea change in the way people think and, more importantly, act. The analysts refer to such a seismic shift in behavior as a “tipping point.”

And so it goes with the green hotel movement. Just recently, a decision by America’s largest retailer reflected an environmental consciousness that arguably began on Earth Day in 1970, but will soon become an integral part of traveling for millions of people in the United States: Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., adopted an environmental labeling program for all the products it sells. That bold step could redefine the design, makeup, and economic footprints of thousands of consumer goods sold around the globe.

More importantly, said Patricia Griffin, president and founder of the “Green” Hotels Association®, Wal-Mart is training consumers to be more aware of how the products they buy and use can affect Earth’s fragile ecosystem. Already, surveys consistently show that a majority of travelers support green initiatives at hotels, whether that means not washing the bed linens every day or simply recycling paper products.

“I think Wal-Mart’s decision is going to have an enormous impact across America, and that will definitely affect hotels,” Griffin said. “Wal-Mart is such a big company that its green labeling program really could have a transformative impact. When you think about all the criticism Wal-Mart has endured over the years [from environmentalists], this is really welcome news. Millions of people shop at Wal-Mart every day.

“Now [consumers] are going to see exactly how the products they buy affect the environment. They will take that attitude with them when they check into a

hotel. In the next few years, guests are just going to expect that the hotel where they are staying will be eco-friendly. They’ll be disappointed if it isn’t. So, going green doesn’t just cut costs. It’s an essential marketing tool.”

For the hotel industry, the timing couldn’t be better. After all, the nation is dealing with a challenging economy, with unemployment approaching 10 percent. If a giant retailer can see the economics behind a sound environmental policy, so can hoteliers, who by definition are all about making guests feel relaxed and welcome.

They know only too well that cutting water and electricity use cuts overhead costs that falls directly to the bottom line. As the economy recovers, hoteliers will seek ways to cut their costs and cater to the growing demand among guests to be more environmentally responsible.

“There is no question that being a green hotel saves money each and every month,” Griffin said. “More and more, hotel managers are going to see – and I don’t think it will take that much more time – that going green is not just good for the environment or great PR. It will absolutely result in increased profits.

“To me, that is the simplest thing anyone could ask you to do, and that is to ask you to conserve. In the next five years, I predict that many more hotels will ask their guests to do just that. And if they don’t, their guests are going to ask why the hotel isn’t doing more to protect the environment.

“My No. 1 goal for hoteliers would be to have an understanding of their property’s impact on their destination and to be in control of that. They can move their cities and their states toward stronger greening programs through their own properties and their marketing,” said Griffin.

Member hotels have chosen to take advantage of “Green” Hotel Association® membership because it’s the perfect marriage of eco-friendliness and bottom-line savings.





GHA Member Grand Hyatt Denver Downtown – already with many green initiatives in place – continues to seek better and more environmentally conscious methods. Here is a sampling of the measures the Grand Hyatt Denver has in place: CFL bulbs in all guest rooms; cardboard and paper recycling programs; light sensors in offices, restrooms, and employee work areas; bed linen changes upon request only; more energy-efficient guest and service elevators; and low-flow showerheads and sink aerators.

### RAISING THE BAR & RAISING AWARENESS

To maintain their greenness, hotels will start asking more of their vendors – more green options for products, packaging, and delivery. Short-term economics have always been the speed bump of innovation, but as all recognize the long-term benefits – both economically and environmentally – of greening, the industry will see that these developments are literally an open road to long-term viability.

Buttressing this thought will be greater scrutiny of “green” claims. As awareness increases, vendors selling to hotels and hotels wooing customers will need rock-solid explanations of what makes their product or property one of environmental responsibility. Company Web sites are the first step for promoting one’s green measures, but social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter will hold tremendous potential for hotels to keep their customers informed of fresh ideas.

Green-focused professional groups will play an increasingly important role in the learning process by providing hoteliers and vendors productive forums for exchanging ideas and brainstorming new green strategies. Example: A national network, Chef’s Collaborative, unites chefs, producers, educators, and culinary fans interested in building a more sustainable food supply.

Encouragement will also come from government initiatives like the EPA’s WasteWise program. Established in 1994, WasteWise educates its business, government, and nonprofit members on the benefits of reducing solid waste. Look for a growing number of green awards and recognition through such groups, as well as business organizations.

Media attention often follows significant greening achievements, but hotels will need to take proactive steps to ensure their efforts are noticed. Not only is such exposure good for business, but it will also help advance the overall greening effort.

“I think we have seen a dramatic increase in greening and I think it will be ongoing,” Griffin said. “I think hoteliers will learn how these things will save them money, create camaraderie among staff, and improve their business. Greening certainly makes the guest more enthusiastic about your property because you are protecting your destination.”

That said, greening success must be a perpetual pursuit – a continuous quest to scale another cliff, rather than rest upon the plateau of complacency.

“No one is ever done being green,” Griffin said. “There will always be new options, new ideas, and new products available, so we need to be aware of these new developments and apply them in whatever we do.”



# "Green" Hotels Association®

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**EDUCATOR:** Faculty and public employees interested in "green" programs in the hospitality industry. Faculty and Public Employees - \$200/year. Includes your logo or photo with web listing. Add \$25/year for mailing addresses outside the US.

**ENVIRONMENTALIST:** Organizations and associations interested in Earth-saving ideas and wishing to support "Green" Hotels Association® members. Organizations/Associations: Up to 50 employees - \$300/year; 51+ employees - \$400/year. Includes your logo or photo with web listing. Add \$25/year for mailing addresses outside the US.

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InnoWare also offers OctaView® and Expressions® made from post-industrial recycled PETE, which carries the #1 recycle mark. These high-gloss containers feature crystal clear lids and make a classy black backdrop for foods up to 150° F.

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Progressive properties find that being "green" can save green, reducing laundry operation costs by saving energy, water and resources.

Cypress Bath, Bed & Spa, the leading supplier of luxurious bathrobes, towels and linens for the hospitality industry for over 25 years, is experiencing increased adoption of their recently introduced Green Earth™ towels. Due in part to the rising energy and water costs associated with laundry operations, environmentally conscious hotels have found a way to provide luxury linens while significantly reducing their energy usage.

Gaia Napa Valley Resort & Spa, the world's first and only LEED Gold-certified hotel, recently began using the Green Earth towel throughout the property. Janice Alpeche, general manager stated, "I was a bit skeptical when I was first shown the potential 20-30% savings. After thoroughly testing the product in our in-house laundry facility and monitoring energy consumption over several months, however, it has exceeded our expectations."

Green Earth towels are made from super-fine, Extra-Long Staple (ELS) cotton, which is known for its sustainable properties, as well as superior softness, absorbency, durability, and luxurious feel. Green Earth towels are 160% bulkier than traditional towels of the same weight, yet 30% lighter, so more towels can be loaded in each wash. Therefore, they cost significantly less to launder, using up to 30% less water and drying 10-20% faster. This reduces hotel operational costs, while also reducing environmental impact.

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# PRODUCT SHOWCASE

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