



Capital Communiqué



ASHRAE - AMERICAN SOCIETY OF HEATING, REFRIGERATING AND AIR-CONDITIONING ENGINEERS

<http://www.ashrae.ottawa.on.ca> **OTTAWA VALLEY CHAPTER** e-mail: contact@ashrae.ottawa.on.ca

2007 - 2008

May 2008

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EVENING PROGRAM

- DATE:** Tuesday **May 20th, 2008**. Social: 17:30 Dinner: 18:30 Program: 20:00
CLEO Banquet Center, 156 Cleopatra Dr., Nepean, Ont., (613) 224-8700
- TECH SESSION:** N/A
- THEME:** **History / Past Presidents / Companions**
- PROGRAM:** **Passenger Aircraft Indoor Air Quality Problems and Solutions**
- SPEAKER:** **Dr. Douglas S. Walkinshaw**
- OVERVIEW:** President of Indoor Air Technologies Inc. and co-inventor of "PEACE" aircraft diffusers to mitigate against pathogen spread between passengers, the ECHO-Air and ECHO System ventilation systems for improving thermal comfort, indoor air quality and protection against moisture problems in aircraft and buildings; Dr. Walkinshaw will speak about **passenger aircraft indoor air quality problems and solutions**.
- SPEAKER BIO:** Dr. Walkinshaw is an international authority in the field of indoor air quality problem identification and solving. With respect to ASHRAE, Dr. Walkinshaw was a member of the 62-1989 committee that set the original 15 CFM/person minimum ventilation standard for building, passenger aircraft and other indoor environments, and of the SPC 161 committee which developed a separate air quality and ventilation standard for passenger aircraft that is being issued this year. He has been a speaker at many international conferences and has published numerous papers on the subject of indoor air quality. Prior to founding Indoor Air Technologies in 1988, Dr. Walkinshaw held different positions with Canadian Federal Government departments and agencies, including at the Defence Research Board where he worked on the blast hardening of the Canadian DDH 280 destroyer, at Public Works Canada working on building energy conservation, at the National Research Council developing its first indoor air quality research program and at Health Canada on IAQ chemical and biological guidelines. Dr. Walkinshaw holds a PH.D. in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Alberta, and Master's and Bachelor's degrees in Civil Engineering from McMaster University. He is a founding member of the International Society of Indoor Air Quality and Climate (ISIAQ) and the International Academy for the Indoor Air Sciences (IAIAS).



Menu
 Caesar Salad
 Bacon wrapped tournedos with garlic-mashed potatoes and steamed vegetables
 Chocolate Cake
 Chapter Members: \$30.00 Guests: \$45.00



President's Message

By Robert Lefebvre
P.Eng., LEED AP
2007-2008 OVC President

Hi Everyone,

So here it is, my last President's Message. At the beginning of the year, I dreaded writing this article and really struggled to fill the page. Now as I "pencil" my last article I find that I actually look forward to it. I hope you have enjoyed my articles as much as I have recently enjoyed putting them together.

The last article is traditionally a time to reflect on the year that has been. I have had a great time as the chapter President and I am very proud of the year our chapter has had. The two main goals I had for the chapter this year were to have a program that would encourage chapter membership retention, and to bolster our chapter coffers (we almost ran out of operating funds at the beginning of the year). The program this year has been outstanding. The topics were diverse and the speakers were all excellent. We also had two very successful seminars that both sold out. The combination of the good program and the two seminars has helped the chapter's bottom line.

There have also been some challenges this year. The miss assignment of Ottawa Valley members to other chapters comes to mind. The new ASHRAE society membership database program didn't (and still doesn't) understand our Canadian postal code system and assigned all new and renewed Ontario ASHRAE members to the Toronto chapter. However, thanks to some hard work from our Region II DRC, the Ontario chapter presidents and the ASHRAE society membership team, a solution was found.

Another casualty of ASHRAE's new database program is the chapter roster. Some of you have noticed that we haven't issued it yet. The database program that we have used for years to compile and create the roster is no longer compatible with ASHRAE's new program. Our chapter has procured a new roster program but there needs to be some additional programming added to suit our needs. Thanks for your patience.

