



National

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## Clean Show sold to German firm

Ownership of the Clean Show, which has been in the hands of five U.S. trade associations, is passing to a German company with extensive experience organizing conventions and trade shows both in and outside the textile care industry.

The sale should not affect the upcoming Clean Show planned for New Orleans this June. The sale price was not disclosed.

German-based Messe Frankfurt, the show's new owner, is the world's largest trade fair, congress and event organizer with its own exhibition grounds. Many industry members are familiar with its Texcare event which it has produced every four years in Frankfurt, Germany, since 1956.

In addition to Texcare International, Messe Frankfurt has been holding Texcare Asia, which recently merged with China Laundry Expo, since 1998. Together, the two events offer an annual product show for textile care in China.

Messe Frankfurt also recently purchased JET Expo, a Paris trade fair for the French-speaking markets. Also, Gulf Laundrex is presented by Texcare and held annually in Dubai.

The company also organizes numerous Texcare Forums, which bring local buyers together with international manufacturers.

Wolfgang Marzin, president and chief executive officer of Messe Frankfurt, said, "With the Clean Show, we have purchased America's biggest trade fair for textile care and gained another module for our worldwide network of events for the textile-care sector. We now hold trade fairs in all major economic regions and offer synergistic effects for both exhibitors and visitors."

He added that Messe Frankfurt will be organizing the Clean Show in cooperation with the five U.S. trade associations that are the former owners: the Drycleaning and

Laundry Institute, the Textile Care Allied Trades Association, the Coin Laundry Association, the Association for Linen Management and the Textile Rental Services Association.

Riddle & Associates, the company that has been managing the show for many years, will continue its involvement and will manage the upcoming show in New Orleans on Messe Frankfurt's behalf.

"Based on its success organizing international events for the textile-care sector, Messe Frankfurt has the expertise and experience, as well as relationships with key exhibiting partners, to ensure the continued growth and development of the Clean Show," said Joseph Ricci, chair of the Clean Show executive committee for 2019.

As part of the sale, the five current trade association sponsors will serve on an advisory board to provide input on future shows, promoting and supporting the show, sponsoring a booth, and in a variety of other ways.

TCATA President Leslie Schaeffer noted that "It is important for TCATA members to know that the exhibitor package plan and the discounts on exhibit booths under the TCATA Plus One program (members of TCATA plus one other association get the lowest rates available) will remain a valuable benefit for future shows. We anticipate that the transition to a new owner will be seamless, and that both exhibitors and attendees will largely have the same experience they had at past shows."

The Clean Show concept began in 1975 when several industry trade associations decided to work together to put on a single show rather than each doing separate shows. Following that show, three additional sponsors joined the group to form the World Educational Congress for Laundering and Drycleaning, and today's Clean Show was born in 1977 with its first show in Chicago.

By 1992, the show, which had been managed by Coin Laundry Association, had grown in size and stature to the point that the sponsors decided to engage professional show management. Riddle & Associates, an Atlanta-based trade show management and consulting firm, was hired to produce Clean '93. John Riddle, the company's president, had worked with the Clean Show's operations since 1981.

The show continued to grow through the '90s, hitting high marks for attendance (21,000) in Las Vegas in 1997 and number of exhibiting companies (621) in Orlando in 1999. Those numbers began falling through the early 2000s, bottoming out at 9,902 attendees and 412 exhibiting compa-



**The Clean Show marked its 40th anniversary in Las Vegas in 2017 where visitors were reminded to come to this year's show in New Orleans. The trade associations that started and sponsored the show all those years have now sold it to a German exhibition company.**

nies in New Orleans in 2009.

Since then, the trend has reversed with increases in both attendance and number of exhibiting companies. The 2017 show in Las Vegas drew 12,563 attendees and 472 exhibitors. As of mid-December, 359 companies had signed on to exhibit at the upcoming June 20-23 show in New Orleans.

Last year, *Trade Show Executive* magazine listed the Clean Show as among the 50 fastest growing shows of 2017. The show was ranked in all three categories of the awards competition — net square feet of exhibit space, number of exhibiting companies and total attendance — one of the few trade shows that exceeded the level of growth to be named in all three.

Messe Frankfurt, with its headquarters in Frankfurt am Main, is owned by the City of Frankfurt (60 percent) and the German State of Hesse (40 percent).

The company said it is expecting 2018 sales of about €715 million (\$881 million). The 490-plus events held around the world under the Messe Frankfurt umbrella were attended by almost 102,000 exhibitors and an estimated 4.5 million visitors the firm said.

In a year-end report, Messe Frankfurt's CEO Marzin said, "We have further glob-

alized our brands and stepped up the pace of our worldwide acquisition activities. At almost 150 trade fairs, some 102,000 exhibitors — more than ever before — put their trust in us and invested in interaction formats. Messe Frankfurt is a pillar of strength in the fast-moving digital age."

"We have an expansion strategy tailored specially towards the Group and are taking it resolutely to the next level," he added.

Messe Frankfurt operates two venues at its Frankfurt base — the Congress Center and Kap Europa — as well as having over 90 congress and conference halls on its exhibition grounds. In 2018, the Kap Europa congress centre was booked out for the entire year.

The company has more than 2,500 employees at 30 locations around the world. Messe Frankfurt's North American subsidiary, Messe Frankfurt USA, has an office in Atlanta, GA, and is headed by Dennis Smith.

Messe Frankfurt USA produces several textile-related events in North America, including Texworld USA, a semi-annual event held in New York for fabric buyers, designers and merchandisers, Home Textiles Sourcing Expo, Techtextil North America, Texprocess Americas, and Texworld USA.



**Wolfgang Marzin**  
Messe Frankfurt CEO



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# Looking back to look ahead

This is the time when it is customary to reflect on the past year and look ahead to the next, maybe setting goals or making resolutions that we hope will improve ourselves and our businesses.

It is certainly a worthy exercise but soon business as usual rears its head and we find ourselves back into regular routines and life goes on as before. Those routines are a powerful force that keep the very changes we'd like to implement from taking place. They provide excuses for not moving ahead with new ideas and new approaches.

We tell ourselves we can't change from how we've always done it because customers or employees won't like it if we do something differently, or we heard about someone who tried it and it didn't work, or it will cost too much so we'll wait until we have more money in the bank... the list goes on and we become stuck in a loop of doing the same thing over and over and hoping for different results. Some have called that the definition of insanity. But in reality, doing the same thing over and over is really just the definition of lethargy, and in business that is a recipe for failure.

In her column this month — the last before she heads into retirement — Deborah Rechnitz takes a longer view, looking back at where the industry was in 1991, how it has changed since then and offering predictions for what might be to come the next 20 years. As she notes, many of the arguments against change back in the day are ones you can still hear today. Oh, the specific changes that were being argued against 25 or more years ago have taken place and many of the cleaners who failed to adapt to those changes have fallen by the wayside. Computers aren't needed in drycleaning and would never really work anyway. Remember that one? How about pick-up and delivery routes are a thing of the past. Can't be done the way things are now. Yet it seems everybody is doing it today.

She makes some predictions for the next 20 years that may strike some as just as unlikely as the now accepted practices did 25 years ago. But don't discount the innovators' and impossible dreamers' abilities to make these changes happen.

She concludes her column with a quote from George Bernard Shaw: "The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable man persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man."

So, yes, not making big changes may very well seem reasonable by the standards of the time. Why not stick with the tried and true? On the other hand, why not try? It may seem unreasonable today but in 10 or 20 years you'll think "Why didn't we do this sooner?"

# Crafting a message that matters

With some 2.27 billion monthly active Facebook users worldwide and over 440 million blogs out there in cyberspace (depending on who you believe with the statistics), it's easy to see that we have become a world of marketers. Everybody has something to say. Everybody wants to be heard. From posts about how great life is to pleas for sympathy when it feels less merciful, to dog and cat videos, food pictures, funny memes and a seemingly infinite barrage of selfies, human communication runs rampant in its myriad forms every second of every day.

It's easier than ever to reach more people and yet so much harder than ever to stand out. After all, how does one market their business to people who are always busy marketing themselves?

It's all about relevance. Customer service expectations have increased to the point where people are highly unlikely to ignore any message that doesn't contain a benefit of some sort. As new columnist Larry Siegel writes in his column this month (see page 30), "Now, more than ever, time is a valuable commodity and people expect that the time they take to read an e-mail or ad, small effort that it may be, will be rewarded."

These days, your marketing strategies must revolve around giving something to consumers that they deem worthwhile, and in an age where everybody is bombarded with communication constantly, you also have to work constantly to make your message better. As Siegel notes, that's where plant owners must become creative and consistent to stand a chance at succeeding with their promotional strategies. That means making a commitment to market year-round, and as Siegel suggests, tapping into holidays, national observances and special and seasonal occurrences to tie into what is going on in the world.

