



# National Clothesline

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## A place to meet old friends and new ideas

For three days last month, Long Beach, CA, was the center of the drycleaning industry, a place to meet old friends and new ideas, to honor the past and plan for the future.

And for the California Cleaners Association, it was a sign that the nearly 100-year-old organization still has a lot of life left in it. The association brought together more than 60 companies to put on an ex-

hibition of equipment, supplies and technology that attracted about 800 cleaners and launderers to the Long Beach Convention Center, home of the biennial show for more years than anybody can remem-

ber.

The exhibit hall was busy both days of the show, as a steady stream of cleaners and launderers looking to upgrade their businesses and plan for a future that promises both problems and possibilities.

The weekend began with a special Management Leadership Day on Friday with three seminars focused on branding, business succession and digital marketing presented by Krista Clive-Smith, Riaz Chauthani and Brian Rashid.

Seminars continued on Saturday morning. Before the exhibit hall opened, Chris Moreno of Laundry Locker discussed how to setup a wash-dry-fold laundry service.

California cleaners had particular interest in the second seminar of the morning, presented by attorney Jibit Cinar. She covered the topics of workplace discrimination and harassment, parental leave laws and the issue of determining who is an employee and who is an independent contractor. Those topics are nettlesome for California employers who have to meet more stringent state standards than those set by the federal government.

The educational opportunities continued once the exhibit hall opened. Clinics presented on the show floor included shirt finishing by Unipress, stain removal by

*Continued on page 10*



The Long Beach Convention center was the meeting place for cleaners and allied trades people during Fabricare 2018 Aug. 17-19.

## Drycleaner of the Year is a family honor



Sajid Veera, the California Cleaners Association Drycleaner of the Year, is pictured with CCA President Jim Douglas and his mother, Yasmin, after receiving the honor at CCA's Fabricare 2018 in Long Beach, CA.

When the California Cleaners Association awarded Sajid Veera with its prestigious Drycleaner of the Year Award at Fabricare 2018, it was the culmination of a long journey by the owner of Door to Door Cleaners and his family.

The Veera family, consisting of Sajid and his brother Habib and their parents, Yasin and Yasmin, originally hailed from Bombay (now Mumbai), India, where they launched entrepreneurial ventures ranging from juice/ice cream bars called Canteena to a frozen food brand called Lazeez in the 1980s.

Looking for more lucrative opportunities, they eventually relocated about 8,700 miles away to Redondo Beach, CA, and started a drycleaning business in 1993.

"We all started it together," Sajid said, "and it doesn't make sense for me to get the award when all of us equally have done everything with the business."

Now, the business is in its 25th year and has expanded to include a 15,000-sq.-ft. processing facility with about 50 employees

to handle work from ten locations along with pickup and delivery service. While the scope of the business has changed some, the core values have remained the same.

"We don't focus on price. We always focus on quality," Sajid said. "When we opened in 1993, we found out that our nearest highest-priced competitor was charging like \$3.50 for a pair of pants at that time. We said, 'You know what? We are going to charge a dollar more than what they are charging, but our quality and our service and everything that goes along with it is going to be far superior to theirs. We are going to blow them out of the water.' That's been the philosophy from that time on."

Over the years, the Veera family business has joined America's Best Cleaners and the Association of Wedding Gown Specialists. Their efforts to be more environmentally friendly has also earned them several distinctions, including an Environmental Hero Award and a SEED Award from the South Bay Business Envi-

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Casey Scanlon had plans for big changes when he became the third-generation owner of his family's business.



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Impurities in make-up water can lead to the death of a boiler. Bruce Grossman explains how to prevent problems with proper treatment.



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Unusual problems in the shirt department may require the detective skills of Columbo to solve, says Don Desrosiers.



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Some silks can't be wetcleaned but most of them can if you follow Dan Eisen's recommended procedures.







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# A drycleaner who paid the ultimate price

It’s hard to imagine a more dangerous and difficult location to be a drycleaner in than Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia. In fact, the U.S. State Department (and most Western nations) have issued an advisory warning to avoid all travel to the city for any reason. The region is rife with terrorist activity from the al-Qaeda affiliated terrorist group known as al-Shabaab. Essentially, on any given day, kidnappings, suicide bombings and murder can take place. Such was the case in August when a man named Mohamed Mahamoud Sheikh drove his car during the day only to have two men shoot and kill him.

He was a drycleaner, and a damn good one. The young man had decided to give up a lucrative (and much safer) job in Dubai in order to set up the first cleaners in Mogadishu in over 20 years: Somalia Premium Laundry. He wanted to help rebuild his fallen home city and saw an excellent business opportunity that was sorely needed as many local businessmen and politicians had to visit neighboring countries just to get their suits cleaned. He hoped to bring everyday services to a region where violence monopolizes media headlines. Mohamed also owned a florist shop and encouraged others to start up businesses. He also had plans to open a gym and playground for children. Now, he’s dead, and less importantly, drycleaning in the city may have died with him.

There are some pretty remarkable people in this industry, all over the world. It’s always sad to hear one of the more inspirational ones dying so young in such a tragic way. But, if there is a positive caveat to take from this story, it’s this: Mohamed’s death was far from pointless. While he and many other youth in Mogadishu have had their lives cut short, their spirit lives on in those they have left behind. After Mohamed’s death, the young locals engaged in a rare demonstration while wearing white headbands with phrases like “Stop Killing Youth.” Additionally, they posted #WeAreNotSafe on social media as a defiant gesture to those who should be held accountable for such horrible crimes.

The lesson to be found here is that no matter how difficult the market that your business is located in, entrepreneurs are in a unique position to help those less fortunate in their community, to have a positive impact on lives and to inspire others to try and do the same. Unfortunately, such things often seem to be in scarce commodity no matter what part of the world you live in, but some are willing to try to change that. For all the drycleaners out there in that category, please keep up with your efforts and take comfort in the fact that your actions do not always go unappreciated.

# Getting new customers is only a start

Much has been written and discussed about how to get new customers. Every cleaner — or at least all of those who have a plan for growth — has some type of program in place to attract customers and no small amount of money is spent to this end.

If attracting new customers is the extent of your marketing program, it is only half baked. Getting them in the store is only the first step in the process. Getting them to keep coming back is the ultimate goal. Otherwise, you are just engaging in “catch and release” marketing.

Programs designed to bring customers into your store can be easily defeated by your own actions — or inaction. Dirty looking storefronts and outdated displays are likely to put customers off. Loud music in the store can be a major turnoff. A store that looks crowded can discourage people from coming inside.

Customers want to do business in stores that give them the sense that “this is the right place.” This requires a clean, organized, efficient and uncrowded store. Loud music or a messy environment conveys to the customer that the staff is not paying attention — either to the goods or to the shopper. A crowded store with lines at the counter store tells time-pressed customers, “Don’t come in now unless you want to wait.”

If that first impression is not good, you may never get a chance to impress them with your great prices, quality cleaning, friendly staff, wide range of services or whatever combination you offer that you believe gives you a competitive edge.

The onset of the fall season, which brings out more customers, is a good time to make sure you’re not turning off customers before they even come in. Clean up the customer service area, take down old signs, wash the windows, get the fingerprints off the door, turn down (or off) the music (or the TV). Some of those little things that you have just learned to “live with” and may not even notice could be creating hurdles at your front door, keeping new customers from coming in just as if there were a brick wall instead of an entryway.

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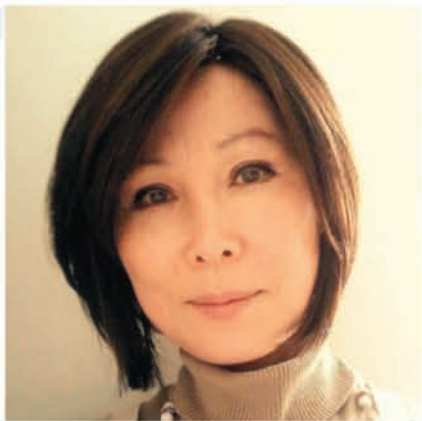


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# Go out and get it

**W**hen Casey Scanlon purchased his family's drycleaning business earlier this year, he had big changes in mind.

In fact, the third generation cleaner has instigated innovations all across the board — from a new name and brand to offering more services and employing a different strategy.

"So now I'm just about 35 and at the beginning phase of my career in ownership and since the takeover that's when we completed the rebrand of the company," he said. "There was a point in time when we were operating five locations under four names, none of which were called Scanlon's."

"We have only recently in the last few years converted and rebranded everything as Scanlon's," he added. "Legacy is important for me because once you go, what's left? That's one of the big reasons I wanted to stick our name on the building. I want people to know Scanlon's Cleaners has been around 60 years."

Originally, the business was started by Casey's grandfather Bob in Kingston, NY. Back then, it was known as Governor Clinton's Cleaners and Tailors, named after a New York State political figure. The choice was appropriate since Bob was often called "The Gov" by his customers.

"My grandfather was a route driver for another cleaners," he explained. "He started his own company in 1956. He used the route method to grow his business."

Combined with his wife Jackie's tailoring skills, the couple tried hard to differentiate themselves.

"They were so small they could handle any odd request from the customer," Casey noted. "They could take the extra time with an item. They could spend days working on something... flushing through ink. They were not the cheapest. They were one of the priciest in the area, but they were known for amazing quality and great customer service. That was the premise with them. They worked together as a team and everyone knew Bob and Jackie. They were kind of a famous couple in the area."

"My grandfather had such a rapport with his customers that they would bake him cakes. One I especially recall would make him pierogi from scratch," Casey recalled. "But those days are long gone."

After Casey's father Jay graduated from Notre Dame with a business degree, he traded in his dreams of being a chef so he could try to find the right recipe to grow the family cleaning business.

"They did a lot of market research and a lot of recommendations coming from some locals who lived out in the neighboring town of Woodstock, New York," Casey said. "In 1984, they started the first satellite shop in West Hurley."

Expansion was tried many times over the years, as were many names: Esposito's, American and Sheer were among them. The family even tried different strategies at different locations, from unparalleled quality to being a discount cleaners. It wasn't until more

recently that they were all branded together. Today, Scanlon Cleaner's has one main location, three satellites and 20 employees.

Though Kingston's population is only a little over 20,000 people, the small town did have one big boost that certainly helped the company over the years.

"Kingston had IBM for a long time. Obviously that was a huge job provider and an economy stimulator," Casey ex-

plained. "We did all of that and now it's huge for us."

**E**ven after he sold the business to his son, Jay continued to chip in. In fact, he's carrying on the same tradition that his father started.

"My grandfather worked for us until he died. He was 83. He was still going out and taking care of the customers who stuck with him over the years," Casey explained. "My father actually

he has a firm vision of the future of drycleaning and how to connect to customers of his generation.

"At my age, I'm in that middle ground, in the grey area of what I expect as customer service versus what I always want," he noted. "I don't want customer service. I don't want to have to do anything. I'm a Millennial and as I'm hiring these new staff members who are in high school to do counter operations, just the simple act of look-



## Casey Scanlon

plained. "In 1996, they left the area as they've done all over the place. That was a big hit we took. Everybody felt it... every business around here. A lot of places went out of business. We like to call ourselves the survivors of the area."

Casey, who grew up helping his father in the business, began his full-time tenure in 1998, right as revenue significantly declined. Drastic times called for drastic measures.

"We consolidated our production to one plant and a couple of satellites," he said. "Regrettably, we had to cut a little bit of the staff but that's how we stayed alive."

**T**rying to keep the company at the right balance has been difficult. At times, satellite locations had to be shut down, such as last year with the West Hurley location that had been their first addition; at other times, Scanlon's acquired stores for more volume. In 2014, the company added locations in Rhinebeck and Red Hook.

"This acquisition was just two small satellite stores but it improved our volume and helped us bounce back from the downturn," he noted, "and now we had more staff and we were able to keep the staff we currently had. I think what I'm hearing is that most successful cleaners nowadays have one plant and several satellites and that's the way to do it."

Buying and selling when necessary has certainly helped considerably, but Casey believes the addition of new services like area rug cleaning, wedding gown preservation and restoration work has proved to be essential.