Of course, the chapter does not run itself. There are approximately 25 chapter members that volunteer their precious time so that we may enjoy the benefits of our wonderful chapter. On behalf of ASHRAE society, the region, our chapter members and myself, here is a big **THANK-YOU** to all the volunteers. Without your time and effort, there would be no chapter – there would be no ASHRAE.

Speaking of people who know a thing or two about volunteering their time for the chapter, our May meeting is Past Presidents/Companions night with the theme of History. This is a meeting I look forward to every year. It's an opportunity to catch up with people who you may not have seen in a while and affords an opportunity to thank the spouses and companions for their support.

The evening's program is on Aircraft Indoor Air Quality presented by our own chapter member, Dr. Doug Walkinshaw. This is a very hot topic right now (especially with airline workers unions) and if you ever wondered why you seem to get a cold the week after you have flown, you will want to stick around for this talk.

I look forward to seeing you at the May meeting.

Yours very truly,

Robert Lefebvre, P.Eng., LEED AP
ASHRAE Ottawa Valley Chapter
2007-2008 President



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Secretary



What You Missed

by Patrick St-Onge, P.Eng.
2007-2008 Secretary

For our April meeting, we had the honour of receiving an ASHRAE Society Presidential Member and Distinguished Lecturer who made the trip from England to meet with us: Mr. Richard H. Rooley.

The theme of the evening was Research and the Chapter was pleased to see in attendance, the members of Enbridge Consumers Gas who were one of the very few companies and organizations that joined the prestigious Golden Circle investor level by contributing over \$10,000 to ASHRAE research.

Mr. Rooley's presentation of the evening was entitled "The human seven deadly sins in the use and construction of buildings", making a parallel between the engineering industry, in particular the design portion of it, and the original seven deadly sins from the Bible. The speaker wanted to illustrate the challenges the industry is facing along with the required attitudes and communication skills engineers must develop to reach the deserved status of our profession in the society. Obviously one of his priorities, Mr. Rooley also emphasized the importance of designing buildings that can be easily maintained.

Talking about maintainability, Mr. Rooley was also the speaker for the Wine and Cheese (technical session) that took place earlier in the afternoon. The presentation "Maintenance for Sustainability", focused on avoiding buildings with non-maintainable situations. "Commissioning, operation and maintenance (O&M) are likely to turn out to be just as critical to achieving actual net-zero energy performance as design."



Tom O'Grady of Distech receives an ASHRAE Research Donation award.



Dalton McIntyre receives an ASHRAE Research Donation award



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Matthew Edmonds receives an ASHRAE Research Donation on behalf of Longhill Energy.



Susan Clinesmith of Enbridge Consumers Gas receives an ASHRAE Research Donation award.



Richard Rooley presenting.



Robert Lefebvre presented Richard Rooley with a gift of appreciation for his speech.

Committee Chair



Membership

by Christine Kemp
2007-2008 OVC Membership Promotion Chair

ASHRAE Ottawa Valley Chapter would like to welcome the following new members: Kamel Haddad and Kyle Fridgen

We also have two new student members this month: Jonathan Bloomquist and Kevin Voelker.

Welcome to our group. We hope to see you at our May meeting.

Christine Kemp
Membership Chair Person



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Governor



History – Spotlight on Wayne Tapp

by Rod Potter
Governor, Chapter Historian, Gopher and Webmaster

“I am eternally grateful for my career, and truly feel that I could not have gained more enjoyment in any other business. Given the opportunity, I would gladly do it all again.”

How’s that for an endorsement of our industry?

Wayne Tapp was born on October 6th, 1936 in Ottawa, his parent’s first son after three daughters. For reasons we will not enter into here, his parents decided to call it quits soon thereafter, and the task of raising Wayne then fell to his grandparents from his father’s side. Wayne was suffering from infantile paralysis and required reliable care, and fortunately his grandfather James Tapp had a flourishing contracting business at the time. His sisters were sent to St. Patrick’s Orphanage because they were considered “healthy”, and Wayne’s early years were spent at his grandparent’s house on Clarendon Avenue near Island Park Drive and Wellington Street. This was actually considered the “west end” in those days because it was at the western city limits.