The good news is that social media, email marketing programs and technology have made crafting promotions much cheaper and simpler. The bad news is that means every business (including your competition) can take advantage of the tools out there. The only way to get a leg up is to get to know your customers well and to spend a sufficient amount of time to come up with new ideas. Gone are the days where marketing is a "necessary evil" that you can try whenever you have a spare moment (which is about once a year). Now, marketing is essential and something that should always be rolling around in the back of your mind. It's time to rethink your approach to selling your services. It can be a lot of work, but it can also reap a high Return on Investment if you maintain a positive attitude and are willing to put the same quality into your marketing that you put into cleaning clothes.

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# How Many Dry Cleaners Has Your Insurance Agent Handled? One or Two? Three?

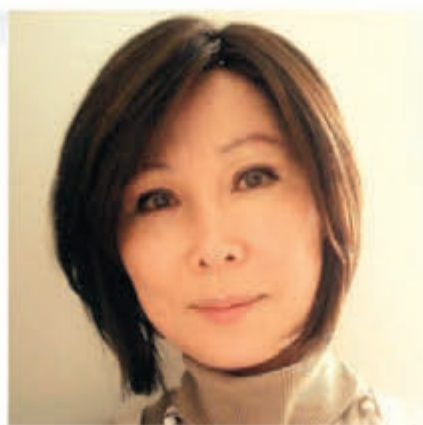


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# Drycleaning 2.0

He was named one of “40 under 40” by the *Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal* in 2012. He was called a “Business Rockstar” on the Radio America show hosted by broadcasting great Pat O’Brien. He was also the man who started Mulberrys Cleaners back in 2008.

Before all that, however, Dan Miller was just a man running late for an important meeting with a big corporation unaware there was a garter hanging out of his suit pocket.

“I went to a wedding and at this particular wedding the bride threw the garter out into the crowd,” he explained. “I caught the garter and put it in my pocket. Then I got my suit drycleaned and got it back. I went to a meeting and was running late and as I walked into the meeting I saw something hanging out of my pocket out of the corner of my eye. Of course, right as I walked into the room I realized what it was.”

Dan was working as senior associate for McKinsey & Company at the time where he partnered with many Fortune 500 companies as a consultant. Every time he visited the drycleaners to clean his suits, he inevitably was disappointed by the service.

“A lot of it was the standard issues that customers state, whether it was lost or broken buttons or a torn hole in the shirt, clothes coming back smelling funny of chemicals, the lack of technology, the fact that a lot of cleaners didn’t even have a website. You didn’t know when your order was ready. You didn’t know what the price was — those kinds of things,” he recalled.

“What was so striking to me was the juxtaposition between what you would think of as a best practice in a company like Target, Starbucks or Amazon and what was happening at my local drycleaner,” he continued. “That really is when it hit me. Wait a minute... if I just take all of the stuff I’ve learned and all the things that I’ve talked to clients about and bring it to drycleaning and laundry, then I could probably have an edge at least on some of my competition.”

Taking time off from McKinsey & Company, Dan embarked on a road trip across the country and talked to drycleaners every step of the way.

“Really what I learned is that it’s a very fragmented industry,” he said. “The quality and service is highly variable.”

The fact-finding mission gave him confidence to proceed with a plan to start a new drycleaning business in his home state of Minnesota. However, he was aware that many from outside the industry come into it feeling like they can revolutionize it and ultimately fail in their endeavor. He was determined to do things differently.

“I came across the name Mulberrys. It was funny, I wanted something that, in the back of your head, reminded you of something natural and something almost like a British tailor shop. There’s a famous street called Mulberry Street in London,” he said. “So, I looked up ‘mulberrys’ and it turns out that one of the harder stains to remove is a mulberry stain. I thought, ‘This is perfect.’”

As far as backgrounds go, Dan cer-

tainly had the right pedigree. He earned degrees in Political Science and Economics at College of the Holy Cross and went on to earn a Master’s in Economics from the University of Minnesota.

Before he consulted with Fortune 500 companies, his ambitions were in a much a different and more frustrating sphere: politics.

“I interned at the White House and the U.S. Senate,” he recalled. “I got my Master’s in Public Policy and even ran for city council when I was about 25. In doing that, I realized I didn’t particu-

larly like politics.”

that over the years. Now we have a mobile app where you can literally order a pickup in 15 minutes, like ordering a pizza, and you can track your order the whole way through.”

The last main component of Mulberrys was to modernize its business practices. With each step of the drycleaning process tracked through technology, there was a transparency to the public that gave customers more confidence in the business and him more control.

From year one, Mulberrys has quickly sprouted new locations. In just eleven years, the company

“My dad had this great expression I loved — I don’t know if it’s an original — ‘Nobody wants to be bad at their job.’” he noted. “In reality, if somebody is bad at their job, it’s probably because they don’t know what they’re supposed to be doing, or they haven’t been trained. They haven’t been held accountable. If you make it crystal clear how to succeed, most people try to succeed.”

Employee retention is one of the company’s greatest strengths and to Dan there is no big mystery on how to keep it consistent.



larly like politics.”

In January of 2009, Dan opened the business as a single store and a home delivery route. Mulberrys was built on four foundations from the beginning.

“Number one, we wanted to create a world-class customer experience so at every touchpoint we tried to do something different,” he noted. “We tried to create beautiful boutique stores where we sell detergent and offer free coffee. You can buy beverages. Clothes come back on wooded hangers in branded packaging.”

Dan prepared meticulously to that end, earning all three DLI certifications in drycleaning, wet-cleaning and environmental, which leads into the second pillar of Mulberrys’ foundation.

“The second piece was the environmental aspect,” he said.

The company initially used Solvair and transitioned to Solvon K4 over time. Additionally, recyclable packaging was used, as well as more stringent measures.

“As far as I know, we are the only carbon-neutral cleaner in the country,” he noted. “What that means is all of our facilities are powered by solar or wind and we measure our carbon impact, like through our vans and things like that, and we fund renewable energy projects that basically compensate for that.”

The third foundational block for the business was the paramount one in Dan’s mind.

“We always wanted to use technology to make our processes as convenient as possible so we started out by having a website where you can schedule your pickup and so on and so forth,” he emphasized. “We built on

has expanded to include 23 stores — seven in Minnesota, 16 in California — as well as a delivery route in Dallas, TX.

Though Dan had tried to prepare himself for being a drycleaning plant owner as much as possible, there have been a lot of lessons learned along the way.

“One of the jokes I make is that almost everything I had that was a consulting idea has failed,” he laughed. “It’s definitely a unique beast, but I think that the amazing thing about drycleaning and laundry (that nobody gets) is that at scale drycleaning and laundry is as hard of an operational problem that you’ll ever see.”

“The joke I make is that what we do is the exact same thing FedEx does if FedEx had to take their packages, open them up, blend everything in the packages all together, fix what was in them and then repack them and put them back in boxes and get them back to the same place and call it a day... all for \$3.”

No matter how insanely difficult the logistical processes of the industry are, Dan has always believed one aspect that could make or break success would be the right employees.

“This is such a labor intensive industry, right?” he began. “What we’ve done very intentionally and very thoughtfully is really invest in our people in the sense that we share data all the way down. We literally share revenue and profitability data with our whole company. We train people on not just how to clean things, but how the business works.”

With such knowledge of the inner workings of the company, employees understand the reasoning behind specific business practices and are more likely to adhere to them.

“We provide 401k, healthcare, competitive wages and we even have Berry stock, which is stock in the company,” he explained. “Because we make that investment, which of course is a lot of money up front, in the long run that gives us a stable platform to grow and build on because you’ve got people who really know what they’re doing.”

The platform must be very stable since Mulberrys recently acquired more than 350 Laundry Locker locations to further solidify its delivery network in the San Francisco Bay area.

“It’s been a phenomenally smooth transition. I think everybody is really happy and excited about it,” he said. “Normally when you do an acquisition there’s all these terrible things behind the hood, but it really hasn’t been that way. It’s been terrific.”

Dan believes the move will only better position the company for the future; he believes the industry will undergo a Drycleaning 2.0 upgrade.

“It may take two decades, but over time you are going to see this gradual evolution towards on-demand delivery of everything,” he said. “It’s going to be the Amazon effect.”

For now, however, Mulberrys is seeing steady growth in both counter and routes sales.

“The key to that is shifting with your target audience,” he said. “The mobile app, for example — we’re seeing huge growth in the on-demand platform because that’s what younger people want. I want it now. I want it delivered to me.”

“People kind of bad mouth the drycleaning industry, that it’s dying or whatever,” he added, “but I don’t agree with that. It’s not dying. It’s shifting. It’s going to feel like dying if you’re not shifting with it.”



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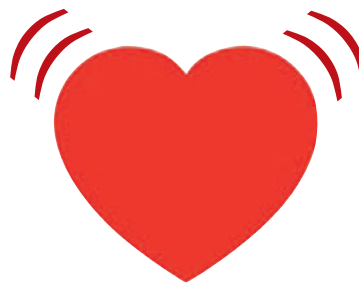


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# STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT



BY DEBORAH RECHNITZ

## Progress past, present and future

In 1991 many things were going to happen that would lead to my future in helping this industry.

After already spending over 10 years learning and sharing, I was offered the opportunity to look into the future of the drycleaning industry for the International Drycleaners Congress and presented my predictions at a convention in Victoria, Canada. I provided some food for thought, some proof that there is always a better way, and some incentive that we must look ahead.