"I'm a numbers guy, so I know that one 8' x 10' area rug is the equivalent of 54.23 shirts," he said. "I can lose ten five shirts-a-week customers by cleaning one area rug per week. So, that's just a no-brainer, but people are afraid

does the route right now. He does it just to keep the honor of my grandfather going."

While the routes have been around for a long time, they haven't grown to their potential, which is why Casey is in the process of making big changes with Scanlon's.

"That's our future," he said. "We are literally about to launch a massive project for revamping our routes style. We are going with a fully automated system that's basically just going to take customer service away and make it a better experience for them but there will be zero interaction."

As Casey is quick to point out: "Nothing about drycleaning is cool." Of course, that doesn't mean he can't try to make it that way.

"What I've learned is that we are normally just thought of as a dirty old business. I'm trying to step into the technology trends of today to bring a little bit of a cool factor to it," he explained. "We've invested in this development software with web and mobile app automation. Very simply, we are going to streamline the whole process of pickup and delivery with just a few steps on your phone."

"We are going to try to funnel our current database into our route and then attack outside cities to pull some of their market share. Foot traffic just isn't increasing."

Armed with a new website designed to push customers to join the delivery route and a plan to launch an app after Labor Day, Casey's goal is to cut back on the human element.

"You're not coming in. You're not calling. You're literally just hitting a few buttons on your phone," he said. "You can schedule a pick up and be an on-demand customer or you can be a steady customer that we come to once a week. It's going to be that simple."

As a young owner, Casey is positive

ing somebody in the eyes when you're talking to them... it's getting worse and I don't see it ever getting better."

**S**o, it occurred to him that maybe the best way to adapt is to try to remove the human element more.

"It's just going to make it so they don't have to interact. We're using state-of-the-art technology with this. We are going to map out the exact areas we want to attract down to the street," he noted.

The software is designed to empower customers to follow their orders every step of the way with notifications. The idea is to cut out an errand, something he believes people don't want to do anymore. Instead, taking care of their clothes could be as easy as putting them out on Sunday night as they roll out their trash bins.

"I'm absolutely obsessed with it, to be honest with you," he said. "We are trying to become a mobile business."

Still, Casey and his father have butted heads a little on the strategy. The biggest question for the elder Scanlon is "Why are you converting customers who are already coming in?"

According to his son, there is a compelling reason: "Statistically, a route customer will spend more money because they don't realize how much they're spending. It's a credit card on file. They are going to stuff things in a bag and not think: 'Well a shirt's \$2.99 and pants cost this...' They don't care. They just throw it in. You're doing all of the work for them."

At a time when drycleaning volume is down, Casey believes the best course of action is to remain proactive.

"There are no jobs coming into the area. There's no growth and people are still trending for a more casual lifestyle so I know I have to go out and get it," he said. "The only way to grow is to be on top of just about everything."



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*~Craig Ford, Owner/Operator, SeaBreeze Cleaners*

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*~Robert Marks, Ruthie's Cleaners*

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# Buffalo cleaner hosts meeting of Tuchman Advisory Group

Colvin Cleaners in Buffalo, NY, hosted a meeting of the Tuchman Advisory Group in June. Paul, Cyndee, and Chris Billoni of Colvin Cleaners led the group on a tour of their plant which was followed up by a group critique of the plant's operations. Guest speakers at the meeting included: Michael Casciano of Casciano Consulting Group, who discussed ways to add value to financial discussions; Megan Rechin, Colvin Cleaners Media Consultant, who spoke on "Keepin' It Real — Marketing and Communications for the Modern Drycleaner;" and

John Rothmann, a KGO-AM810 talk show host, who gave a political commentary on breaking news of the day. The meeting also included a visit to the Pierce-Arrow Museum, a review of YTD financials, and hearing member presentations. The meeting concluded with dinner on Friday at Skylon, a rotating Niagara Falls restaurant where the group was treated to a fireworks show over the falls during dinner. For information on the group, contact Ellen Rothmann, ellenrothmann@yahoo.com.



A Tuchman Advisory Group photo taken in front of a specially constructed Frank Lloyd Wright gas station built inside the Pierce-Arrow Museum. In front from left are Cyndee Billoni of Colvin Cleaners, Jana Janssen of Martinizing GreenEarth Cleaners, Lang and Judy Houston of Crest Cleaners, David Makepeace of Medlin-Davis Cleaners, North, Amy Trail of Medlin-Davis Cleaners, South, Ellen Rothmann of the Tuchman Advisory Group, and Marie Tapia of Martinizing GreenEarth Cleaners. In back from left are Paul Billon of Colvin Cleaners, John Rothmann, Michael Poeschl of Revolution Cleaners, Michael Jones of Highland Cleaners, Gary Futterman of Flair Cleaners, Ed Pizzarello of Revolution Cleaners, Richard Thum of Five Star Cleaners, Keith Houston of Crest Cleaners, Lauren Houston of Crest Cleaners), Lee Makepeace of Medlin-Davis Cleaners, North, and Brett Allen of Medlin-Davis, South.

# Canadian Fabricare sets 2-day conference

"Diversify and Grow" will be the theme of the Canadian Fabricare Association's industry conference to be held Oct. 12-13 at the Holiday Inn Yorkdale in Toronto, ON. Friday's sessions will cater mostly to the laundry industry while Saturday will be devoted to cleaners looking to grow into the laundry sector — linen supply, coin laundry, etc. Speakers scheduled for Friday will give new entrepreneurs in the laundry industry the base information they need to properly analyze their laundry equipment needs and how to develop an ROI and initiate a proper design and analysis for a three- to five-year work plan. Achieving the longest textile life and the highest processing quality will also be discussed along with energy conservation and wastewater management and assessing laundry equipment to purchase for maximum ROI. A laundry consultant from American Laundry Systems, will speak on both Friday and Saturday on how to add laundry services to current cleaning operations. How to secure customer data will be also be discussed both Friday and Saturday with attendees learning how hackers are able to retrieve input transmissions and access customers' personal information held in a business's computers. Other topics for discussion on Saturday will sexual harassment and how to comply with new rules. How to employ online marketing to increase sales will also be discussed. A variety of additional topics will be addressed by various speakers on Saturday. These include pickup and delivery sales promotions; handling solvents; environmental regulations; the benefits of wet-cleaning; small business obligations, risks and opportunities; and expanding abilities for pickup and delivery. The conference will end with a cocktail party and dinner Saturday evening. The full registration package, which includes all meetings, breakfast, lunch and the Saturday evening dinner, is \$231.65. Partial registrations are also available. For details, visit the association's website, [www.fabricare.org](http://www.fabricare.org). Hotel rooms at the Holiday Inn Yorkdale are available for \$159.95 plus taxes for a single or double. Reservations should be made directly with the hotel by calling (866) 586-0046 and mentioning CFA to get the special room rate. For more information, call Sidney Chelksy, executive director, (905) 881-5906.

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Paula Kostick  
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Forenta	54" Apparel Press	\$3,300
Ajax	CBS Sleever	\$3,995
✓ Hoffman	Double Topper	\$3,200
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Superstarch	Starch Cooker	\$2,995
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Forenta	19VS Topper	\$4,450
Ipso	50 lb. Gas Dryer	\$3,195
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# A life of achievement honored

The long and storied career of Milt Chortkoff was honored with the presentation of the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute's Diamond Achievement Award during a ceremony at the California Cleaners Association's Fabricare 2018.

The award is the highest honor bestowed by DLI and recognizes a lifetime of contributions to the drycleaning industry. To date there have been only seven other individuals to receive the honor.

Chortkoff died last December but his family — wife Edythe, and daughter and son-in-law Beth and Michael Shader were on hand to receive the award.

His life-long career in the industry, which began with delivering wet-wash bundles in a three-wheeled pushcart from his parents small hand laundry in Brooklyn, NY, continued until his death just short of his 89th birthday.

The Chortkoffs moved to California in 1946, where his father bought Hollyway Cleaners in Echo Park. Milt worked his way through junior college delivering laundry and cleaning before joining his father full time. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, he helped increase business income from \$1,000 per week to \$10,000 per week. In the late 1970s, he built a new 5,000-square-foot location from scratch that hit the \$40,000-per-week mark.

He made an attempt to retire in 1985 but that turned out to be only the end of his first act in the business. He was drawn back in and in 1988 bought a business that became the famed Milt & Edie's, located in the heart of Burbank's Media District where everything was tailored for their customers'



Milt Chortkoff's daughter, Beth, and his wife, Edythe (the Edie of Milt & Edie's), show the Diamond Achievement Award presented at Fabricare 2018.

convenience and enjoyment, including being open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The store's atmosphere is designed to make sure that every second a customer spends inside is pleasant. Music videos play on a plasma monitor and complimentary refreshments are readily available — including, coffee, tea, water, candy, cookies, donuts and cheese and crackers. All of those luxuries are in addition to the customer service pledge to provide the perfect garment at no extra charge.

Beth and Mike Shader are carrying on the Milt & Edie's tradition. A 30th anniversary celebration of rededication was held at the store this spring attended by government and Chamber of Commerce officials and, of course, customers.

"Thirty years of love and dedication have made Milt & Edie's what it is today and seeing everyone here supporting us was wonderful," said Edie at the time. "Milt would have loved it."

# Gathering in Long Beach

Continued from page 1

A.L. Wilson, and laundry by Faultless. These continued on the second day of the show with a pants finishing clinic by Sankosha USA and another stain removal clinic, this one by R. R. Street & Co. Inc.

That evening featured presentations of various awards at the President's Reception where past board members were honored, new board members were sworn in and outgoing president Arik Levy handed over the gavel to incoming president Jim Douglas.

The final day of the show con-

tinued with another round of seminars before the show opened. Kyle Nesbit of MW Cleaners (transitioning to Tide Cleaners) led off with a detailed explanation of how his company tracks the performance of its stores, its CSRs and, most important, its customers.

The final session presented Jim Groshans, the FabriCoach, who told how to build a team amongst employees to ensure that customers are satisfied, even if things go wrong.

Judging by the smiles and positive comments, nothing went wrong at Fabricare 2018.



It was a changing of the guard for CCA with outgoing president Arik Levy (left) and incoming president Jim Douglas during the appropriately named President's Reception.

# Drycleaner of the Year is a family honor

Continued from page 1

ronmental Coalition.

The company has also fostered a reputation for being one of the best in the industry. It is a daily battle to keep on top of their brand, especially in a time when anyone can post complaints online.

"We never get complaints about our customer service. We never get complaints on our qual-

ity. The only complaint we get is on price," Sajid noted. "Whenever that happens, my standard answer to a customer who complains about price is 'I'd rather you complain about price than you complain about quality.'"

In terms of earning the award, Sajid chalks it up to all of his family's hard work and focus. The company must always comes first.

"We don't have an extravagant lifestyle. We have a decent

lifestyle, but everything we make we put right back into the business," he emphasized. "That's what has contributed to our success."

It doesn't hurt that Sajid him-

self is rarely satisfied. He considers himself a perfectionist and is always looking for ways to improve Door-to-Door Cleaners. Still, he realizes he is just one aspect of the overall formula for

success.

"This award is not a reflection of me. It's a reflection of the entire family who put the work in," he said. "It's awesome to be the best drycleaner in California."

# Hotels selected for Clean Show

Exhibit sales and hotel reservations are open for companies and cleaners who plan to participate in Clean '19 in New Orleans

next June.

New Orleans will be ready to accommodate attendees during the show's run at the Morial Con-

vention Center June 20-23.

Clean Show management has arranged for discounts and special amenities at a variety of New Orleans hotels for the show while the five co-sponsoring trade association have designated headquarters hotels for their members.

The Drycleaning and Laundry Institute will headquarter at the Hotel Monteleone, the same hotel the association used the last time the Clean Show was in New Orleans in 2013.

The Monteleone is part of the official Clean Show package which includes 23 hotels in the area around the convention center.

Reservations must be made through Connections Housing, the official housing agent for Clean 2019. Rates and registration information can be found on the Clean Show website.

Telephone reservations can be made by calling Connections Housing, (844) 216-0057.