Wayne attended St. George’s Catholic School on Piccadilly Avenue from grade one through grade eight. The Grey Nuns ran this school and he can remember them as strict disciplinarians. In fact he was prone to getting into schoolyard scraps that usually ended in a good strapping. One of his favourite sparring partners was the late Pat Marsden, who went on to become a colourful sports broadcaster.


Of course Wayne lived through the years of World War II and he remembers going to the junction of Bank and Sparks Streets on VE Day with his grandparents. The shouting, singing and general merriment were an incredible experience and he can still see it clearly.

High school years were spent at St. Patrick’s College High School on Main Street (now Immaculata). He was quite athletic in his early years and enjoyed playing junior hockey. He graduated from high school in 1954 after finishing grade 13. At around this time his grandfather James was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, and James’ love for Wayne caused him to alter his will to include Wayne as an equal to his three sons and six daughters. Wayne jokes that this effectively made him the “fourth son”, and therefore made his father his brother!

In 1954 Wayne enrolled in Architecture at Ryerson Institute of Technology and after about a year and a half, he switched over to Structural Engineering. Alas this did not prove to be his calling either and after about a year Wayne gave it up and returned to Ottawa. His father Victor was still in the picture and he was disappointed that Wayne had left the college. However Wayne was not drifting for long because Victor was acquainted with Darcy Helmer, of Balharrie Helmer Architects, and Wayne soon had a job there, working on structural design. This was circa 1957 and he also undertook occasional mechanical project work and realized that this was his calling. He was also developing quite the reputation as a fun-loving rascal (sic).

Wayne worked on the Riverside Hospital structural design, and with colleague George Pack’s guidance, was able to complete sixteen 30x42” structural drawings in two months, quite an achievement in the days of hand-drafting and T-Squares. In those days the firm contracted much of the mechanical and electrical design to Goodkey Weedmark; Wayne remembers coordinating the design with Gord Goodkey. Wayne’s efficiency paid major dividends to both the firm and himself. Watson Balharrie was the senior architect at the firm, renowned for his genius, coke-bottle spectacles, and a rotund figure. It was about 1960 at this point and although Wayne owned a new house in Aylmer, Quebec, he did not own a car.

FRANK JEFFERIES, P.ENG.
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Stéphan Riffault, P.Eng.
Sales Engineer
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Watson clearly wanted to reward Wayne for his hard work and presented him with a cheque for \$1600.00, the result of which was a 1956 Chevy station wagon c/w fins, from Brennan Motors near Wellington and Holland. Watson also encouraged Wayne to take a holiday in the fall of that year and being a photography buff, he made a new Minolta camera available for Wayne's use on the holiday. After the holiday Wayne showed Watson the beautiful range of slides he had taken with the camera, and Watson refused to accept the camera back "because it was used". This was when Wayne realized two things about Watson Balharrie: (a) he was a gentleman; and (b) he was not in fact two separate partners, Watson being his Christian name!

The firm strived to offer the "full package" of design services and Wayne remembers working with a Brit called Dave Palmer (mechanical) and an electrical guy called Bill Macawhey. The close working relationship with Goodkey Weedmark was slowing down at this point. Wayne soon began working on more mechanical projects under Dave Palmer, and some major projects were completed in these years such as the main Post Office Terminal in Alta Vista, Sir Robert Borden High School, and Earl of March High School. The company bid for the design of the new Lansdowne Park stadium complex but lost out to a firm from British Columbia. Eventually Dave Palmer left for a company in Cornwall, and Wayne was soon joined by Paul Leung, a stamped mechanical engineer.