Below is my historical "look back" and the reality that emerged. I hope you find it interesting and perhaps insightful for the future.

### The horse and buggy period of 1991

"You may tell me that great changes have been made in the drycleaning industry. You can tell me that this industry has come a long way. We have, after all, new, state-of-the-art equipment. We have automated presses with electronic

controls replacing electro-mechanical parts, and we have the introduction of point of sale systems to achieve consis-

these batches is in fixed units throughout the plant. We load a basket and wait until it's full before we move it to the next

spotting.

"Change has come as individual operators have been threatened by competitors or

dollars. I want to know the product lines they are using. I want to know if they are not giving me their shirts or house-

**The step from fiction to fact is only a short one. The elite of the industry will find ways to take this step and support research and development that will be needed.**

tent pricing.

"Are these great strides? I contend that they are mostly bells and whistles on existing technology. There are very little cost-saving advantages, no labor savings, and no changes in the value added process. Foot-stopping presses are still in use. The heat and steam continues to blow at employees. Jacket pressers still make multiple lays on a press. We excel in changing the package without changing the basic design or process.

"The process still involves batch cleaning. We accumulate garments between major operations and the movement of

operation.

"The first blouse, in the bottom of the basket, can wait several hours before it is ever worked on. Smaller garments move through the standard process and only get segregated towards the end of the day resulting in late or lost items. Packaging and wrapping hasn't changed in years.

"Tags are sold and tags are bought. They are placed on garments and they are removed from garments. We assume tags are indispensable. Heat-sealed barcodes won't hold. We can't get them small enough. They won't stay on through washing, cleaning and

governments, but today, change is here to stay and positive change, in this industry, has been and will continue to be made through innovators.

"The net affect of the speed at which change is occurring is that some operators will succeed and others will not. Those who continue to move with the tide of change will continue to prosper. Although waves and storms may slow you down along the way, those who ignore the threats and do not respond to the tides of change will fail. Recognizing the opportunities available to you and taking advantage of them will be necessary for your survival into the year 2000.

"The Chinese have the same word for opportunity as they do for crisis."

### By 2001, 10 years later

The single biggest step progressive operators took was related to computerization, but it really took 20 years to get here.

To put this in perspective, in 1980, I spoke about a radical concept of point-of-sale computers for the drycleaning industry.

At that time, people considered me absolutely crazy; I didn't understand anything about the industry; I had no idea about the true costs and benefits involved in this type of capital expenditure.

Enough is enough, they said. This is all fiction after all. The drycleaner doesn't need this. It isn't necessary nor cost effective.

Over the next 10 years, the industry had installed 5,000 such systems. Even in its infancy, it reaped great rewards with automated pricing resulting in effective price increases of three to ten percent and improved cash control.

But even by 2001, few had fully utilized their invested dollar to the full potential of this technology. I want to know the dollars my customers spend. I want to know which 15 percent of my customers spend 80 percent of my

hold. I want to know how often they use my services. I want to know when to anticipate their visit and to react when I don't see them.

### By 2018

Today, it is the general production process which has begun to change to achieve the next real benefit from computer technology... it's all about the tag.

We needed to eliminate the manual and error prone assembly process. Sophisticated computerization and barcoding made this possible.

In 1991 we knew it could be done. We were applying barcodes to the backs of bumble bees and tracking them entering and exiting their beehives. Prototypes were just coming out and two were available during Clean '93, but in 1991 drycleaners said it couldn't be done. There are too many problems with it. Our industry is different from the commercial laundries who were beginning to implement it. Or maybe, but we can't afford it. It won't work in my plant.

These challenges were present, but they were overcome by innovative and progressive operators.

Who would have guessed that we would have more than doubled our productivity with drycleaning pieces per operator hour improving from eight to 12 pph to 16 to 22 and beyond?

### A look forward to 2040

As said in 1991, the step from fiction to fact is only a short one. The elite of the industry will find ways to take this step and support the research and development that will be needed for the facts of 2040.

We have moved away from foot-stomping presses, although there are some places that you can still find them. We have improved employee work areas with steam being moved away from them and fresh air into the plant.

*Continued on page 10*

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Deborah Rechnitz

# Progress past, present and future

Continued from page 8

We have reduced multiple lays of garments with increased steam tunnel usage, helped by the change in fiber content of our garment mix. We have presses better sized for smaller garments such as fitted blouses. We have taken on-board computerization, combined with barcoding, and allowed us to automate assembly and bagging. This all took about 25 years instead of the projected 10, but we finally got there. Today it's all about the consumer. They want service when they want it, not when it is most convenient for the operator to provide it. They want

results the way they want it; not the way that is currently most efficient to provide it. They want what they want, not what the drycleaner wants to provide. But drycleaners will say it can't be done. There are too many problems with these suggestions. Our industry is different. Or maybe yes, but we can't afford it. It won't work in my plant. These challenges were present in 1980, in 1991, in 2001, and today, but they were overcome by innovative and progressive operators. What will the future look like? Brands will drop the word drycleaning as it involves a process that has more

negative connotations than positive ones. The term "drycleaning" narrows the market focus and slows growth. Ownership will become a mixture of out-of-industry and in-industry members to accommodate the financial requirements of growth and the technical processing requirements. We will move from very large machines with the mixing of customers' orders and the required netting to smaller machines with individual customer orders. We will follow customer requests for detergent, hang to dry, or fold and ship, providing the customer an opportunity to have it their way, not

the drycleaners' way. There will no longer be poly bags for packaging. They will be either replaced due to legislation or voluntary creativity. Distribution through routes, stores, and lockers will routinely be used to service the customer. Delivery times will continue to be faster and faster to meet the growing customer expectations and there will be a dependency of on-demand apps. The distribution methods will have a mixture of ownership including company owned, franchised owned and licensed operators, all operating under one brand. Route delivery and lock-

**Challenges were present in 1980, in 1991, in 2001, and today, but they were overcome by innovative and progressive operators.**

ers will include products from other companies. Routes will continue to grow with an emphasis on morning and evening shifts. There will be improved coordination and/or cross-ownership with laundromats. Product lines will include athletic wear, casual wear, household, linens, wedding gowns, garments (blue and white collar), medical, aged care and alterations. Customers will expect you to know their individual garment requirements and to segregate the orders by household members. There will be horizontal conveyors systems along with the vertical, hanger-oriented conveyors to process the packages. Individual pricing will be used alongside subscription services. It was George Bernard Shaw who remarked "The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable man persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man." Ladies and gentlemen, let us all be unreasonable.

**A final word**  
Thank you. This is my last scheduled article for the NATIONAL CLOTHESLINE, a first-rate trade magazine. I want to thank every one of my clients from whom I have learned so much over the years, to some vendors so generous with their time and expertise, to others that support this industry in so many ways.

Deborah Rechnitz has been an independent management consultant in the drycleaning industry since 1980. She also was chief operating officer of one of the largest USA drycleaning operations in 2008. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Finance and Personnel Administration; a Bachelor of Arts degree in Interpersonal Communications; and an MBA in Operations Management from Case Western Reserve University. She can be reached by e-mail at drechnitz@gmail.com or phone at (253) 405-7043.





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~ Steve Grashoff

President of Peerless Cleaners and CRDN of Northern Indiana



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# WEST

## Tuchman Group meets at Flair Cleaners



Members of Tuchman Advisory Group toured the Flair Cleaners facilities in Los Angeles, CA, in early November.

Tuchman Advisory Group (TAG) held its latest meeting from Nov. 7 to 9 in Los Angeles, hosted by Gary Gutterman and Drew Singer of Flair Cleaners.

In addition to touring and offering critiques of several Flair Cleaners locations, the group heard presentations from each member and engaged in an open discussion covering pressing matters that are currently affecting the drycleaning industry.

They also stayed at the historic Beverly Hilton in Beverly Hills, CA.

Bruce Frankel with Eckhoff Wealth Management, LLC, of San Rafael, CA, was the featured

speaker. He discussed some of the material from his best-selling book, *The 7 Biggest Financial Mistakes Made by Successful Entrepreneurs*.

On Friday evening, the get-together concluded with dinner at Miceli's Italian Restaurant in Hollywood, CA.

After dinner, the group went to see *Trump in Space – The Musical*, at the Second City Theater. This show was co-produced and co-written by Landon Kirksey who is the son of TAG member Rick Kirkey of Munro Cleaners.

During the meeting, the Tuchman Group also welcomed Ben and Mary Combs (Judi's Cleaners/Sacramento, CA) and Grant Carson (Martinizing/Alameda, CA) as new members.

As members, they will enjoy a key benefit of TAG membership which is reviewing the YTD numbers of each affiliate business, offering a confidential analysis that is helpful to all members for accountability and comparison purposes.

For more information, contact Ellen Rothmann at [ellenrothmann@yahoo.com](mailto:ellenrothmann@yahoo.com).