In addition to exhibits, there will be educational seminars on technology, business management and environmental issues by the co-sponsoring associations, generally in the morning hours.

For more information, visit the show's website at [www.clean-show.com](http://www.clean-show.com), or contact show management, Riddle & Associates; phone, (404) 876-1988.

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~ Steve Grashoff

President of Peerless Cleaners and CRDN of Northern Indiana



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# WRENCH WORKS



By BRUCE GROSSMAN

## Boiler water treatment, Part I

This month's article pertains to that irriguous (great word, look it up) and oft misunderstood subject, treating water for use in boiler operations.

Before getting to the heart of the matter here are a few disclaimers.

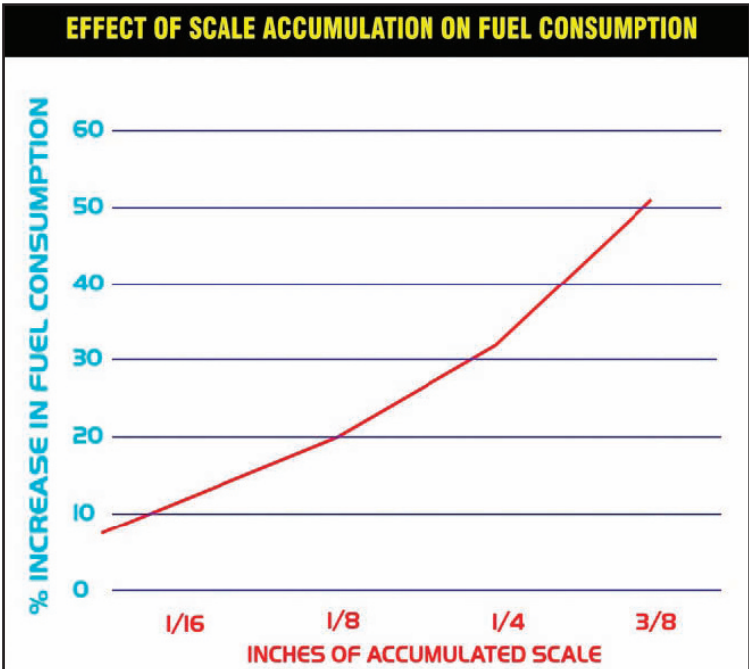
damaged by the addition of water with improper chemistry.

In most cases the damage caused by improper treatment of the water entering your boiler is gradual and cumulative.

My expertise in the field of water chemistry is limited to observing the results of and, in some cases, repairing the damage caused by the introduction of improperly treated water into a boiler, not about the water chemistry itself. Therefore, what I'm doing in this article is compiling and presenting information from sources who have experience and expertise in the field of boiler water chemistry.

This slow damage affects your bottom line in the form of escalating fuel and steam system maintenance costs. Have a look at the accompanying illustration to see just how expensive a thin coating of scale inside your boiler can be.

water which is unusable. More specifically they are about water that shouldn't be used in its current form.



maintenance issues and invariably there is someone in the audience who claims that they do not treat make-up water in any way and have had no problems with their boiler.

This is the raw water used to make up for water that has been lost in using the steam generated by the boiler. This water contains most of the impurities which require treatment.

**Feed water.** This is the water contained in the return tank, a combination of fresh make-up water added to the tank and condensate returning to the return (condensate) tank from the machinery.

**Boiler water.** This is the water contained inside the boiler itself which will be converted to steam.

Bruce Grossman is the chief of R&D for EZtimers Manufacturing, maker of the new EZ Level return tank water level control. To prevent boiler scaling and other damage the EZ Level return tank water level control replaces that ball float valve in the condensate return tank. For saving money on handling waste, the Sahara and Drop in the Bucket line of high purity separator water mister/evaporators provide a thrifty, legal method to get rid of the separator water generated by your drycleaning machine. For information on EZ-timers products, visit [www.ez-timers.com](http://www.ez-timers.com). Address any questions or comments for Bruce to [bruce@eztimers.com](mailto:bruce@eztimers.com) or call (702) 376-6693.

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# KEEP IT LEGAL



BY FRANK KOLLMAN

## Contesting an unemployment claim

Some of my clients never contest unemployment claims. Others fight them tooth and nail. Consequently, the experience ratings for my clients range from very low to very high.

If you are one of those employers who likes to keep your experience rating low, saving money in the process, you need to understand how the system works. Otherwise, you can waste a lot of time contesting claims you have absolutely no chance of winning.

The unemployment insur-

ance scheme in this country involves states administering a program with a large federal component.

As a result, there is relative uniformity across the country. Whatever gets you unemployment in Missouri probably gets you unemployment in Kansas.

Because it is a form of "insurance," it is up to the state acting like a claims adjuster to determine if an employee is eligible for benefits.

Not all employees who lose their jobs are entitled to receive

those benefits. In some cases, they may receive benefits, but only after a waiting period. The state, again acting like an insurance company, can raise your "premium" if you have a lot of claims where benefits are paid out.

So, what kinds of situations will result in a terminated employee not receiving benefits? Let me begin by stating that "unsatisfactory work performance" is not one of them. If an employee is fired for incompetence, that will not usually disqualify him from receiving

benefits.

Employers typically must show that the employee was fired for misconduct or gross misconduct.

What's the difference?

In the case of ordinary misconduct, the disqualification is normally only for a short period of time, like four to ten weeks. Gross misconduct normally results in disqualification, period.

The difference in terms of actual conduct is not clearly delineated. Theft is gross misconduct, while recurring cash

register shortages may be ordinary misconduct. Then again, cash register shortages may be incompetence that does not cause benefits to be denied.

Chronic lateness or absenteeism would be ordinary misconduct.

To prove misconduct, gross or otherwise, it helps for the employer to have a set of rules that makes it clear to the employee that the behavior is, in fact, misconduct. It also helps to have prior disciplinary warnings to the employee that further misconduct will result in termination.

If the employee has resigned, that is a basis for denying benefits, but even employees who have voluntarily resigned can get benefits. For example, if the employee can show he resigned "with good cause," benefits will be awarded.

An employee who quits because of sexual harassment, the denial of a raise he was promised, or some other "misconduct" by the employer can get benefits.

If an employee says he resigned at the employer's request, that will be treated just like a discharge. Then, the state will have to decide if the employee engaged in disqualifying misconduct.

Finally, most states will disqualify an employee from receiving benefits during any period in which the employee is receiving severance pay.

This becomes an issue frequently in negotiating a severance agreement and release with a terminated employee. Plus, the employee has to show he is seeking other employment, though that is pretty easy to do. In most states, employees on strike do not get unemployment benefits.

Even in the best of circumstances, however, employees who do not deserve benefits will receive them.

Employers should be prepared to explain, in some detail, why an employee was fired to have any chance of winning one of these claims. It is also good practice if the employee later files a charge of discrimination or a lawsuit for wrongful termination.

Frank Kollman is a partner in the law firm of Kollman & Saucier, PA, in Baltimore, MD. He can be reached by phone at (410) 727-4300 or fax (410) 727-4391. His firm's web site can be found at [www.kollmanlaw.com](http://www.kollmanlaw.com). It has articles, sample policies, news and other information on employee/employer relations.



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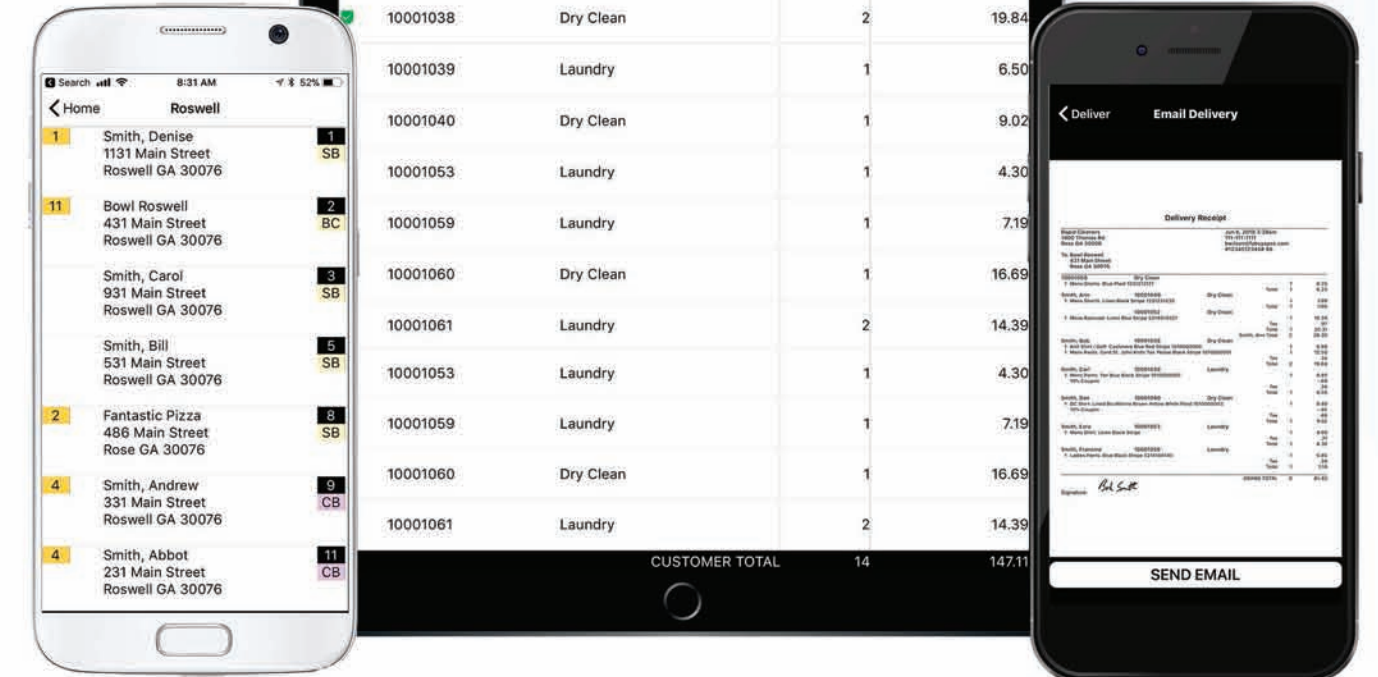
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# MIDATLANTIC

## Baltimore’s Inner Harbor to host PDCA Expo

Baltimore’s Inner Harbor is home to the Maryland Science Center, the National Aquarium, the Babe Ruth Birthplace and Museum and Camden Yards, the official home stadium of the Baltimore Orioles and the Baltimore Ravens.

This November, it will also be home to the Pennsylvania and Delaware Cleaners Association’s 2018 Drycleaning and Laundry Expo.

The event will run from Nov. 9 to 11 at the Baltimore Convention Center in Maryland and the association has tapped several expert speakers to headline the weekend’s educational programs that

will cover everything from social media strategies and labor law issues to hiring advice and a team approach to achieving excellent customer service.

Sunday’s keynote speaker will be Brian Rashid, the CEO of A Life in Shorts. He will lead a discussion on “Smart Digital Marketing” that will demonstrate how easy it can be to digitally market on a shoestring budget.

Attracting new customers is an ongoing issue for drycleaners, as is hiring good employees and keeping them.

Addressing that topic will be Route Pro James Peuster who will present a program on “Breaking

the ‘I Can’t Find Good People’ Myth.” He will offer advice on how to expand your search for new hires by tapping into a bigger pool of potential candidates.

Also on the weekend’s schedule will be attorney Frank Kollman who will head a session on “Keeping on the Right Side of Employment Laws.”

Plant managers and owners need to keep abreast of the complicated web of state and federal labor regulations that can result in expensive lawsuits down the road and Kollman will help you steer through it.

On the exhibit floor, Fabric Coach Jim Groshans will explain

how you can mold your employees into a more effective team in a seminar called “The Team Approach to Building Customer Service Excellence.”

While the seminars will provide an excellent opportunities for drycleaners to learn more about running their business, so will the exhibit hall, which will serve as a portal for sellers and buyers of all the latest in the industry’s products and services to meet face to face. It is also a great opportunity to ask questions and see the equipment running during live demonstrations.