Wayne spent most of the 1960's at Balharrie Helmer and in 1972 he was offered a position at JL Richards, where Ken Hazel was running the mechanical design department. Wayne stayed at this position until 1979. Ken Hazel left circa 1977 to join Clemann Large Patterson, after which Wayne took over the role of running the design department under Noel Kirby. Gerry Patterson met with Wayne in 1979 and offered him a position at CLP, after being highly recommended by Ken Hazel. Wayne was in for a slight shock with this move; he had grown accustomed to being a supervisor over a large number of designers whilst at JL Richards. At CLP he was given two or three projects to run, shown a drawing board, and expected to get on with it.

After a short while Wayne approached Gerry Patterson and basically said he was not happy with his own performance and felt that he was letting the firm down. One **Drew Hamilton** had recently left CLP and this left an opening for Wayne to move into the site supervision role, which certainly became his forte from that point onwards. In 1980 things were "booming" to say the least, and Wayne remembers running as many as 30-40 projects at once in those days. Phrases like "drive-by supervision" were common.

One day Wayne had been out in the east end (presumably "driving-by" a project) when he was asked by Gerry Patterson to take a quick look at a building just off the Queensway near Carling, on his way back. So Wayne exited the Queensway at the Carling westbound off-ramp and pulled around the back of Hampton Park Plaza and stopped outside a multi-storey building under construction. The site was basically deserted and he proceeded to walk up the stairs and took notes of seemingly inadequate heating water piping and other deficiencies. After this he went back to the office and wrote a quick report for Gerry. The next morning he walked into Gerry's office and they discussed the report which Gerry said was excellent but rather confusing, because the building was supposed to have electric baseboard heating, not forced hot water. To this Wayne said something should be done about that right away because there sure was heating water being installed. Then they checked the address and the laughter started. The right building was way over near Pinecrest (don't ask).

Wayne has nothing but good things to say about his time at Clemann Large Patterson, which was run by a wonderfully innovative group of engineers and designers. These were gravy days, the money was great, and he had inspiring people like the late Alan Large around him who was famous for his British humour. David Henselwood became a great pal, and Wayne taught him to curl. It was fairly common for both of them to attend a site meeting together, then do lunch, and end up curling high on life and beer.

The energy crisis brought much work with an energy-saving bias, and Wayne worked on many energy conservation studies for the Government buildings downtown. He remembers a wonderful project in the Blackburn building on Sparks Street, which had high security because of the Prime Minister's support staff occupying some of the floor space. This was a tenant refit that lasted 1-1/2 years and Wayne completely gave himself to the project. We often hear about character actors such as

Sean Penn who spend six months or so “living the role” before playing the part. This is the dedication that Wayne brought to his work.

In around 1994 Wayne left CLP and formed his own company, WV Technical Services, after which he was involved with the mechanical retrofit of many schools for the Ottawa Catholic Board. In fact his relationship with the school board was so good that in 1996 he accepted a direct two-year contract with them to run their Gurdwara Maintenance and Operations Department.

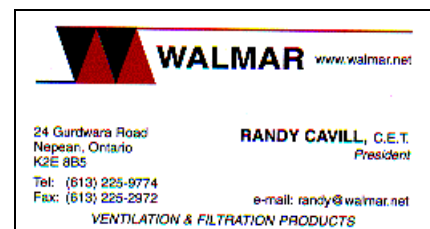
The year 1999 was a difficult one for Wayne because he suffered heart problems and eventually had triple-bypass surgery, after which he took most of the year off to recover. His good friend Tom Wolstenholme eventually approached him with a project for Greer Galloway, a furniture manufacturing plant in Peterborough. This was a warehouse conversion project and Wayne designed the HVAC system which was interesting because it required a 100-foot high exhaust stack to get rid of the nasty chemicals involved with the manufacturing process.

Wayne has continued working with Tom Wolstenholme and is still involved on many current projects with Jp2g here in Ottawa. In the words of the late Drew Hamilton: *“Wayne is a legend in Ottawa”*. And he is a true gentleman and a great friend.