### PERFECT CLEANERS WETCLEANS FOR GREATER PROFIT

Since the installation of new Poseidon Textile Care System Wetcleaning Machines and Dryers, Perfect Cleaners, in Detroit, has tripled processing throughput, lowered utility costs, and realized an 8 percent increase in sales volume. Owner Gary Heflin, a dry cleaner of 28 years, has transformed his business from predominately dry cleaning to mostly wetcleaning. Wetcleaning, he maintains, is a more cost-effective, environmentally friendly and productive way to process garments of all types and fabrics.

#### Boosting Productivity to Make Room for More Accounts

"The Poseidon system allowed us to significantly improve productivity so I could seek out new accounts," said Heflin. "Wetcleaning is so much better and faster than dry cleaning. It uses less water and natural gas and we can wetclean pretty much anything, including suits, uniforms, overcoats, wools, silks and wedding gowns."

#### Choosing Poseidon

Perfect Cleaners worked with Jeff Quail and Mike "Stucky" Szczotka, of Eagle Star Equipment, in Troy, Mich., to select, install and program its new Poseidon wetcleaning equipment, including two 40- and four 90-pound capacity soft-mount wetcleaning machines, and four 85-pound capacity dryers. The highly programmable Poseidon system offers flexibility and ease-of-use. The wetcleaning machines are set up with 18 different programs for specific item types, including gowns, comforters, napkins, darks, spa sheets, chef coats, shirts, and more. "Soaps and conditioners are automatically injected," said Heflin, "and one wetcleaning machine has steam injection for cleaning chef and lab coats. This eliminates pre-scrubbing labor and time," he said. "The quality is excellent and my customers have

noticed a positive change." Operators simply enter a program number, load the wetcleaning machine and press start. The machine automatically does the rest by combining the right chemicals, water temperatures, water levels, mechanical action, g-force, baths and cycle times.

The Poseidon Dryers, which are engineered to safely and quickly dry wetcleaned items with no shrinkage, according to Quail, offer moisture-sensing technology, on-the-fly adjustments and a flexible control. "They program the dryers to fit the wetcleaning machines by item type," said Heflin. "We have no problems with shrinkage, items come out slightly damp, and finish work takes less time. As soon as the dryer stops, we lay out the garments, which are finished and pressed in 15 percent less time. Before we had the Poseidon Dryers, we had to hang-dry casino drapes. Now they are quickly dried in the Poseidon Dryer, which greatly improves our production," said Heflin.

Wetcleaning is so much better and faster than dry cleaning. It uses less water and natural gas and we can wetclean pretty much anything,"

- Gary Heflin Owner Perfect Cleaners



While it takes 60 minutes to dry clean one load, it takes just 35-40 minutes to wetclean and dry the same size load, according to Heflin.

"This allows us to finish our work a couple of hours sooner in the day and turn off the boiler, which saves a ton of money on gas and labor."

Perfect Cleaners, which did very little wetcleaning before, now wetcleans 60 percent of incoming items. Heflin expects that number to grow. "I really wish I had the machines years ago. Poseidon gives you everything a drycleaner would

want without the costs. Wetcleaning has enhanced our whole operation and allowed us to do a whole lot more in less time with great quality."

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### Picking up delivery route strategies in Napa, CA

The California Cleaners Association has enlisted the aid of Route Pro James Peuster for a two-day workshop on delivery routes. The event will take place on Friday and Saturday, Feb. 22 and 23 in Napa, CA.

The workshop is geared for owners, managers and sales staff. Peuster will draw on many years of industry experience to outline the essential strategies of route development with an end goal of increasing overall route sales of those who feel like they may be missing the extra edge to make it happen.

Some of the core strategies that will be emphasized will include: how to get and keep staff motivated; how to hold your team accountable; ten things to increase sales; and effective marketing materials and tools.

The cost to attend is \$179 for members and \$279 for non-members. Discounts are available for those who send multiple attendees from the same plant. Space is limited.

The program will run from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. on Friday and from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday. Attendees can ask questions and take part in an open discussion from 2 to 3 p.m. on the final day.

For more information or to register for the workshop, contact the CCA office by calling (916) 239-4070 or visit them online at [www.calcleaners.com](http://www.calcleaners.com).





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# SHIRT TALES



BY DON DESROSIERS

## How thousands of shirts are made

**M**y home city, Fall River, MA, has been a textile city for about 150 years. How fitting it is that shirts are made here.

I managed to get a tour of Fall River Shirt Company and I must say that this proved to be a most interesting adventure. I showed up at the factory, and was treated to an extraordinarily detailed tour by the plant manager Emmanuel Moniz. I wish to thank him publicly for his time and commend him for his ability at running what surely must be one of the slickest manufacturing facilities in the country.

In 1975, the company, then known as Shelburne Shirt, employed 800 workers and produced 1,100 dozen shirts per day. These shirts were lower quality shirts that retailed for \$10 to \$15 at department stores such as K-Mart.

In 1987, Shelburne Shirt, which at one time competed with six other shirt plants in this city alone, decided to close down the Fall River operation after 60 years.

A few of the management employees had other ideas. They got together and bought the company and created Fall River Shirt Company. Their business plan called for making a much higher quality shirt and seeking the high-end market.

The shirts made here retail for between \$75 and \$125. They are the exclusive shirt

manufacturer for Nordstrom's. In fact, every shirt made here ends up at Nordstrom's.

All of the shirts for the company's other customers are made at their sister facility in Pennsylvania. This Fall River plant is strictly high-end. That market, of course, is different. Now they employ only 150 people to produce 125 dozen shirts per day. Mathematically, that is far fewer "pieces per operator hour".

There are now only 10 shirt manufacturing plants in the United States and they make a mere 5 percent of the shirts sold in this country. Asia and the Caribbean basin claim the balance.

While a Fall River worker, being paid a few nickels per shirt can make over \$20,000 per year, their foreign counterparts are perfectly content to make \$100 per month.

I had to ask why Nordstrom's patronized Fall River Shirt rather than a foreign company that paid slave wages. I got an interesting answer: In spite of the fact that the foreign shirt makers are paid an unconscionable 1/16 of what they'd make in this country, Fall River Shirt has to match their price!

Nordstrom's doesn't go to the local manufacturer because of price. And it isn't because of quality either. Ralph Lauren, Tommy Hilfiger and countless other brands are all imported. The foreigners apparently do a



**This computer controlled cutter is a marvel. It cuts through 95 thicknesses of fabric at once with mind boggling precision and lightning speed. All the tables are fitted with air flotation.**



**This is the cuff sewing machine. This carousel rotates while the sewing machine follows the outer boundaries of the templates.**

quality job. Nordstrom's buys the U.S. product because of the service that they can get — two to three week turn-around.

This is vital in order to replenish depleted stock. The foreign products are subject to port charges, import taxes, transportation costs and perhaps other things, but that

surely doesn't offset the slave labor wages. So, in spite of all that, the U.S. manufacturers must have a slick operation and a very efficient one in order to be profitable with a comparatively high payroll.

My tour began in the area of the plant that Emmanuel called the "brains" of the oper-



**This amazing machine inverts the collars, then presses it in two operations, half of the collar at a time. Then the perimeter is sewn by means of a template that is to this operator's left.**



**The completed shirts are attached to this holder and carefully inspected. The computer unit attached to the holder is how each employee is paid. They slide a card through it that identifies them and pays them appropriately for this particular chore.**

ation — the cutting room.

And what a room it is, occupying maybe a half an acre of floor space. All of the colossal tables, there since 1927, have been retrofitted with air floatation. They function like an air-hockey table, allowing the fabric to be moved along the tables very easily.

The yards goods are all cut by computer. Absolutely fascinating to watch, the computer controlled blade can cut up to 95 thicknesses of material at once.

What I saw being cut were all of the components for about 50 white cotton shirts. It takes four square meters of cloth to make two shirts.

When the material is plaid, striped or checked, the positioning of the individual parts is a key difference between making a \$100 shirt and a \$10 shirt. The stripes, for instance, must be consistent and regular, even though a pocket, a sleeve gusset or a button-hole band are overlapped.

Consider that this pocket, for example is folded over and sewn before being attached to the shirt itself. Regardless, the stripes (or plaid) must match perfectly. If one collar point has a small bit of, say blue, from a check pattern, the other collar point must have the same bit of blue, perfectly symmetrical.

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Don Desrosiers

How thousands of shirts are made

Continued from page 16

To think about this while watching a shirt being cut is mind-boggling. Little wonder that the plotting is done by

computer.

Once the material is cut, the individual components are tied together and labeled with a card that not only includes a bar code, but also numerous

details about the actual shirt which it will eventually make up.

These components are tossed in a bin and sent to the sewing room. This room is di-

vided into three areas: small parts, large parts and assembly.

It is absolutely amazing how these 100-something people combine to make a stunningly beautiful product out of what appears to be nothing more than stray scraps of cotton.

Emmanuel calls the sewing room the heart of the plant. There is a limited amount of automation in this plant. Too much automation does not produce a top quality garment. It is possible to automate 90 percent of the shirt manufacturing processes aside from assembly of the components, which is always done by hand. This automation is associated with lower quality garments.

The collar has three parts: front, back and interface. And they are sewn together in that order. This part of the collar is sewn by hand, all piece work. Imperfects are rejected, not paid for and fixed.