The exhibit hall will be open from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturday, and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday.

day, and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday.

PDCA has selected the Hyatt Regency Baltimore Inner Harbor to serve as this year’s headquarters for its 2018 Expo.

The special hotel rate is \$159 per night for single or double occupancy for those who contact the hotel for reservations at (410) 528-1234 and mention their affiliation with Expo 2018.

For more information, visit [www.pdclean.org](http://www.pdclean.org).

## Two courses to round out 2018 slate at DLI

Those who want to gain introductory and advanced drycleaning knowledge from the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute will have only two more opportunities this year.

The association will offer one Fall session each for its one-week Introduction to Drycleaning class and its two week Advanced Drycleaning class; both will start in October.

The five-day introductory class is ideal for those who are newer to the industry with less than one year of experience.

It will be held from Oct. 15 to 19 at DLI’s School of Drycleaning Technology in Laurel, MD.

Class instruction will cover a wide variety of topics, including: sorting loads; drycleaning science; fibers and their characteristics; fabric constructions; cleaning silk, satin and other fabrics; soil cleaning theory; operating a drycleaning machine; stain removal chemistry and procedures; removing coffee, ink, grease and other stains; pressing pants, coats and skirts; and using tensioning equipment to improve finishing quality.

Tuition is \$1,095 for DLI members (\$959 each for two or more from the same plant) and \$1,449 for non-members.

Those who complete that course, or who have more hands-on production experience may want to take the advanced course, which will run from Oct. 22 to Nov. 2.

It will cover some of the same topics, though more in-depth, plus a multitude of new ones such as: fiber identification through burn testing; using bleaches without damaging fabric color; pressing blouses, dresses, ties, pleated garments, silks, velvets and corduroy; troubleshooting problems with the drycleaning machine; and current regulations facing the drycleaning industry.

Tuition is \$1,549 for members (or \$1,349 each for two or more from the same plant) and \$2,049 for non-members. Additional discounts are available for those who sign up for both classes concurrently.

For more information or to register, visit [www.dlionline.org](http://www.dlionline.org).

## MAKING CENTS OF THE DOLLARS COMPARING WET CLEANING & DRY CLEANING COSTS

New technologies allow wet cleaning to significantly improve throughput production over traditional dry cleaning. This makes a strong case for the eco-friendly wet cleaning process. But what about the costs associated with wet cleaning versus dry cleaning? When compared — dollar for dollar — wet cleaning is thousands less.

### INITIAL INVESTMENT

First, let’s evaluate the initial cost of each system. This is the amount required to purchase new alternative-solvent dry cleaning machines versus similarly sized Poseidon wet cleaning systems.

When the numbers are crunched, there’s a \$67,000-\$72,000 cost differential in favor of Poseidon wet cleaning. But that’s just the tip of the iceberg. Let’s dig deeper.

#### 1) Additional Capital Expenditures

Often, there are additional costs associated with operating a new dry cleaning machine, including upgrading boilers, chillers, air compressors and electrical. If you have to upgrade any of these because of your new dry cleaning machine, you’ll fork out considerably more. Whereas, if you go with a wet cleaning system, you won’t.

For example, a customer is installing an 80-pound capacity dry cleaning machine at a cost north of \$100,000 list price. It’s going into an existing facility. To operate correctly, the dry cleaning machine will require the purchase of another chiller (\$16,000) and an 80 amp breaker. Additionally, the new chiller will require another 70 amp breaker. In the end, the new dry cleaning machine not only requires a new chiller, it demands a costly electrical upgrade. All this adds up.

By comparison, an 80-pound capacity Poseidon wet cleaning system, which operates on 15 amp breakers, doesn’t require anything extra. So, if you add a wet cleaning system, you’ll likely not have to purchase or upgrade anything else.

#### 2) Operational Costs

We know now that the minimal initial investment of a 60-pound capacity dry cleaning machine is at least \$67,000 greater than that of a similarly sized wet cleaning system. We also know other capital expenditures and upgrades are also part of the installation and operational equation. Now, let’s compare labor, chemistry/solvent, regulatory/licensing fees and utility costs.

**Chemistry** — Initial start-up costs for chemistry for a 60-pound wet cleaning machine is around \$2,000. It’s \$6,000 for a 60-pound dry cleaning machine. From there on, there is not a huge difference.

**Water** — Water usage can vary. On the dry cleaning side, when a chiller is utilized to recycle water through a dry cleaning machine, very little water is used. But, a chiller costs between \$15,000 and \$30,000.

In general, a 60-pound wet cleaning machine uses 40 gallons of water per load, and over the course of a year, would go through as much water as a dry cleaning machine hooked to a water tower. A dry cleaning machine hooked to a chiller is the most water efficient. The only problem is that this scenario requires a costly initial investment.

**Electricity** — When it comes to electricity, wet cleaning comes out ahead. This is because a dry cleaning machine requires 60-90 amps to operate, whereas a wet cleaning system requires just 15.

**Natural Gas** — The boiler needed to operate a dry cleaning machine uses 670,000 BTUs, which dwarfs the wet cleaning requirement of 118,000 BTUs. Plus, a boiler will run until all plant production is completed for the day. A wet cleaning system dryer operates in 15-20 minute increments a dozen times a day. Again, wet cleaning wins.

**Labor** — When compared, labor costs are very similar in both dry cleaning and wet cleaning.

#### 3) Regulatory & Waste Disposal Fees

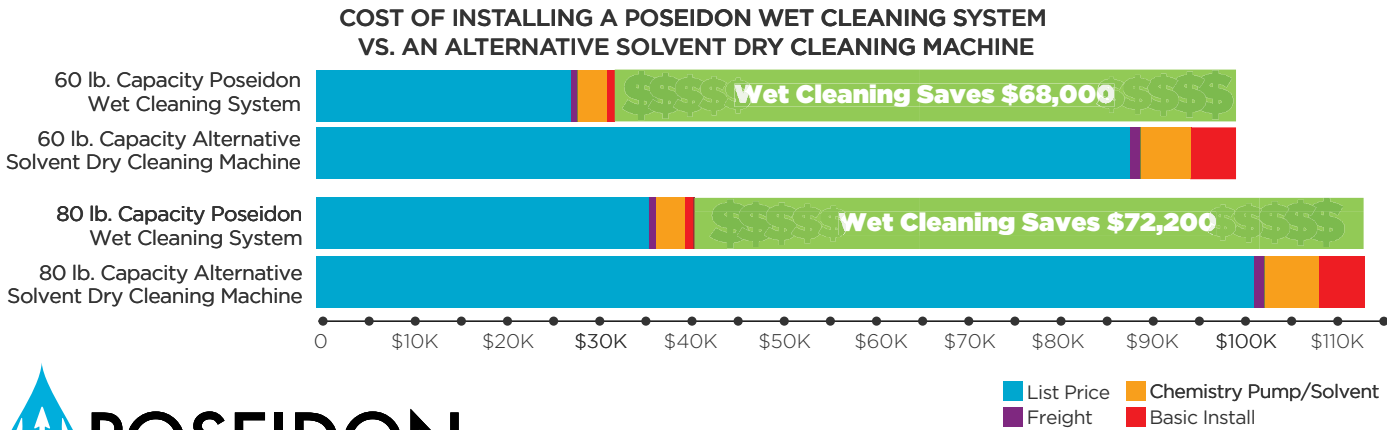
Finally, regulatory fees and waste disposal costs are not uniform across the country because each state has its own set of laws. Typically, it costs hundreds per drum for removal of dry cleaning still-bottom-solvent wastes.

On the flip side, there are never disposal or regulatory costs for wet cleaning.

### WET CLEANING — A THIRD OF THE COST OF DRY CLEANING

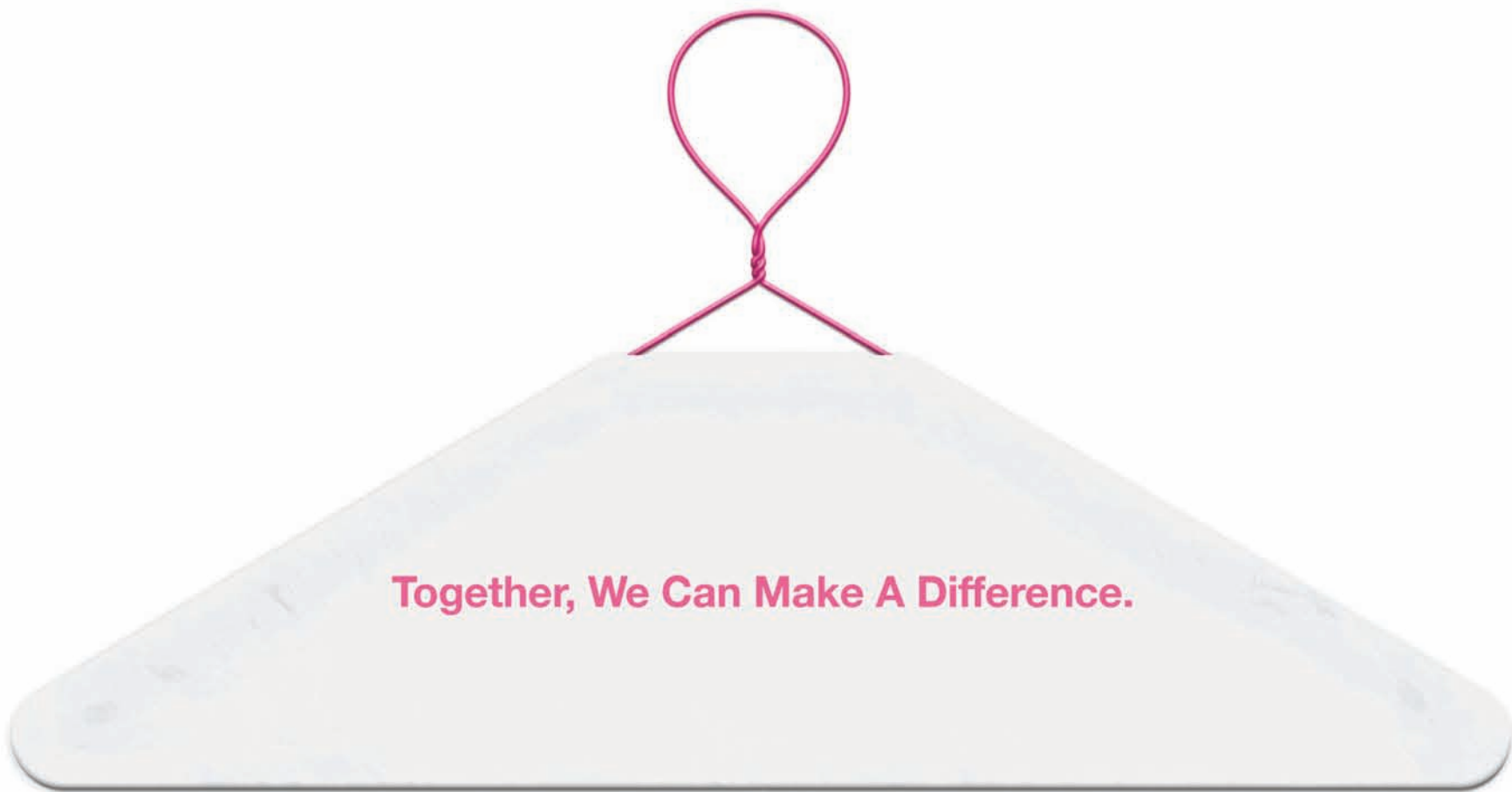
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# SHIRT TALES



BY DON DESROSIERS

## Mysteries in the shirt department

**O**K, I admit it. I am the world's biggest Columbo fan. Surely you must remember the bumbling Los Angeles homicide detective in the crumpled raincoat. (Why did he always wear that in LA?)

My fondness for Columbo has nothing to do with his style or his mannerisms, although those traits never annoyed me. I considered them to be a wee bit of comic relief. After all, Columbo did have a grim job. He just made us forget that.

Anyway, I like Columbo because of the ingenious writing — the quality of the stories. On Columbo, you always knew whodunit, but it was hard to imagine how the seemingly hapless detective would figure it out. He always had us amidst a genuine mystery.