*“I like to see someone walk away happy after a problem has been solved”
Wayne Tapp 2008*

Roderic S. Potter
Chances R Restaurant
Ottawa
2008.05.05





Algonquin Incorporates Design Competition

By Stephen Lynch
2007-2008 OVC Student Activities Chair

It is coming to the end of my first term as Chair of Student Activities. What a great experience and I am looking forward to building upon this momentum for the next term. I would like to thank everyone who participated and/or contributed to the efforts of our local Student Activities. This was a year of adjustment as I learned the ropes and I had some great support from our members. It is a pleasure promoting ASHRAE, in particular our chapter, knowing the kind of support I receive from all of you.

I am very pleased to announce that Algonquin College, under the direction of David Thibodeau has incorporated the ASHRAE Design Competition into its curriculum. The design competition has been introduced into the project portion of the Mechanical Engineering Technology curriculum. This is a great opportunity for the students at Algonquin and for our chapter to have representation at the design competition. I will be looking for support from our members to help provide guidance, resources and mentorship to the students involved in this. It will be a good one to keep track of.

In addition, Algonquin College is a few signatures away from a student chapter. We are in the process of finalizing the details. This is another display of Algonquin's commitment to ASHRAE and our chapter. I would like to recognize David Thibodeau for his incredible efforts in helping this come to fruition.

As with all other monthly meetings, we encourage individuals or companies to support a student through sponsoring their meals. Please let the greeters at the front know that you would like to sponsor a student for the night. If you would like to sponsor student meals throughout the year we will recognize your contributions by issuing you a receipt for your investment in Student Activities, publish your name and/or company's name on our website, and include you in our list of previous donors in the Capital Communiqué

Thank you for your support,

Stephen Lynch

More student related information from ASHRAE:

Check This Out:

ASHRAE Student Zone posts last year's Design Competition winners work:
<http://www.ashrae.org/students/page/704>

ASHRAE Careers & Internships – A great career resource
<http://www.ashrae.org/students/page/726>

Don't miss this great opportunity for internships! - Employers, meet students! This is a new ASHRAE program for business owners and employers to post their available internships, and for ASHRAE student members to search and apply for positions meeting their search criteria! There is no better way for students to gain industry experience! And there is no better way for employers to get the cream of the crop on their staff!

Dates to remember:

May 10th – May 18th (University of Ottawa); Canada-Wide Science Fair
<http://www.cwsf2008.ca/>

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The Energy Conservation People

Governor



Table Top Display

By Frank Bann, P.Eng.
Governor

This month's Table Top is presented by Andrew Arneaud from Titus.



Titus is promoting their TDF Dynafuser. Dynafuser is a linear slot diffuser powered by the temperature of the supply air. Pattern controllers automatically change to the correct positions in both heating and cooling applications. The Dynafuser is a cost effective solution that puts the air where it needs to be, in the occupied zone, and does it efficiently, meeting Standard 55 on Air Change Effectiveness

This month's Table Top is also presented by Imtee Baksh from Regulvar, promoting their Elodrive actuators.



Elodrive's History

Elodrive was founded in 1999 as part of the Phoenix Mecano group, focusing on actuators for HVAC damper and valve control. North American customer service, distribution, product management and valve assembly are located in Pennsylvania. Actuator engineering, research and development, and production are based in Minden, Germany.

Philosophy

Elodrive is focused on designing, developing, producing and selling innovative and user-friendly actuator solutions for the heating, ventilation and air-conditioning industry (HVAC). We are able to develop industry-changing product solutions by cross-linking the combined knowledge of our customers, employees, and suppliers.


What's In a Name?

Elo = Electronic
Drive = Actuator

Elodrive Is Part Of The Phoenix Mecano Group

Founded in 1975, Phoenix Mecano AG is a worldwide operating group with headquarters in Switzerland. Phoenix Mecano and its subsidiary companies have gained a leading international position with innovative product solutions for the industrial electronics and machine industries. Product areas include housings for electronics, industrial automation components, switches, linear industrial actuators and positioning systems, along with electronic contract manufacturing. The Phoenix Mecano group employs over 4000 people worldwide

John Lowery, PEng.
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This month's Table Top is also presented by Tom O'Grady from DisTech.