The next stage is where the collars are inverted, pressed, the perimeter sewn, then trimmed and sent to inspection. This part is semi-automatic. The machine that does all this is amazing and it must be retrofitted for each different cut of shirt.

The blade onto which the collar is inverted and then pressed is machined to the precise cut of the collar of this shirt. Maintenance needs to be summoned to change the blades when this operator sees, on that bar-coded card, that the new batch has a different cut of collar. This is the machine that I'd like to work with.

The sewing of the cuffs is also automated. They are assembled in a way that is similar to the collars and the perimeter is also sewn automatically.

The cuffs are on a carousel, about two feet in diameter. The plates are adjusted to match the size (and cut) of this particular shirt being made.

Cuffs are different sizes. They are, like some many other parts of a shirt, scaled proportional to the neck size. During perimeter sewing of the cuffs, the sewing machine follows the plates to which the cuffs are attached. These plates act as templates. The cuffs end up like a string of sausages as the sewing machine never stops, moving from one cuff to the next.

Seven separate times during the manufacturing process, components are sent to an inspector who specializes in the evaluation of this particular component. Each fabricated part has a "pass" or "fail" standard. It's fairly basic: perfection passes, all else fails.

The more complex the design is on the fabric, the more likely an error is. For this rea-

son, checked and plaid shirts cost more than striped shirts for all involved. It cost more to manufacture, therefore, it cost the store more and ultimately, more money for the consumer.

Plain fabric shirts are the easiest and least expensive. The "small parts" area employs many people, each with a specialty. Most of the sewing is done by using gauges, guides and skill. Meanwhile the "large parts" area works on parts like fronts, backs and sleeves, but they also sew small parts that are components of the large parts. The large parts workers will sew on the pockets, for instance. They also affix the care labels and the brand labels and the size labels.

Before I go on, I have to share a secret with you, but you must promise to simply keep it in your memory bank and not use this artillery over and over. It will ruin your credibility if you do. Knowledge is power.

I have taken the time to learn about how shirts are made with the hopes that I will understand something about shirts a bit better and be better armed to answer a client's question. It is for this same reason that I present this to you — to get a better view of the world of shirts (how geeky is that?) so that perhaps you are better armed to deal with customers.

What am I getting at? Well, maybe I'm making more of this than I should, but when I watched a sewing machine operator attaching labels — size labels, brand-name labels and yes, care labels — I asked if this was inspected for accuracy.

It isn't. Hmmm. I urge you not to run with this. It might be tempting to whip out this column to show a customer as a way of explaining why a shirt doesn't fit properly. (The maker "often" attaches the wrong label.) Or as support for your theory that the care label is wrong. (The factory employs immigrants that can't read English so they often attach the wrong care label.)

Don't do this. It will affect your credibility. But it is good to know. It just seems to support some of the suspicions that we've had from time to time.

Have you ever noticed that the size label on some garments is clearly wrong? All of your pants are size 34 waist except one. It's a size 36. An inch is an inch, isn't it? Well, I have learned that it is possible for a machine operator to attach the wrong label and even the best shop will not be aware.

But remember that this is an unusual circumstance, not one that you will run into every couple of days, weeks or even

Continued on page 20



It's amazing how adept these ladies are at catching the most minor defects. Most defects are fixed by the offending operator. Rejects are less than one percent.



These shirts are waiting to be pressed. They've been assembled and inspected and will be in stores in about three weeks.



Cuffs and sleeves are pressed flat. We could never get away with this in our industry.



The body press looks familiar, but this German-built machine isn't used in our industry.

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Don Desrosiers

How thousands of shirts are made

Continued from page 18  
years.

We have all run into care labels that are suspect. Perhaps this is a stab at a reason why.

Keeping in mind that Fall River Shirt is a slick shop —

better than perhaps any other — it is probably the place that is least likely to have a label error happen. But remember that this plant makes a small percentage of the five percent of the shirts that are made in the USA. And if they don't in-

spect for label errors, I feel completely comfortable with the assumption that nobody checks for this possible gaffe.

OK, back to the sewing room. When the subcomponents are completed, they are naturally assembled into com-



The small sizes, or as in this case fitted ladies shirts are done my hand, then folded. It helps that the fabric is neither wet nor wrinkled.



All of the folding and pinning is done entirely by hand.



After pressing, the shirts are queued up here to await folding and then packaging.



After folding, the shirts are set here as they wait to be packaged.



The handcrafted product of Fall River Shirt is very impressive.

plete garments. This is not automated. It is skilled labor. The finished products are carefully inspected and fewer than one percent are rejected.

It is amazing how eagle-eyed the inspectors are. What looks like pure perfection to you or I is obscene to the skilled shirt manufacturer.

I looked at one rejected shirt that was flagged as defective in the sleeve gusset area. It was a checked shirt that, when buttoned at the cuff, would have stripes that did not line up perfectly. Totally unacceptable. I have since looked at shirts in stores and really appreciated the finished product. I look at printed fabric and marvel at the symmetry of the stripes, colors and checks.

The completed shirts are then pressed and folded. These areas do not resemble our pressing and folding areas but are certainly worth an honorable mention.

When it comes to pressing shirts, the manufacturers cheat. First of all, the collars are not repressed. They are pressed during manufacture. That's it. As you know from unwrapping any new shirt, there isn't too much concern for the actual press quality. Or, said in a better way, there isn't a desire to make the garment "ready-to-wear" as in our industry.

The cuffs are pressed folded and flat, a cardinal sin in the drycleaning and laundry business. So are the sleeves.

The fabric is pressed dry — no steam, no water, no moisture. Adding moisture is considered gauche.

The presses are similar looking, to an extent. They look like a conventional double-buck shirt unit, but the brand is unfamiliar, made in Germany.

These particular presses don't use steam to heat the heads, but rather hot oil that is circulated through them. I have always known that this can be done, but had never seen it firsthand.

The shirts are dressed in the way that you'd expect, but they don't appear to be in need of pressing. Once off the press, they are folded and pinned. This is done by hand.

I think that we imagine that the manufacturers have fabulously complicated folding machines that are capable of folding a shirt perfectly, in a flash, whenever we have a bunch of shirts that need folding at 4 p.m. on a Friday.

Not so. It is done entirely by hand and the finished product is gorgeous. Someone then affixes the price tag and packaging. Their goal is to make a shirt ready to buy. They succeed.

Perhaps we can't learn real lessons from this rather obscure part of the shirt world, but there is some comfort in seeing the similarities between the business of maintaining shirts and the business of making them.

Notice that, in spite of the price, it is quality and service combined that generates customers for Fall River Shirt Co. Sure, the buyer won't pay too much, but then who would? If it weren't for service they'd just as soon go to Asia. Just like our customers.

When something cost more to process, more is charged. This is important to remember. We need to do the same always. And as automated as some things have become during our lifetimes, certain things require the skills of dedicated employees.

Sure, we can dream about a giant machine that folds shirts, washes clothes and removes stains, but when we wake up we realize that the success of our business lies in the hands of our people.

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. The Tailwind web site is www.tailwindsystems.com.

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# THE SPOTTING BOARD



BY DAN EISEN

## Household products for spotting

The first thing we must make clear is that you can never replace your spotting or wetcleaning chemicals with household products.

The only household products we use are agents, not manufactured by the chemical companies. These agents I have found have a definite and important use for the drycleaner.

**1. Salt.** Salt is a compound of sodium and chlorine. Standing alone, these compounds are dangerous but as a chemical formulation it is safe. Salt can be used as a dye setter when soaking fabrics.

When soaking colored garments in a wetcleaning bath, salt and acetic acid are both dye setters. Add one ounce of acetic acid (28%) and one tablespoon of salt.

When soaking silk, only use acetic acid since salt can be dangerous to silk.

**2. Glycerine.** Glycerine is an excellent lubricant and works well on some ink and dye stains. It will not leave lighter areas on fabrics because it does not have cleaning properties.

It is used with digester mixtures because it slows the evaporation rate of the wet area.

A small amount can be purchased in a drug store and should be labelled CP or UST. It is also safe on fibers and

most dyes.

Glycerine is also useful when spot bleaching with sodium perborate since it keeps the chemical confined to one area.

**3. Hydrogen peroxide (spray bottle).** This 3% solution can be purchased in a drug store, Walmart or a dollar store.

Advantages of using spray peroxide include:

- Safe to most fabrics and dyes.
- Removes last traces of oxidized stains such as tannin, protein and dye.
- Neutralizes chlorine bleach.
- Reduces potassium permanganate.
- Effective on scorch.
- Easy to apply and does not have to be neutralized.

**4. Hydrogen peroxide (6%).** This can be purchased in a hair salon in a gel form.

It is effective on oxidized stains; more effective than 3%. It must be tested and must be rinsed. Apply with a Q-tip.

**5. Clorox bleach pen.** This is an easy way to use sodium hypochlorite. It avoids accidental spillage.

It cannot be used on wool and silk, but it can be used with testing on other fabrics for last traces of ink, dye, and

protein stains.

Use an acid to remove last traces of bleach.