It is sometimes fun to play detective. We get to do that in our plants sometimes, provided we care enough to get to the bottom of the mystery-du jour. I'd like to share with you a few of my favorite shirt plant mystery stories.

It was something like spring

1992 and I had an extremely bizarre "dirty shirts" problem reported to me by my inspector.

This happened at a time when I ran a large wholesale shirt plant in Massachusetts.

started to get concerned after she had seen eight or ten. Then she told me.

We spent top dollar on chemicals. Re-washes for "ring-around-the-collar" were virtually non-existent and it

brushed off, but just a rinse removed the stain completely.

It looked like wet shirts were brushing up against dusty equipment.

Two bits of evidence made that hypothesis implausible:

stages of development. The assembly procedures hadn't been defined yet, but the size and the definition of individual lots was nearly as clear then as it is today. That was to be my biggest lead.

**We suddenly were getting one or two shirts every 10 or 15 minutes! It was dirt, like wet shirts were brushing up against dusty equipment.**

Whenever an inspector or assembler or a touch-up person finds a stained or dirty shirt, the person in charge is dealt a confusing feeling. This discovery is a good thing and a bad thing simultaneously.

There must be a great deal of satisfaction that an inspector is doing his or her job, but also there is a likelihood that a customer will not be serviced on time because this customer's order may be delayed. Never a good thing.

My inspector didn't tell me about the first few shirts that day. It may have been that she

was quite rare to get a shirt with a stain, thanks to top quality detergent, the best oxygen bleach that money can buy and a world-class chemical rep to keep my wash department in tune.

### Mystery dirt on shirts

But on this day, we suddenly were getting one or two shirts every ten or 15 minutes! It was dirt. "New" dirt, if you know what I mean. It seems that it happened after washing. It was almost like dust, but because the dirt was pressed into the fabric, it couldn't be

One would expect that a shirt would be dirty at approximately the same location. This was not the case.

The dirt was at any number of places on the shirt. Often, it was just a small spot or two, but once on the back of the shirt; on another shirt, the sleeve; on another, it was the cuff or the collar.

Hmmm. Secondly, there was no dusty equipment. Really.

I was around and about the plant trying to solve this problem in earnest while the shirts with dirt on them kept coming. I was truly annoyed and something told me that the regularity of the tainted shirts was a clue, but I wasn't making sense of it.

I strolled into the inspection/assembly area and cringed as I observed what were now dozens of shirt orders all missing a shirt or two, sent back for a stain. Seems like in every lot that we had done, one or two orders were incomplete.

Every lot? That seemed like a clue too. Back then, the Tailwind system was in the initial

This plant would produce about 360 shirts per hour. In the Tailwind world, that is about six lots — one lot every 10 minutes. Hmm, very interesting.

I recalled that my inspector was getting a couple of shirts every 10 to 15 minutes. I had an order or two from what seemed like every lot we had done today. The problem continued and wasn't going away.

The evidence:

- One or two shirts per lot with dust or dirt on them.
- The same kind of stains on every shirt.
- Dozens of different locations.

Remarkable regularity, practically every lot would yield a couple of rejects.

I had to determine what was different today compared to any other day and I was getting desperate. What is different?

I walked over to the wash department and chatted with John, my wash man. John was kind of an elderly guy, a devoted and dedicated employee. I expressed to him my

*Continued on page 22*

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**Stephanie Barrero** (*Door2Door Drycleaners / Bluffton, SC*)

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**Julian Bulsara** (*Prestige Cleaners / Lauderhill, FL*)

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Don Desrosiers

Mysteries in the shirt department

*Continued from page 20*

extraordinary displeasure with this problem that we were having.

He just shrugged his shoulders as he took the latest batch of rejected shirts from my hands. John was quite proud of his wash department. I was happy to see that he had tidied up a bit over the weekend.

On the previous Friday, I had asked him to get rid of some clutter in a corner. We kept individual lots organized and separated by using 35-gallon plastic barrels. They hold a Tailwind-sized lot nicely.

John would cover the wet shirts with plastic like so many of us do. The clutter in the corner was mostly the covers of those barrels.

I wondered why John didn't just use the covers instead of wrestling with the poly all the time. On Friday last, he agreed and said that he'd clean them off and start using them instead of poly. He had, indeed cleaned them off and his department was sparkling.

Uh-oh.

I just stumbled upon something different. Is it possible? Can it be?

I had nearly reached my office while I was thinking all of this. I abruptly turned around and headed back towards the wash area. I removed the cover from a barrel that contained a full lot of shirts. The inside of the cover was covered with droplets of water caused by the dampness of the shirts.

I suspected that the cover hadn't been cleaned well enough and the dust on the cover rubbed off onto the shirts and left the dirt there. It was hard to see dirt on the

cover though. It was dark blue plastic. I fetched a clean, dry, white cloth and wiped off the inside of the cover – including the crevices. Guess what?

I think that John brushed off the dust that past weekend. He was conscientious. But he

surely didn't scrub them clean with a wet cloth. As much havoc as his faux pas caused us that day, there was a great deal of satisfaction in solving the mystery.

**Moral of the story I:** Don't take anything for granted.

**Moral of the story II:** If you don't inspect it, don't expect it.

**Moral of the story III:** Don't waste a minute of time getting to the bottom of a problem.

**Lunchtime leftovers**

A few months ago, in the midst of a very involved on-site job in the Midwest, I was concerned about the large number of stained shirts arriving in the inspection department.

This time, they were legitimate, identifiable stains — yellowing stains, food stains, ring-around-the-collar, tannin. This isn't acceptable in a shirt laundry.

Stains — food and other types — do come out if you are using good chemicals. I think that some shirt launderers think that stains are something for the drycleaning department to remove, not the wash cycle. This is wrong. Among

those who think so were this client and his staff.

This was an easy problem to solve. I checked the chemicals in the wash department. I considered the built detergent to be acceptable and the requisite oxygen bleach was in plain

sight.

I questioned the wash person. I learned immediately that the portioning was way off and the bleach — critical for stain removal — was only used for re-washes.

I adjusted the portioning and was eager to see a drastic reduction in returned shirts the next day.

Moral of the story: You get what you pay for.

The next morning, I was plenty busy with follow-up training and I almost forgot to enjoy the assembly area — free of confusion, stress, mayhem and, most important of all today, free of incomplete orders caused by returned shirts.

A few hours later, around lunch, we started to get stained shirts in the assembly department again — more than a dozen.

I wasn't happy about this. I checked with the wash person who assured me that she was now washing with the revised wash formula and certainly oxygen bleach in every load.

I asked her about the stained shirts that had been sent to her recently. She was a bit defensive.

Apparently overwhelmed with a sudden influx of at least 10 or 12 shirts during the last 30 or 40 minutes, she simply put them aside. I found them hanging by her spotting area.

My client and I inspected them and found deep orange

stains in a variety of places on nearly all of the shirts there. The stain looked like rust to me, but a quick test with a rust remover proved me wrong in no time.

We organized the shirts by stain type. It was easy. Only a couple or so didn't belong.

This plant had eight single buck units. Each unit had a "branding iron" welded to the lower portion of the rear steam chest. The result was a clear mark on the tail of each shirt that identifies the press and the presser. All of the orange stains came from the same press.

We moved to the pressing area. I looked around and in less than 15 seconds I had my answer. Behind the bucks of the collar/cuff press lay all of the evidence that I needed.

I showed my client. We both shook our heads. He was eager to remove the evidence but I wanted to get the manager and walk her through what we had just done.

Now the three of us retraced. We showed the manager the shirts with stains, and the tail imprints that showed the common source. Over at the shirt unit, I showed her the

soiled plate of the spaghetti and meatballs lunch that the presser ate before going to lunch.

**Moral of the story I:** Know what your employees are doing while they are on your time.

**Moral of the story II:** Lunch time is the time for eating lunch.

**Moral of the story III:** No eating, drinking or smoking in the plant.

I suppose that at some time in the past, at this same plant, somebody needed to know who pressed what shirt. Without the branding in the tail that these units afford, (or any other method of doing essentially the same thing) it was probably very difficult or impossible to ascertain who pressed what.

This often needs to be known in virtually any plant. It allows for accountability. Someone in charge found that it was important enough to modify each unit slightly so that in the future the "detective" work would be automatic. Good move.

Columbo may use clues to arrive at solutions to problems, but he can not control whether or not someone in the future will learn from these clues. You can.

As owners and managers, we need to learn from our daily experiences. It may be rewarding to solve a mystery, but it is far more rewarding to have the solution be self-evident because we have controls in place to either prevent a recurrence or a control that instantly points to the cause.

Some time ago, someone made those presses "self-evident." Hopefully, there is no more eating while pressing. I know that washing the inside of plastic barrels became routine at my plant.

Don Desrosiers has been in the drycleaning and shirt laundering business since 1978. He is a work-flow engineer and a management consultant who provides services to shirt launderers and drycleaners through Tailwind Systems. He is a member of the Society of Professional Consultants and winner of DLI's Commitment to Professionalism award. He can be reached at 186 Narrow Ave., Westport, MA 02790 or at his office by fax (508) 636-8839; by cell (508) 965-3163; or e-mail at [tailwindsystems@charter.net](mailto:tailwindsystems@charter.net). The Tailwind web site is [www.tailwindsystems.com](http://www.tailwindsystems.com).



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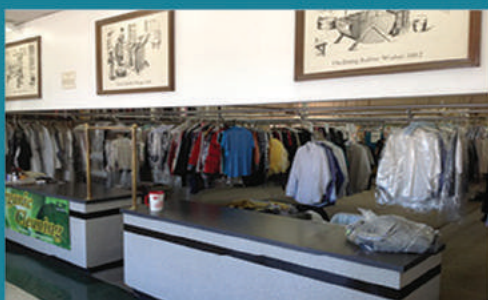
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Knowing that my Easysec doesn't have distillation makes me happy. I struggled with using machines that only had distillation. I found out about Easysec and at first, I was hesitant in switching because other dry cleaners does not use non distillation machines in the area. Finally I decided to try Easysec and when I used it for the first time I was really surprised. I wondered why I waited so long to switch to Easysec. All my hesitations disappeared once I saw how efficient and easy it was to use an Easysec machine. I strongly recommend Easysec because it really works!

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# SOUTH



**NU LOOK CLEANERS** in Lake Worth, FL, installed a **Harmony wetcleaning system**. Pictured are **Michael Sternsheim** of Steam Technologies and **Fernando Cantillo**, owner of Nu Look.

## NCALC selects Raleigh for its annual convention

This year, the North Carolina Association of Launderers and Cleaners has opted to make a change in setting for its annual convention.

The association plans to move its 2018 Annual Convention to Raleigh, NC, and instead of the usual Springtime format, the event will now be held in the Fall from Oct. 19 to 21.

The precise location will be at the StateView Hotel at the North Carolina State University Centennial Campus.

The program will undergo some changes, as well, as the Friday night evening dinner will feature a keynote presentation by professional speaker Denise Ryan.

Described as a “motivational pyromaniac,” Ryan will explore the topic of “Dealing with Change Without Going Up in Flames” using a lot of energy, humor and enthusiasm.

The educational program on Saturday will focus on budgeting and planning for a more profitable business, best practices in laun-

dering and cleaning and an update on the cleanup progress and how to take advantage of the Drycleaning Solvent Clean-Up Act (DSCA) program.

In addition to the educational seminars, the weekend will contain plenty of opportunities for professional networking, fellowship and tabletop vendor exhibits for attendees to visit.

NCALC will also host its annual membership meeting and fundraising raffle, including the President’s Reception and Recognition Banquet on Saturday evening.

For those with spare time to fill, the convention has been planned in conjunction with the dates for the North Carolina State Fair (Oct. 11 and 21) and the Consolidated Laundry and Equipment Show (which will take place on Friday and Saturday, Oct. 19 and 20).

As for the official headquarters for the event, the StateView Hotel, it is located near Raleigh’s downtown area.

It is designated as an Autograph Collection Hotel, which means it is a luxury hotel owned by Marriott International.