DisTech HVAC Inc. will be showing the latest product developments in the Viessmann Manufacturing product line including the Vitodens 100 wall mount natural gas fired condensing boiler and the Vitosol 200/300 flat plate and vacuum tube solar collector series. In addition we will be displaying something new the DisTech product line card: the NU-AIR Enerboss Integrated HRV/Air Handler with heat/cool capability and ECM fan motor. We welcome everyone to have a look at these fine products and look forward to seeing you there!



Student Sponsors


by Jason Alexander
2007-2008 OVC Treasurer

The Ottawa Valley Chapter would like to thank the following individuals for sponsoring a student meal at the March meeting:

Robert Lefebvre of Goodkey Weedmark and Associates
Stephen Lynch of Direct Energy
Joel Primeau of Genivar (2 students)

As with all other monthly meetings, we encourage individuals or companies to support a student through sponsoring their meals.

Jason Alexander



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ASHRAE TEGA Awards

by Thomas Chiykowski
2007-2008 OVC Committee Chair

Thanks to everyone for your great submissions. To see all the winning submissions, refer to our chapter website, where they will shortly be posted in the Awards section for This Year.

Tom Chiykowski



News Update

By Robert Lefebvre
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Technical News:

Lessons from ASHRAE Roundtable on High-Performing Buildings Shared in Video

February 20, 2008

ATLANTA – Early involvement by all members of the building team is crucial to the success of high-performing buildings, according to panellists in a new video from ASHRAE. “You can’t operate efficiently if the building hasn’t been designed with that in mind,” said Don Winston, P.E., director of technical services, The Durst Organization, Inc. “The operators will always win in the end. If you don’t design it in a way that it can be operated in accordance with its performance goals, it won’t be...it really goes back to the design process and a level of cooperation. Everyone has to be in on it, including the operations team, from day zero.”

Lessons learned in sustainable design can now be seen via a free online video at www.ashrae.org/roundtable. The video is a recording of a special roundtable, *High-Performance Buildings: Lessons from the Leaders*, originally presented at ASHRAE’s 2008 Winter Meeting.

The panellists discuss owner motivations, technical challenges, design choices and trade-offs, costs for these projects, and share perspectives about whether the expectations set early in the design process have been met once the buildings are occupied. The panellists include representatives of New York’s best-known owner/developer firms, along with the engineering designers who bring their projects to reality. Their projects include some of the most sustainable buildings in New York City, such as 4 Times Square, the Chrysler Center, One Bryant Park and the New York Times Headquarters.

“What does high performance mean?,” questions panellist Tom Scarola, director of engineering, Tishman Speyer. “Up until even a few years ago, buildings were designed very prescriptively based on meeting codes, not challenging whether they could perform better. What we do today is called high performance but it is just good and efficient design. It is reasonable to believe that the issue is no longer if it is a high-performance building, the question is how high. Building a high-performance building means never having to say you’re sorry.”

The panellists agree that it is essential that planning for the design, operation and maintenance of high performing buildings start early and involve all members of the building team. They also agree that designers and engineers should strive to incorporate new technologies and design methods. “Put behind you what’ve done for the last 20 jobs,” suggests panellist Scott Frank, P.E., partner, Jaros Baum & Bolles. “Get in the habit of saying ‘how can we do this differently,’ ask ‘why not’ at every turn, worship the god of common sense, and be sure every decision and recommendation you make is backed up by rigorous engineering.”

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Dan Nall P.E., senior vice president/director-advanced technologies, Flack + Kurtz addresses sustainability outside the U.S. market. "Perhaps the most informative experience I have had is working on projects in the Middle East, where the entire support infrastructure is being built at the same time as the buildings. This provides an opportunity to investigate the relations of multiple buildings to their support infrastructure and the opportunities that exist to create a complex cascading utilization of resources. The answer doesn't lie in making individual green buildings – it lies in making green cities."