**6. Lysol spray (unscented).** This spray is effective for removing odor on some fabrics. When spraying, make sure you are holding the spray a safe distance from the fabric so the fabric does not become damp from the spray.

**7. Nonionic fast drying carpet cleaners.** There are some brands of carpet cleaners that are nonionic in nature and have agents in it that make it dry quickly.

I have brought this agent to drycleaners that I deal with to spot clean items that they do not have to re-clean. This avoids the use of solvent and has a wide range of wetside staining.

**8. Vaseline.** This is petroleum jelly and can be used to protect areas of a garment from contacting a chemical you are using. It works well when you are using strong bleaching agents near trimming. It can be applied with a Q-tip easily.

**9. Q-tips.** These little cotton swabs are great to apply chemicals. It prevents the chemical from spreading, which commonly occurs when pouring chemicals. They can also be used to gently rub an area of a fragile fabric rather

than brushing.

**10. Mineral oil.** This is a safe and inexpensive source of oil to use to make an oil pad. The mineral oil can be applied directly to a towel, powder puff or a small circular pad used to apply make-up.

You can use another cloth to rub the cloth with the oil to obtain a small amount of oil that can then be applied to a fabric or leather that has some color loss.

**11. Castor oil.** Thinner than mineral oil, it can also be used to make an oil pad. Castor oil can also be mixed with water to obtain a less oily pad. Mix two or three parts water with one part castor oil for this solution.

**12. Baking soda.** Baking soda is a mild alkali with a pH of 9. It can be used to accelerate some chemicals such as peroxide and activate lubricants to be more aggressive. It does not have the strong odor of ammonia and is environmentally safe. There are some concerns about the environmental safety of ammonia in the water.

Dan Eisen, former chief garment analyst for the National Cleaners Association, can be reached at (772) 340-0909 or (772) 579-5044, by e-mail at [cleandan@comcast.net](mailto:cleandan@comcast.net) or through his website is [www.daneisen.com](http://www.daneisen.com).

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# MIDWEST



MODEL CLEANERS in Williston, ND, purchased a Unipress Hurricane single buck shirt press through E. Weinberg Supply. Pictured from left are Norma Diaz, the operator, Tom Wilder, the owner, and Richard Reese of Unipress.

## Zengeler Cleaners collects more than 2,000 coats for vets

For the past several years, Libertyville Rotary Sunrise and Zengeler Cleaners have teamed up to collect coats, gloves, scarves and other winter clothing in support of the nation's veterans as a way to say "thank you" to vets for their service to the country.

This year the tradition continued. Zengeler Cleaners and Rotary collected 2,186 coats along with hundreds of pairs of gloves, scarves and other winter gar-

ments, collectively valued at more than \$300,000. Donations were accepted at Zengeler's two Libertyville stores through October, then the Zengeler team inspected, repaired as needed and cleaned every single item. The renewed items were delivered to the VA Hospital in time for Veterans Day on Sunday, November 11.

With surviving veterans of World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam, along with more recent veterans serving on the front lines in the Middle East as well as other conflicts, there are thousands of veterans in the United States, many of whom have found it challenging to transition back to a civilian life.

"There are many challenges facing our veterans as they return from active duty," noted Tom Zengeler, president of Zengeler Cleaners. "The two leading examples are readjusting to civilian life and returning to the workforce. Sadly, many of the jobs they held before leaving to serve their country are no longer available, which makes the prospects of finding meaningful work more difficult than ever.

"To support our veterans, Libertyville Rotary Sunrise along with Zengeler Cleaners and our customers wanted to make a positive difference in their lives as a way to show our gratitude for the sacrifices they've made on behalf of all Americans," Zengeler said.

The below-average temperatures experienced from late October and throughout November have made this year more challenging for out-of-work veterans. Food, shelter and clothing are often quite difficult to come by, particularly when it comes to seasonal items, such as winter coats and jackets.

"Fortunately, support for this cause continues to be strong every single year," continued Zengeler. "The local community pulled together with timely donations to once again show we really care about our veterans."

The Libertyville Rotary Sunrise Club chapter was founded in 1987. Being an active Rotarian is a Zengeler family tradition: Bob Zengeler, Sr., Tom's father, is now in his 59th year as a Rotarian, while Tom is a charter member of the Libertyville Rotary Sunrise Chapter and has perfect attendance since the chapter was formed.

Rotary International is an organization of business and professional leaders that provides humanitarian service, encourages high ethical standards, and works to build peace and goodwill in the world. There are 1.2 million Rotarians in more than 32,000 clubs in more than 200 countries.



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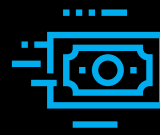
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# SOUTH

## Customer service, routes on SEFA slate

A pair of educational seminars sponsored by the South Eastern Fabricare Association are coming up soon.

The first will explore the topic of "Achieving Customer Service Excellence" on Jan. 15, followed by "Quit Spinning Your Wheels and Driving in Circles," a one-day route development workshop the next day.

Jim Groshans, the head coach at FabriCoach.com, will explore how team building and an understanding of the entire fabricare process is crucial to delivering excellent customer service.

In his program, he will define customer service, describe customer expectation levels, discuss how each step in the drycleaning plant work flow impacts customer serv-

ice, identify internal communication gaps and solutions, describe why care label basics are important for quality output and customer service and define customer service behaviors needed in order to get the right people.



Groshans



Peuster

It will take place from 6 to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 15 at the Fairfield Inn & Suites located at 7090 Cypress Terrace in Ft. Myers, FL.

The seminar is free for SEFA members if they register by Jan. 8; otherwise they must pay \$25 to attend after that date. Non-members must pay \$25 each, as well.

On the following day, SEFA will head to the Four Points by Sheraton at 4400 W. Cypress St. in Tampa, FL, for a full day program on route development.

The Route Pro James Peuster will conduct a session from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m.

He will be drawing from his years of experience to help plant owners, managers and sales staff learn essential strategies to growing pickup and delivery routes.

Some of the topics he will explore will include how time management drives success, ten ways to increase sales, effective marketing and tools, and staying motivated and accountable.

The cost for the one-day routes workshop is \$49 for members and \$99 for non-members; however, there are discounts available for those who send multiple attendees from the same plant.

Space is strictly limited for both programs, so SEFA recommends registering ASAP.

To sign up, contact the association by calling (877) 707-7332.

More information can also be found online at SEFA's website located at [www.sefa.org](http://www.sefa.org).

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## NCALC wraps convention, set to meet in Jan.

The North Carolina Association of Launderers and Cleaners held its 112th annual convention at the StateView Hotel located on the campus of North Carolina State University in Raleigh, NC, in October.

On Friday evening, professional speaker Denise Ryan presented a session on "Dealing with Change Without Going Up in Flames."

President Rita Foley of Regency Cleaners presided over a membership meeting featuring updates on the association's activities and elected new officers and directors, including incoming president David Makepeace of Medlin-Davis Cleaners of Raleigh.

Seminars were presented on a variety of topics, including budgeting, the Drycleaning Solvent Cleanup Act (DSCA) and best practices for wash-dry-fold services, cleaning gowns and route and delivery services.

In addition to attending the show, many cleaners also visited the nearby open house at Consolidated Equipment Laundry.

At the Saturday banquet, Foley recognized several members for their contributions to the association, including Allan Cheatham of Shallotte Cleaners who received the President's Award.

Next up for NCALC will be its Winter Meeting scheduled for Jan. 25 to 27 at the Pinehurst Resort on Carolina Vista Drive in Pinehurst, NC.

On the schedule will be a Friday evening Reception and Dinner Social, Saturday morning board and committee meetings and a Dinner Social outing later that evening.

NCALC will host a DSCA Stakeholders Meeting on April 25 at the Department of Environmental Quality's Green Square Building at 217 W. Jones St. in Raleigh.

For information on any of NCALC's upcoming events, call the office, (919) 313-4542, or visit [www.ncalc.org](http://www.ncalc.org).



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# MARKETINGMAN



BY LARRY SIEGEL

## Plan a year's worth of promotions

If you made a business resolution for 2019, was it to get new customers? Was it to keep your current customers coming back?

In either case — or both! — communication with existing and potential customers using e-mail and social media is essential.

To keep your messages and advertising creative and innovative, I suggest tapping into the recognized holidays, national observations, special occasions and seasonal occurrences you'll find on a promotional calendar (I like national-daycalendar.com but you can use the Google machine to find others).

When I pitched this article to my editor, Hal, I sent him the link to my calendar site and he quickly replied that he had no idea it was National Bath Tub Day. For proof of concept, I plucked a thumbnail photo of folded bath towels off the web and sent it back to him with a sample offer: 20% off bath towels (valid today only and only for bath towels). Sold it!

Before I go into promotional opportunities, let me be clear about what needs to go into a promotion to make it most likely to succeed: relevance and value.

Relevance relates to how the holiday or occasion ties to a cleaners. Luckily, most people like to look good when they party and that's your forte, plus you're great at helping to prepare for — and clean up after — an event.

And here's the touchy part: everything you send out, from an e-mail or postcard to a Facebook ad, should feature an offer!

Why?