Look for more information on hotel rates and registration for the convention in the near future.

In other recent association news, NCALC announced that Hugh West of FabriClean Supply was elected to the Board of Directors.

He will serve as the new Allied Trades Representative, filling the remainder of the term that was left vacant following the resignation of Clint Harris.

West, who lives in Cary, NC, with his wife Sandy, was officially instated during the NCALC Spring Board Meeting that took place on May 19 at Carolina Beach.

In his new post as Allied Trades Representative, West will serve as a member of the Board of Directors, as well as the Executive Committee of NCALC to represent the views of the associate members of the association.

NCALC has also made plans for its next association meeting that will take place early next year.

The Winter Meeting will take place from Jan. 25 to 27 at the Pinehurst Resort in Pinehurst, NC. The site has hosted three U.S. Open golf tournaments during its rich history.

The meeting will feature a Friday evening reception and dinner social, Saturday morning board and committee meetings and a Saturday evening dinner social outing. For more information on any of NCALC, contact the association by calling (919) 313-4542 or visit them online at [www.ncalc.org](http://www.ncalc.org).

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Welcome Reception: **Hyatt Regency - Inner Harbor**

Saturday, November 10

Stop Laboring Over Your Employees

9:00 - 10:00 am  
**James Peuster**, The Route Pro  
**Breaking the “I can’t find good people” Myth**

10:00 - 11:00 am  
**Frank Kollman**, Kollman & Saucier, PA  
**Keeping on the Right Side of Employment Laws**

5:30 - 7:00 pm  
Cocktail Reception on the Show Floor

Exhibitors as of 8/24

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CM Company  
Columbia / ILSA  
Computer Connections  
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DLI  
Easy Plus  
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Fabricare Systems  
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Sunday, November 11

9:00 - 11:00 am  
Keynote Speaker:  
**Brian Rashid**, CEO of A Life in Shorts  
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# MIDWEST

## Higher fees for Minnesota cleanup fund

Fees that Minnesota cleaners pay into the state cleanup fund are slated to increase by about 45 percent.

The fund, known officially as the Drycleaner Environmental Response and Reimbursement Account, was established in 1995 as a means to pay for the cleanup of soil, groundwater or surface water contamination at drycleaning facilities. Under the fund, most drycleaning facilities that provided services to the general public may apply for reimbursement for their investigation and cleanup work.

The fees, which include annual

registration and a surcharge on solvent purchases, have been adjusted annually to ensure an annual income for the fund of \$650,000. With the number of drycleaning plants continuing to decline and the remaining ones using less solvent, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) requested that the Minnesota Department of Revenue (MDOR) adjust the fees to meet the \$650,000 target.

Currently, plants with fewer than five full-time equivalent employees are paying an annual registration fee of \$2,470; plants with five to ten employees are paying

\$5,330; and plants with more than 10 are paying \$9,815.

MPCA has requested that the MDOR raise those fees as of July 1, 2018 as follows: \$3,582 for plants with fewer than five employees; \$7,729 for plants with five to ten employees; and \$14,232 for plants with more than 10 employees.

The registration fees are due on Oct. 18 each year or can be paid quarterly.

Surcharges assessed to solvent purchases would increase similarly. Perc, currently at \$29.07 a gallon would increase to \$43.07. Hydrocarbon-based solvents, now

at \$15.75, would increase to \$22.84. Other non-aqueous solvents would rise from \$7.35 to \$10.66.

Suppliers who sell the solvents are required to charge and collect the solvent fees from drycleaners.

MPCA said the current fee levels would not be sufficient to raise the required \$650,000 next year, based on the number of registered drycleaners and the quantity of cleaning chemicals being used.

The Minnesota Cleaners Association, in a notice to members published on its website, noted that two years ago the Minnesota legislature responded to an asso-

ciation request for additional funding by providing \$743,000 to “help clear up some of the backlog” on clean-ups while passing new rules restricting access to the fund and how the reimbursements from the fund can be used.

“However, new sites continue to be added and vapor intrusion is becoming a widespread issue,” MCA said. “The number of drycleaning facilities continues to go down and therefore each of us has to bear a larger burden of funding this fund.”

Further action with the legislature is anticipated, the association said.

“The MCA board knows that we need to get in front of the legislative session for 2019 in order to attempt to create alternative funding sources to help with our fund.”

Registration and solvent fees have been steadily increasing. In 2015, for example, the per gallon fee for perc was \$15.70. The new rate of \$43.07 represents almost a three-fold increase since then.

Registration fees have risen at a similar rate. Plants with fewer than five full-time employees that were paying \$1,500 in 2015 would now pay \$3,582.

The fees assessed in 2015 netted \$520,000 revenue for the fund, well short of the \$650,000 target. The total amount reimbursed in 2015 was \$560,354; in 2016 it was \$701,286. During the first 20 years of the fund’s existence, more than 50 facilities received approximately \$10.6 million in full or partial reimbursement, according to an MPCA report.

Since 1995, the year the program was adopted, the number of operating drycleaning plants has fallen from 350 to 130, according to a recent report in the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Thus the fund would have to draw an average of \$5,000 a year from each of the remaining operating plants to reach its \$650,000 goal.

Access to reimbursements from the fund is available to both current and former operators of drycleaning plants and to property owners who leased to drycleaners during the time the drycleaning facility operated.

Reimbursements can cover investigation and cleanup costs that are determined to be reasonable by the MPCA after allowing for a \$10,000 deductible.

No single drycleaning facility may receive more than \$100,000 in a given year. Amounts above that are eligible for reimbursement in subsequent years.

Not all costs associated with cleanups are eligible for reimbursement. For example, consultant and legal fees, costs reimbursed by insurance and the owner’s or operator’s personal time overseeing cleanup aren’t eligible, nor can money be used to pay for repair, replacement or upgrades of the plant or equipment.



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# THE ROUTE PRO



BY JAMES PEUSTER

## A down under blast from the past

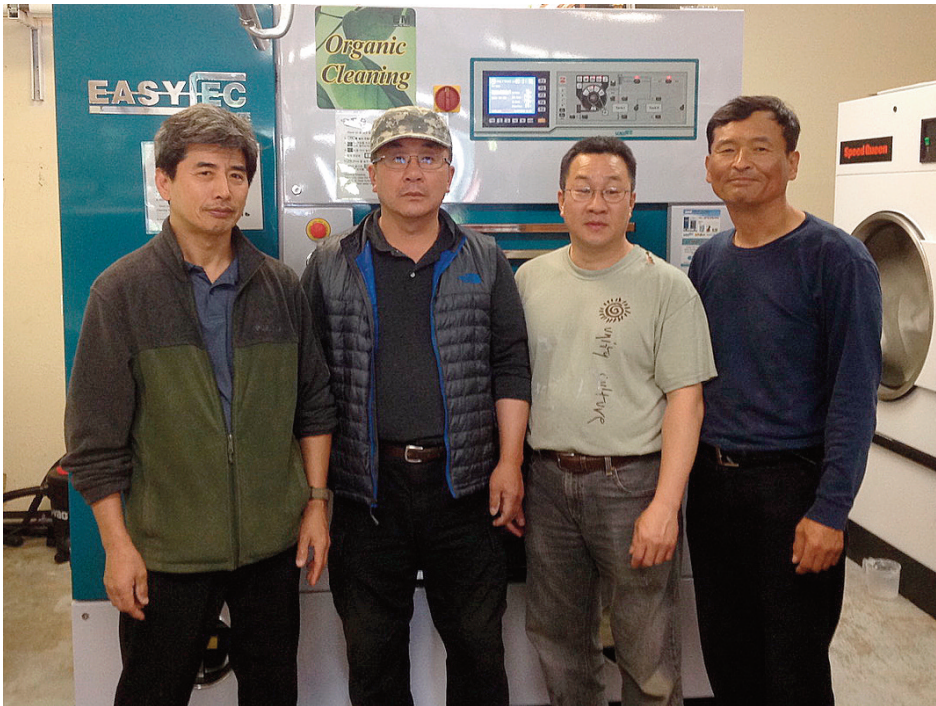
**H**aving clients in Australia makes it challenging, intriguing and reflecting as well. A wise driver from Aussie made this comment: “Australia may be 15 hours ahead of America but 10 years behind!” I don’t necessarily agree, but in terms of where pick-up and delivery

are, he may be accurate. The concept of routes isn’t the focus there like it is here in the United States, but it’s getting there. But it is reopening my eyes to how important routes are to the future of drycleaners.

Although many cringe doing this, just look back at 2008. Spends and trends were down. Rent and payroll went up as well as increased competition. The drycleaning industry experienced so many changes all at once. Many were not prepared for that. Other industries suffered as well. As I have mentioned before, Blockbuster increased their market share by adding more stores. The concept of going after more business took a turn for all industries. Fast forward to now. We have delivery outlets like UberEats making noise as well as the concept of On Demand. This shows you that consumers are looking for convenience, no matter the cost, and the drycleaning industry isn’t removed from the convenience component of a customer service experience. Back in 2008, my motto was this: “Don’t fall behind and blame the econ-

omy on your sales decline. Routes are you best bet to increase your bottom line.” Australia opened my eyes again to the importance of not being comfortable and complacent. I watch as many cleaners continue to put their business on autopilot. The time is now to not let the “good times” settle in. Too often businesses wait for things to get bad to increase their marketing efforts. Others cut back when times are bad. You have the opportunity to develop a game plan for growth. The longer you wait to move your competitors solidify their routes. The bottom line is this: Routes are not only a sub-component of growth, they are your best bet. Solidify your future by solidifying your focus.

**James Peuster is a consultant who specializes in route development, management and maintenance. He offers onsite consulting as well as ongoing coaching across the country. He also has cost groups to monitor route efficiency. For more information, call him at (816) 739-2066 or visit his website at [www.theroutepro.com](http://www.theroutepro.com).**



PC CLEANERS in Graham, WA, purchased an Easysec MS-402E through J. Park Inc. The owners, Mr. Lee and Mr. Park, are pictured with J. Park and Mr. Kang with the new Unesec machine.



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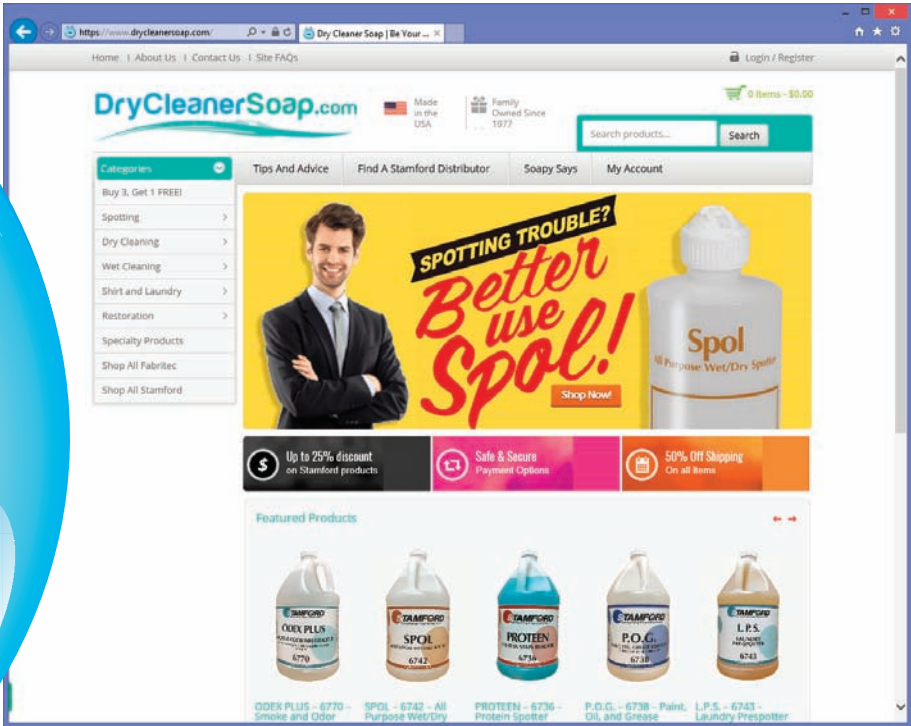
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# SOUTH WEST



**DRY CLEAN CITY in Arlington, TX, purchased a Union HL-860 with hydrocarbon solvent heating through Gulf States Laundry Machinery. Pictured from left are Raul Aguilar, the manager, Thu Nguyen, the owner, and Matt A. Lipman of Union Drycleaning Products.**

## MW Cleaners converting 36 stores to Tide Dry Cleaners

MW Cleaners recently made a few industry-wide ripples when it announced on its website that it will be joining Tide Dry Cleaners.