Sustainability News:

It's true: Green buildings do boost sales, rental and occupancy rates

April 24, 2008

SAN FRANCISCO - Arm & Hammer is selling fabric softener sheets that it says are "more sensible for the environment." Gillette makes cans of shaving gel that carry a little icon of a globe and promise "no CFCs." Even giant Wal-Mart has an "Earth friendly" section of its Web site, offering organic cotton clothing, solar garden lights and energy-efficient appliances.

As Earth Day 2008 arrives on Tuesday, American consumers face a renewed outpouring of environmental marketing claims - boasts by companies that their products are everything from "100 percent natural" to "recyclable," "eco-friendly," "sustainable," "biodegradable," or just plain "green."

Along with these claims has come a new wave of environmental seals and certifications aimed at helping consumers sort the real from the hype.

Some of these environmental seals of approval - such as the U.S. government's "organic" label - are well-known and meaningful. But other green seals of approval are less helpful. Some cover only a few narrow criteria, without addressing other key environmental points. Others have been developed by industry groups with a vested interest in boosting their sales. In some product categories, there are even competing green standards put forward by different organizations.

The result? It can be almost as confusing to sort out the different green seals of approval as it is to sort out green product claims.

"It's kind of a wild, wild West out there, with this big jump to get on the green bandwagon," said Urvashi Rangan, a senior scientist with Consumer Reports.

"There should be a big caution to consumers: Don't base your purchasing decision on some green dot unless you know what that green dot really means," said Scot Case, vice president of TerraChoice Environmental Marketing.

This isn't America's first flood of environmental marketing. In the 1980s, companies were making so many misleading and confusing environmental claims that the Federal Trade Commission drafted a set of green marketing guidelines that were released in 1992.

Among other things, the FTC wrote that green claims should be specific - for instance, stating clearly whether the word "recycled" on a box of paper cups applies to the cups themselves or just their box.

But the FTC did not do much to enforce its own guidelines, according to Case. And consumer and corporate interest in green products waned - until former Vice President Al Gore's documentary "An Inconvenient Truth" drew attention to the threat of climate change in 2006 and sparked a new wave of environmentalism.

Consumer spending on natural foods, vitamins, body care and cleaning products grew by 28 percent to \$22 billion between 2004 and 2006, according to Mintel, a market research group based in Chicago.

Companies rushed to publicize the green aspects of their existing wares or to launch new green items. The number of new consumer product launches tracked by Mintel that involved green claims shot up from five in 2002 to 328 in 2007.

TerraChoice, Case's company, tried to gauge the reliability of all these claims last November with a survey of about a thousand consumer products that made a total of 1,753 environmental statements.

The good news was that very few of the products - less than 1 percent - made outright lies about their environmental benefits.

The bad news was that nearly all the products committed more subtle forms of what TerraChoice called "greenwashing."

Some products claimed to be green based on one attribute, such as recycled packaging, without addressing other environmental problems such as toxic ingredients.

Others made claims that were so vague as to be meaningless.

Products touting themselves as natural were a particular problem since, unlike the term "organic," there is no government definition of the term "natural" outside of meat and poultry.

"We found some 'natural' products that were petroleum based," Case said. "I guess they consider petroleum a natural product. ... Personally, I think the term natural has been so watered down it may never have any meaning again."

"Sustainable" is an even newer marketing buzz word that doesn't have a hard and fast meaning.

"There are so many components to sustainability - protecting the environment, water resources, social responsibility and being a good neighbor, and having good quality and safety," said Linda Brown, executive vice president of Scientific Certification Systems, an Emeryville company that certifies whether products meet particular standards.

"Right now, because there is no standard, people can pick any aspect they want," Brown said, "and consumers don't really know what it means."

Faced with this thicket of confusing claims, many consumers might welcome an environmental equivalent of the Good Housekeeping seal of approval, a well-known endorsement of consumer products provided by the magazine of the same name since 1909.

But that's easier said than done. There are currently dozens of separate environmental seals and certification.

Some address narrow single issues, such as the federal government's Energy Star seal for energy-efficient appliances or the non-profit Forest Stewardship Council's seal for sustainably harvested wood.

But those two are just the tip of the iceberg of single-issue seals. For instance, a group called the Sustainable Forestry Initiative - started by the paper and timber industry - offers its own certification of wood products that is a rival to the FSC standard.