Now, more than ever, time is a valuable commodity and people expect that the time they take to read an e-mail or ad, small effort that it may be, will be rewarded. This is the cost of success and loyalty.

Keep in mind, you don't have to give away the store! In the towel example above, all that's being offered is a percentage off one part of an order.

Sure, some people will limit themselves to just the offer, but many more

will bring in other items as they take advantage of the savings, and, if you use "percent off" promotions, even the one-and-dones are contributing to your profit margin a bit.

On Facebook, you may be able to

ality rewards promotion that can be positioned as preparing for the upcoming holiday season... this is a sure way to stand out from the competition. And don't forget that any holiday that brings out mattress sellers is your op-

to get personal with your bridal customers by taking photos of the couple in their tailored outfits and posting on your Facebook page and encourage them to post photos of their wedding there, too; if possible, put the couple's

**Time is a valuable commodity and people expect that the time they take to read an e-mail or ad, small effort that it may be, will be rewarded.**

get away with sharing information and sending greetings because of the social nature of the medium, but sprinkle in some offers, a contest or perhaps a reward for posting a photo taken during a special occasion to keep people interested in revisiting.

If you send information-only e-mails to your opt-in list enough times, you'll be sure to get a lot of opt-outs. Here's a tip: put a QR code onto printed materials and a "Click here" button on online materials that take people to a landing page where you can go into more depth about your promotion and do more branding of your cleaners.

Hopefully you, like most retail businesses, already tie into the major holidays with promotions and in-store decorations, including New Year's Day, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Easter, Mother's and Father's Day, Fourth of July, Memorial and Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and, of course, Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa.

The issue with these "no brainer" holidays is that everyone promotes during them so it requires a little "brain" to stand out.

For instance, use Valentine's Day to build a 14-day "We love our customers" campaign filled with small branded merchandise giveaways and daily specials culminating with, perhaps, a dip-your-own-strawberry-in-chocolate event on the 14th.

All-American, non-religious Thanksgiving is a great holiday to focus on "Customer Appreciation" with a loy-

portunity to promote cleaning linens, pillows and household items (consider having your customer show the mattress receipt to get a one-time savings).

When it comes to really relevant promotional periods for cleaners, Spring Cleaning, Back-to-School and the bridal "season" are superb.

When March 20 rolls around and Spring begins, let customers know it's time to "freshen" their wardrobe and linens, clean winter garments before storing, or clean out their closets and bring out-dated garments to you to clean and donate to local non-profits.

Take the opportunity in Spring to do some cross-promotion with a neighborhood florist by having raffles for arrangements featuring living plants.

If you're recycling hangers and polybags or are a GreenEarth cleaner, you might want to take advantage of Earth-Day on April 22 to tout your eco-friendliness... and consider handing out seedlings from a local garden nursery with orders being dropped off and there may be some soil-covered clothing coming back at pick-up time!

Back-to-School is an excellent lead-in to Fall promotions, especially if you have a solid tailoring department. Choose a time period that works for your area... I have nieces and nephews going to public and private schools in Southern California and it turns out there are a lot of different starting dates in August and September.

Consider sponsoring sporting events and the arts at schools with uniforms and bands and don't worry if eventually you're hit up for advertising in a program or calendar as these ads are typically inexpensive if you stick to a business-card size. For event sponsorships, try to invest with gift certificates to insure you are the "go-to" cleaners for the school! (Remember that school kids may well become customers one day.)

The reason I put season in quotes when I mentioned bridal "season" earlier is that there may be several times of the year that the bridal market heats up in your area of the country. According to The Knot, typically September (16 percent), June (15 percent) and October (14 percent) are the most popular months for weddings.

Track your cleaning, tailoring and wedding gown preservation sales in your POS system to discover peak periods then tailor your promotions — pun intended — to these months. Try

wedding date in your calendar and mail them a card (if you don't have a blank card with your logo on it, call me!) with a "Congratulations!" gift certificate towards gown preservation in it.

Now comes the fun part: finding interesting and unique "hooks" using your promotional calendar! Look two to three months ahead to see what holidays and observances are coming up so that you have time to make plans.

When something piques your interest, figure out how you can promote your business with it and what media you want to use. For instance, the first Friday of May is National Space Day; Google "how to make a rocket" and choose a method — the messier the better — to post on Facebook or be the subject of an e-blast along with an offer to apply to cleaning spills and grass stains. Be sure to ask customers to post their rocket launches on your page!

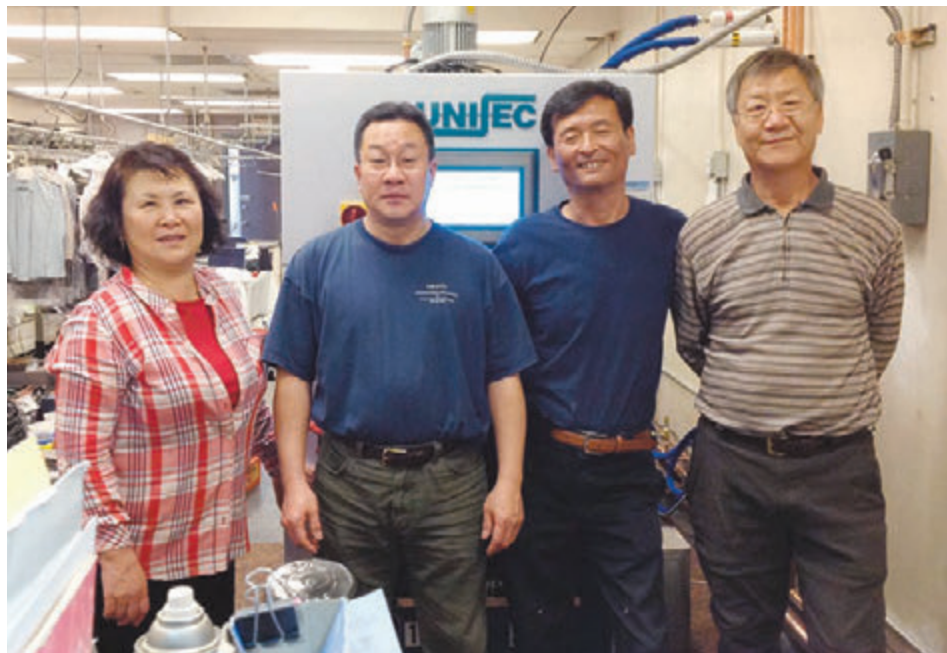
By choosing a longer observance, you can stretch the promotional time period to give yourself flexibility in activities, promotional materials and offers.

For instance, July is National Hot Dog Month, so you might want to give away free hot dogs on weekends, have a hot dog eating contest, judge hot dog recipes, etc.; then e-mail a photo of a white T-shirt covered in mustard and ketchup, DIY cleaning tips, a plug for your professional spotters, and a percent-off offer for cleaning t-shirts.

When you pick from the hundreds of holidays, observances and occasions every year upon which to launch your promotions, be sure to decorate your store appropriately. Major outlets like Party City, WalMart and Target will have things for major holidays, but you can save money by frequenting "dollar" stores and Goodwill... and be sure to store non-perishables for future use if you have the space.

Finally, don't forget to track your sales during each promotional time period. Repeat what works for you and drop what doesn't... there will always be another occasion to try something new!

Larry Siegel is a marketing consultant/graphic designer and believes that "marketing is everything!" He specializes in helping businesses with branding, bringing in new customers and loyalty programs. He can be reached at (818) 241-3042 and [larrysiegel@charter.net](mailto:larrysiegel@charter.net).



AUDITORIUM CLEANERS in Portland, OR, purchased a Unisec MS-252N through J. Park Inc. Pictured from left are Ms. Bok Ja Sung, the owner, Mr. Kang and Mr. J. Park of J. Park Inc. and Sang Man Lee of Unisec.