The company will be changing its 36 MW Cleaners stores in Houston, TX, as well as the MW Cleaners delivery business in Austin, to part of the Tide Dry Cleaners brand.

Back in March, Tailored Brands originally announced the sale of its MW Cleaners business for approximately \$18 million.

According to Tailored Brands Chief Executive Officer Doug Ewert, “MW Cleaners operated as

an independent retail drycleaning business separate from our vertically integrated drycleaning operations that support our formalwear rental business. As part of our commitment to optimize our portfolio, focus on our core businesses and unlock cash flow, we decided to sell MW Cleaners.”

More recently, Mike Nesbit, president of MW Cleaners, wrote a letter to customers saying: “We are thrilled to expand the Tide Dry Cleaners brand in Texas along with some of the most influential leaders in the drycleaning industry.”

He also noted that: “Tide

shares our core belief that customer service is the cornerstone of our business, so rest assured — we’re bringing along the entire MW Cleaners staff that you’ve come to love.”

Customers were also told that they would not see any disruption to their current service. Instead, he noted, they can expect some new benefits as part of the Tide Dry Cleaning family.

Tide has built its reputation on promises to its customer base, including: a 24-hour drop-off and pickup schedule; being open seven days a week with extended hours; a seven-point inspection that includes tightening loose threads and replacing cracked buttons for free; brighter whites and darker blacks with Tide Restore and Back-To-Black services; and rewards and more with the Tide Inner Circle rewards program.

Nesbit also indicated the general time frame of the conversion, saying, “We’re excited to make this change over the next few months and we’ll make sure to keep you informed as we transition!”

The inception of the Tide Dry Cleaners franchises began in 2011 and reached the milestone of 50 franchise locations when it opened up a store in Columbus, OH, in April of 2017.

The company began its first franchise in the Kansas City area and has since expanded to reach California, Utah, Nevada, Nebraska, North Carolina, Arizona, Colorado, Missouri, Oklahoma, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Minnesota, New Jersey, Texas, Georgia and Florida.

For more information, visit the company’s website online at [www.tidedrycleaners.com](http://www.tidedrycleaners.com).

## Lapels opens location in Sugar Land

Lapels Dry Cleaning recently expanded into Sugar Land, TX, opening a full-service satellite store in late July.

“We’re extremely excited to bring a sustainable, non-toxic way of drycleaning clothes to Sugar Land,” said Komal Patel, the owner of four Lapels Dry Cleaning stores in the Katy and Richmond area. “The response at our first four locations in Katy and Richmond has been wonderful.”

The company emphasizes strong customer service, a VIP program that eliminates waiting in line, the use of a 24-hour drop off service, free home delivery, same day service and an Automatic Rewards program.

Patel has plans for an additional location in Cypress, TX. For more information on Lapels Dry Cleaning, visit [www.my-lapels.com](http://www.my-lapels.com).

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# WEST



MR. J'S CLEANERS in San Diego, CA, purchased a Union HL860 cleaning machine through Hendricks Mechanical. Pictured are Kendall Hendricks (left) of Hendricks Mechanical and Hector Avila of Mr. J's Cleaners.

## DLI's introductory course coming to California

The Drycleaning and Laundry Institute will take its introduction to drycleaning course on the road this fall with a session scheduled for California Nov. 12-16.

Brian Johnson, DLI's director of education, will be the instructor for the course which is being held in cooperation with the California Cleaners Association.

The class will meet at Wash-box, 2066 Mountain View Rd., in South El Monte, CA, from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The course provides instruction on completing many tasks in the drycleaning business. From sorting loads to pressing cleaned garments and all points in-between, students will be prepared to handle the hurdles of daily life in a drycleaning plant.

The course will cover many aspects of DLI's formal Introduction to Drycleaning course and is geared toward providing individuals with a solid foundation for professional cleaning. It is ideal for people who are new to the in-

dustry.

The course covers the basics, including sorting loads for drycleaning, cleaning garments, including silk and satin, operating a drycleaning machine, removing stains, including coffee, ink and grease, and pressing pants, coats and skirts.

A special feature will be a tour of the Parker Boiler plant on Nov. 14 where students will learn about boiler maintenance and water treatment. Dinner will be included as part of the tour.

The course is free for students from DLI Premier member plants. For DLI Gold members it is \$995; for Silver members, \$1,095 and for Budget members \$1,195. For non-members the cost is \$1,549.

To register for more information, call Melissa Wagner, DLI registrar, (800) 638-2627 or email MWagner@DLIonline.org

## Stain Wizard Jeff Schwarz to lead RMFA seminars

"Almost everything you need to know about drycleaning" will be the topic of two seminars this month sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Fabricare Association.

Jeff Schwarz will lead both sessions. He will discuss problem garments and how to test to prevent problems, how to process black and white garments, what to do with Spandex and how to do it and removing yellow stains.

He'll also explain how to fix fugitive dye bleeds, spot cleaning how to handle "spot clean" care labels, and bleaching techniques, including advance bleaching tricks of the trade.

The first session will be on Saturday, Sept. 22 in Salt Lake City, UT, at Red Hanger Cleaners, 536 South 200 West. The second will be Sept. 29 in Denver, CO, at Katzson Bros., 960 Vallejo St. Both sessions will run from 9 a.m. to noon.

Schwarz, also known as the Stain Wizard, has been in the drycleaning industry since 1991 and is the Western Regional vice president for A. L. Wilson Co. and is responsible for covering 13 states including Hawaii and Eastern Canada. He visits about 1,000 drycleaning plants each year, providing technical assistance and conducts 20 in-plant training sessions and industry spotting and bleaching seminars every year.

He has also written articles for association newsletters and industry publications.

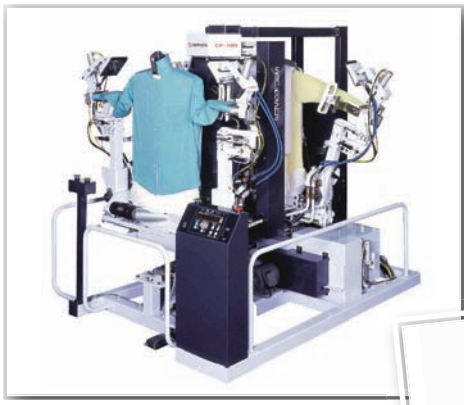
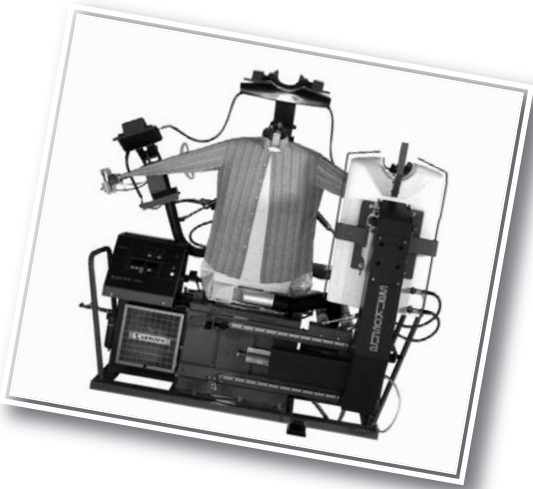
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# THE SPOTTING BOARD



BY DAN EISEN

## Proper wetcleaning methods for silk

The silk fiber derived from the silk worm is still popular with consumers even with the introduction of polyester look-alike.

Consumers enjoy the feel and look of silk compared to synthetics. Silk has been woven into at least 200 fabrics with different names and looks.

The look differs from the type of filament produced by the silk worm, the weave and blend with other fibers.

Most of the silk produced is made to withstand a professional wetcleaning process.

Some of the names associated with silk weave are shantung, pongee, pussah, jacquard and crepe de chine.

### Silks that cannot be wetcleaned

There are a few silks that can not be wetcleaned. These are:

- **Those with a fugitive dye.** A poor dye can easily be tested by pacing a towel under the silk and flushing with the steam gun. Note how easily the dye transfers to the towel.
- **Silk velvet.** The pile easily distorts with water and can

not be restored.

- **Bias cut silk chiffon.** This fabric contains a sizing that dissolves in water, causing shrinkage and distortion.

### Wetcleaning procedure

New state-of-the-art wetcleaning equipment, new detergents and finishing equipment make wetcleaning silk easy and with a very good result. It is important to know how to prespot silk as the different chemicals may not be compatible with the different detergent and softening agents used.

### Cationic detergents

These detergents are the best for wetcleaning silk fabrics. They carry a positive ionic surfactant that tends to remain with the silk fabric, even after rinsing, giving the silk a soft feel and hand. They are also compatible with cationic softening agents which I use in the rinse cycle.

When using this detergent it is also important to use compatible spotting and pre-spotting products. Some spotting agents, such as neutral lubricant, spray spotter, tannin and

protein formulas, may not be compatible with this detergent. These spotting agents may break down, causing rings and swales. The detergent is chemically neutral or slightly acid and contains enzymes and brightening agents.

### Possible problem fabrics cationics

- **Glued on beading and trimming.** The glue will soften, causing separation of the trimming.
- **Pigment or surface prints.** The adhesive binder can soften, causing loss of the print.
- **Plastic trimming.** The plastic can soften, peel and pucker.

### Ionic detergents

This detergent has a negative ionic surfactant charge. These detergents clean and rinse well but do not give the silk as soft a feel as cationic detergent.

They are also not compatible with cationic softening agents. They are used in many wetcleaning systems for processing silk, but the cationic systems work far better.

### Nonionic detergents

These detergents do not carry an ionic charge. They are compatible with all detergents and softening agents. They do tend to give the silk a soft feel when used in wetcleaning. Their primary purpose is to remove greasy soil, oils, wax and grease.

### Softening agents

There are many different softening agents ranging from cationic, silicone, anionic and nonionic.

The best softening agents for silk are the cationic type with a positive ionic charge. They are compatible with cationic and nonionic detergents but can not be used with anionic detergents. The positive ionic charge neutralizes static electricity and gives the fiber more hand and feel.

### Using a cationic detergent system

1. Fill the washer wheel with warm water at 90-100°F.
2. Stop the wheel and inject cationic detergent. Do not inject directly on the garments; if possible, inject from the bottom.
3. Agitate slowly, 15 seconds on and 45 seconds off for eight minutes.
4. Drain.
5. Extract at low speed.
6. Fill again, gentle agitation, same speed, same temperature.
7. Add softener, one to two ounces per 10 pounds.
8. Agitate four minutes, 15 seconds on, 45 seconds off.
9. Drain.
10. Extract to desired water retention.

It must be remembered that all spotting and pre-spotting must be done with cationic detergent or nonionic detergent and these formulations can be effectively made up into tannin or protein formulas.

### Adding chemicals to the cationic formulation

If the silk load is heavily soiled, nonionic detergent can be added, which would increase the removal of greasy soil. For removing soil and oxidation, a hydrogen peroxide and nonionic surfactant can be added to the wash load.

### Special precautions when spotting silk

- Use a padded spotting brush or wrap a towel around a bristle brush.
- Keep the steam gun a safe distance from fabric. High heat and pressure sets stains and chafes the fabric.
- Try to spot silk satin on the reserve side. The delicate floating yarns shift and damage easily.
- Ribbed silk fabrics, such as silk faille, should be brushed against the ribs.

### Chemicals for a cationic wetcleaning system

The following chemicals are used to prevent rings caused by a breakdown of cationic detergents mixed with anionic detergents.