Meanwhile, other single-issue seals focus on issues as diverse as animal welfare, indoor air quality, pesticide residues, biodegradability, sustainable fisheries and sustainably grown flowers.

Then there are seals based on a number of environmental criteria. The best known multi-issue seal is probably the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standard.

The LEED seal is awarded to buildings based on a variety of criteria ranging from energy efficiency to use of nontoxic materials. Nearly 10 percent of new commercial construction projects are now applying for LEED certification, and the council recently launched a program to certify residential construction, too.

Two other multi-issue certification programs are EcoLogo, a certification with roots in the Canadian government but currently managed by an environmental marketing firm, and Green Seal, an independent, nonprofit certification organization. They both have set independent environmental standards for items such as paints and cleaning products since the late 1980s.

But neither of those seals are exactly household words. So many companies don't see the point of spending time and money to get certified by Green Seal or EcoLogo.

Meanwhile, some individual companies are creating their own seals that have the potential to confuse shoppers even further.

SC Johnson announced earlier this year that it is adding a Greenlist logo to bottles of Windex. To average consumers, Greenlist might look like an independent third-party seal of approval - but it is an internal environmental protocol developed by SC Johnson itself.

Environmentalists have praised SC Johnson for using its Greenlist protocol over the past decade to reduce the number of potentially harmful chemicals in its products. But they said that displaying the logo without explanation could be misleading to consumers.

"Why not be Green Seal certified?" said Deborah Moore of the Green Schools Initiative, a Berkeley nonprofit that helps schools make environmental purchasing decisions. "There is a certification out there and hundreds of products have it."

An SC Johnson spokeswoman denied trying to confuse consumers. She said the company had considered a third-party seal but found the application process could be overly bureaucratic. "We look at those seals and respect them, but in the case of Windex it didn't make sense," said Kelly Semrau, vice president of global communications.

Meanwhile, some retailers have also started getting into the act by trying to identify environmentally preferable products for their customers.

Home Depot launched an Eco Options seal for some of the products it carries last year. And last month Whole Foods Market created a category of Premium Body Care products that meet a higher standard than the other items they carry. For instance, the Premium products avoid about 250 ingredients that have been criticized as potentially harmful by health and environmental activists.

"We were getting feedback from consumers saying, 'We don't know what 'natural' is,' " said Jody Villecco, quality standards coordinator for the Whole Foods chain. "We looked at other standards, and there was really no agreement. So we decided that, as a retailer, we were in a quick and objective position to get this done."

Just slightly behind Whole Foods, the natural products industry is currently drafting its own definition of natural cosmetics and body care items. Then it will issue seals to products that meet the standard.

"We can't legally stop anyone from using the term 'natural,' but when consumers become aware there is a standard out there, they'll look at products more carefully," said Daniel Fabricant, vice president of the Natural Products Association.

In the short run, it seems like things may get even more confusing for the eco-minded consumer. Suppose you're seeking an environmentally friendly shampoo. Do you look for the EcoLogo seal, the Whole Foods Premium seal, the National Products Association seal or some other seal? Or do you try to wade through ingredient lists and company Web sites on your own?

"You have to know which seals actually mean something - which ones are independently verified," said Rangan of Consumer Reports.

In the long run, if consumer interest in environmental issues remains high, some of the confusion in the green-standards world may gradually sort itself out. Some experts say one model might be the federal government's organic food standard, which only emerged after years of debate.

But they doubt that we will end up with one single all-encompassing green seal of approval. Instead, they foresee the emergence of widely accepted standards on a range of different issues.

"Even though the U.S. environmental movement is pushing on 40 years old, it's still really early," said Heather Stephenson, co-founder of a Web site called IdealBite that offers environmental tips to consumers. "Every day some new piece of information comes up. Given that we're still learning so much, it's good to have experts in different fields directing labeling. But having said that, it's still really confusing to consumers."

This article is based on a news release from the San Francisco Chronicle by Ilana DeBare





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