- Use glycerine or a nonionic lubricant for general spotting.
- Use a nonionic tannin formula or glycerine with acetic acid.
- Use a nonionic protein formula with enzymes.
- Use hydrogen peroxide without ammonia for oxidized stains.

Dan Eisen, former chief garment analyst for the National Cleaners Association, can be reached at (772) 340-0909 or (772) 579-5044 or by e-mail at cleandan@comcast.net. He offers independent garment analysis and provides consulting services. His website is [www.garmentanalysis.com](http://www.garmentanalysis.com).



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DUTCH GIRL CLEANERS in Lindenhurst, NY, installed a Unipress HS-2 Hurricane double buck shirt unit. Pictured from left are Bill Kahan of Unipress, Sung Bin Ahn of Dae Woo Machinery who sold and installed the unit, Won Gil, owner of Dutch Girl, and Jin Soon Park of Dutch Girl.



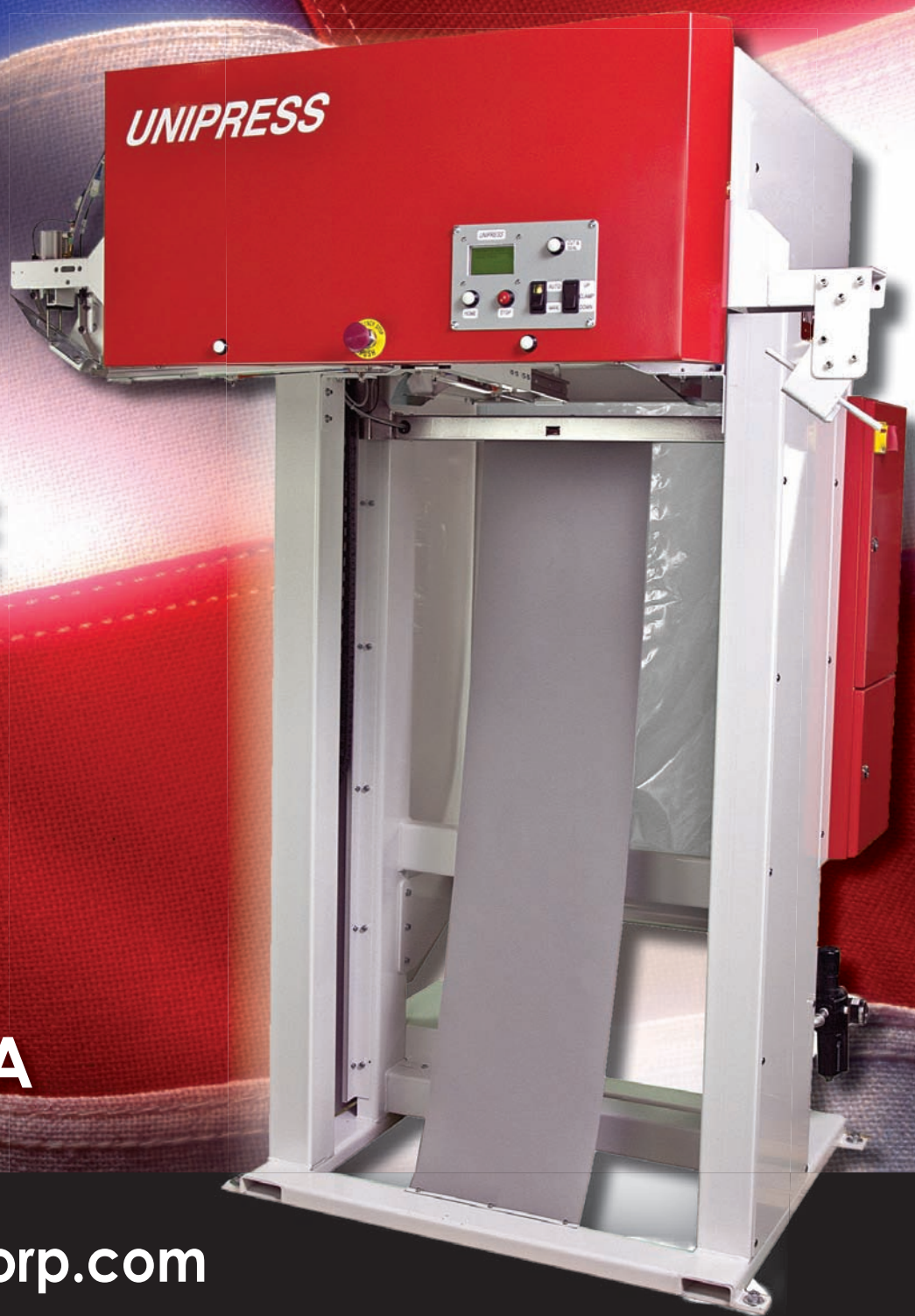
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# NewsMAKERS

**Clearent Software Holdings** has completed the purchase of **Compassmax**, its second purchase this year of one of the drycleaning industry's point-of-sale software developers. The company acquired **SPOT Business Systems** earlier this year.



**BeCreative 360 founders are, from left, Bobby Patel, Dave Troemel and Bryon Eser.**

**BeCreative360**, a company specializing in marketing for the drycleaning industry, was formed by **Bobby Patel, Dave Troemel, and Bryon Eser** six years ago.

Their first customer was **Perfect Cleaners** of Los Angeles, owned and operated by **David Suber**. He was the first one to take a chance on this new marketing company.

Six years later, **BeCreative360** now provides marketing services for more than 200 companies representing more than 1,100 locations across the United States, Canada, the Bahamas, and, most recently, New Zealand.

Their staff has grown as well, going from one part-time employee to 13 full-time employees.

In view of this growth, the company is moving to a new permanent home following the purchase of an office building in Anaheim, CA. With this new office, they'll be able to keep growing and providing new services to the drycleaning industry.

The company's services include monthly promotions, email marketing, social media marketing, reputation management, and website development with SEO services.

The company can be reached at (949) 270-1609 or on the web at [www.becreative360.com](http://www.becreative360.com).

**Clearent Software Holdings** is a wholly owned subsidiary of St. Louis-based payments solutions provider **Clearent**, a full-service, payments solution provider with more than 400 employees, 45,000 merchants and \$16 billion in processing volume.

**Clearent** plans to combine the companies' operations over time, focusing all software development and innovation on the **SPOT** platform.

The combined company, which will retain the **SPOT** name, will continue to fully support the **Compassmax** software solution with ongoing service, maintenance and technical support as customers are transitioned to the **SPOT** platform.

"With **Compassmax**, we saw an opportunity to bring together two software leaders in the drycleaning industry," said **Dan Geraty**, CEO of **Clearent**.

"**Compassmax** and **SPOT** have the knowledge, experience and technical expertise to ensure customer needs are exceeded in the complex and competitive world of drycleaning. We couldn't ask for

a better fit."

"Merging these companies will allow **SPOT** and **Compassmax** to leverage combined thinking, capabilities and development spending as a combined company, rather than duplicate efforts as competitors," said **Geraty**.

"At **Clearent**, we are committed to ensuring a smooth transition to the newly combined **SPOT** for customers and employees alike."

Preliminary transition plans for customers include the creation of software demonstrations and education sessions for current **Compassmax** customers to learn about **SPOT** software features and services, as well as increased customer-service hours to respond to customer inquiries. Dedicated teams will work with each customer to ensure a smooth transition process.

The **Compassmax** platform will stay in place, with a full host of technical-support and maintenance services throughout the transition process.

The combined company will operate as **SPOT**, with headquar-

ters in **Draper, UT**. **Compassmax's** **Falmouth, ME**, offices will remain open, and **Clearent** has committed to retaining all **Compassmax** employees.

Both **SPOT** and **Compassmax** employees will assist in the transition to the **SPOT** platform, including the areas of installation and other customer-support activities.

In addition, **Compassmax** developers will shift their focus to maximizing the **SPOT** platform and developing continued innovations and enhancements to the software.

**Clearent**, which recently was acquired by global private-equity investor **Advent International** and merged with field-services software company **FieldEdge**, remains focused on growth through acquisition in the personal-service software-as-a-service (SaaS) space.

The company is seeking additional acquisitions for its current vertical markets (field services and drycleaning) as well as acquisitions in new vertical markets.

Each year, **Zengeler Cleaners** celebrates its long-time employees by recognizing those with 20 or more years of service.

For the first time in its history, the "20 Year Club" now exceeds 1,000 years of service to **Zengeler Cleaners** customers.

The family-owned business has 33 employees who have been with the company for 20 or more years, combining for 1,018 total

years of service.

**Zengeler Cleaners' 20 Year Club** is led by family patriarch **Robert Zengeler, Sr.**, who still comes to work at age 88 to the **Park Avenue** store in **Libertyville** several days a week.

"When employees observe my father still loving his work in his 73rd year, they also see him as both an inspiration and a role model," according to **Tom Zengeler**, the fifth-generation company president. "His dedication sets a positive tone that resonates throughout the company."

Maintaining loyalty while other companies struggle with retention, said **Zengeler**, "starts by treating every employee with re-

spect and as an individual. We believe loyal, talented and happy employees are keys to our ability to deliver the quality and service our customers have come to expect.

"We also make sure these core values are reflected in all areas of our company, from how we conduct training to determining fair compensation and by providing competitive benefits in a safe working environment," he added.

The loyalty pipeline should continue to grow. **Zengeler Cleaners** currently has 17 employees with 15+ years of service and another 18 who have been with the company for 10 or more years: that's 61 out of 93 employees.



The 20-year club at **Zengeler Cleaners**, with their years of service in parentheses, are, in front from left, **Icela Chavez (28)**; **Michael Zengeler (45)**; **Catalina Ocampo (20)**; **Patricia Moreno (21)**; **Guadalupe Cardenas (23)**; **Patricia Miller (25)**; **Dolores Alcantar (31)**; **Beth Amour (23)**; **Jessica Martinez (20)**; **Jose Gil (29)**; and **Veronica Lorenzo (23)**. In the middle row are **Hector Alvarado (31)**; **Joan Nebel (38)**; **Joanne Koutsovitis (45)**; **Josefina Perez (23)**; **Robert Zengeler, Sr. (73)**; **Karen Ehrich (21)** and **Robert Zengeler, Jr. (44)**. In the back row are **William Fisher (28)**; **Alyce Kingsley (41)**; **Castula Vergara (40)**; **Enrique Tovar (24)**; **Gloria Hernandez (23)**; **Rosalba Perez (24)**; **Dennis Ori (32)**; **Fernanda Estela (35)**; **Martin Levit (25)**; **Nancy Brookman (33)**; **Michael Maguire (23)**; and **Thomas Zengeler (41)**. Not pictured: **Racheal Wiggins-Kolb (44)**; **Claudia Galvez, (24)**; and **Manual Sanchez (20)**.

**Roger Sattler** has resigned as national marketing director for **Pepin Manufacturing** after 17 years of handling sales of the company's lint rollers and related products. He said he will be exploring other opportunities. Before joining **Pepin** he held a similar position with **Bemis Corp.**

Industry friends can reach him at [rrsattler@frontier.com](mailto:rrsattler@frontier.com).

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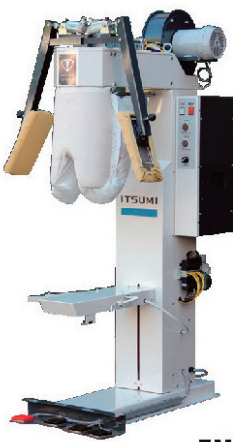
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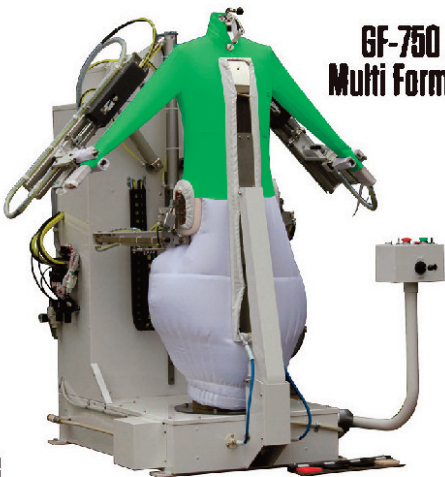
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