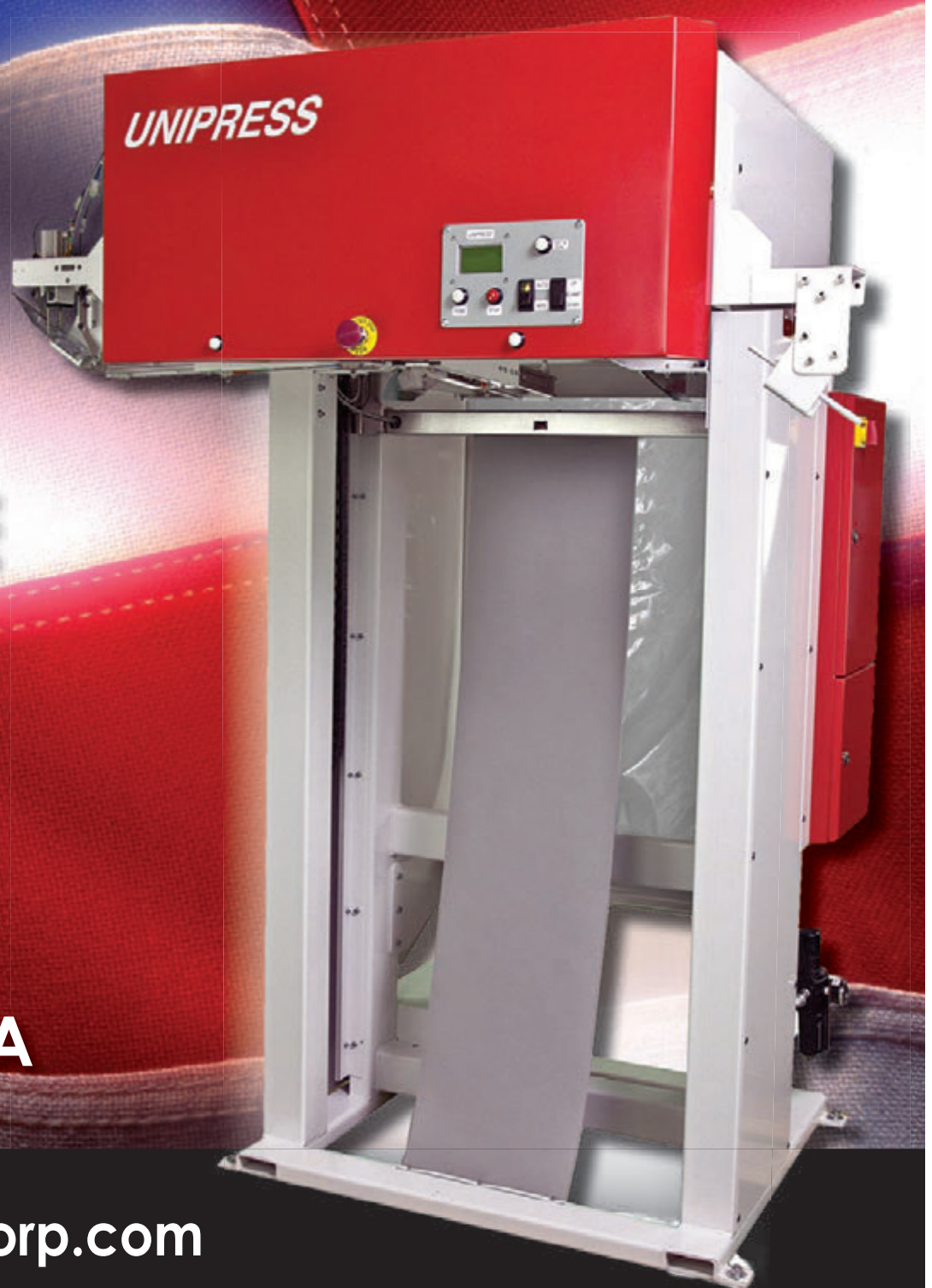
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# WRENCH WORKS



By BRUCE GROSSMAN

## Understanding the water column

In this installment, we'll learn what the water column on your boiler is and what functions it performs.

For openers keep in mind that all the controls on your boiler serve only two functions:

- A. To turn a pump on or off.
  - B. To turn the fire on or off.
- That's it! Simple!  
What's a water column?

Look at the boiler. Hanging somewhere off the side is a cylinder with a sight glass in it.

This is the water column which provides a convenient place to monitor the water level in the pressure vessel. It is attached to the pressure vessel at two point — above the desired water level in the steam storage area, and well

below the desired water level in the water storage area of the pressure vessel. This allows the water level in the column to seek the same height as the water level in the pressure vessel.

Screwed into the top of this cylinder are three probes that look like spark plugs.

When removed from the boiler, these "spark plugs" have metal rods at the opposite ends.

These rods are electrodes (metal rods that easily allow electric current to pass through them).

operated switch which uses a small amount of power (the signal from water level sensing controls) to turn on or off a large amount of power (pump motor).

Bada Bing, Bada Bang, Bada Boom — believe it or not, that's it for controlling the pump.

### Controlling the pump

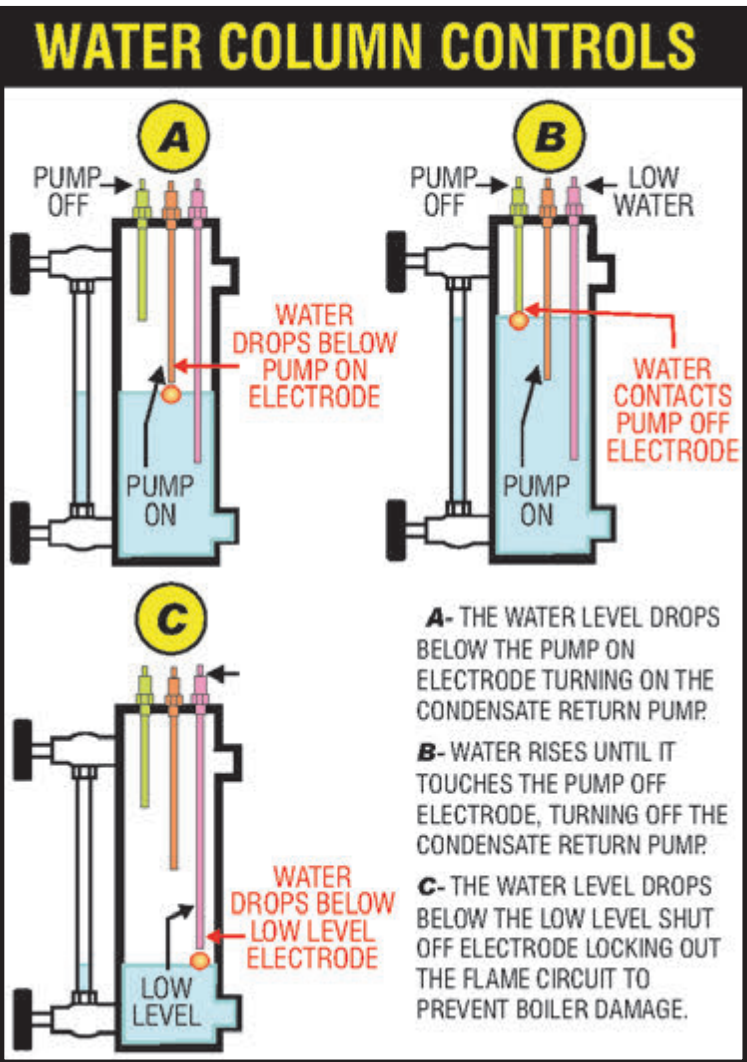
1. The output from the first pump water sensing electrode, which I'm calling the pump on electrode, is monitored when the level drops below the electrode a signal is sent to the wa-

### Controlling the fire

The output from the low water sensing electrode located in the water column is monitored; when the level drops below the electrode, the gas solenoid is shut off and an audible alarm is sounded. When the water level contacts the electrode, the alarm will stop and the gas solenoid circuit is enabled. (If other conditions are met, the flame will go back on.)

Here are some ideas to ruminate over:

Almost all water level monitors incorporate indicator



The water column provides a convenient place to monitor the water level in the pressure vessel.

When the water level makes contact with the rod on the end of the probe, electric current passes from the rod, through the water, to the metal of the water column forming an electrical circuit signaling water is at the level of that probe.

The opposite holds true when the water level drops below the rod and the electrical circuit is broken. There are three probes in the water column controlling two separate operations.

Two of the probes are used to control the pump motor. A contactor is an electrically

operated switch which uses a small amount of power (the signal from water level sensing controls) to turn on or off a large amount of power (pump motor).

2. The output from the second pump water sensing electrode, which I'm calling the pump off electrode, is monitored when the water level rises to contact this electrode, sending a signal to the level controller telling the condensate return pump motor to shut off the condensate return pump.

lights that indicate whether the probe is in contact with water.

Open the boiler control panel access door (on some doors there is an interlock switch that must be depressed or pulled out when the door is opened in order for the boiler to operate) and observe the operation of the indicator lights on a boiler which is running properly.

Make a chart that shows the location of water level control and note whether the light is on or off during boiler operations. That way you will at least know if a level sensor is detecting a problem if the boiler fails to fire.

Even better, shoot a video of these light patterns for reference.

These observations will enable you to troubleshoot level and ignition problems, perhaps saving an expensive, unnecessary service call.

Few things in life are sweeter than fixing a problem yourself without making it worse.

Bruce Grossman is the chief of R&D for EZtimers Manufacturing, maker of the EZ Level return tank water level control that replaces the troublesome ball float valve in the return tank. Also, the Sahara and Drop in the Bucket line of high purity separator water mister/evaporators and the Tattler steam trap tester, an accurate and easy-to-use device are part their product line. For more information on EZtimers products, visit [www.eztimers.com](http://www.eztimers.com). Address any questions or comments to [bruce@eztimers.com](mailto:bruce@eztimers.com) or call (702) 376-6693.

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When I found out I had to change from perc after 14 years, I was very concerned that I would have to deal with the "alternative solvent" headaches I had heard so much about. To my surprise, since switching to **intense**® I have had none of the issues I was worried about. My cleaning results have been nothing short of amazing. My customers have noticed that there is no chemical smell on their garments anymore and are pleased with the feel and cleanliness of their clothes, as well as the idea that we are more environmentally responsible now. **intense**® was the right move for us.

**Bob Hamila** (*Lighthouse Cleaners / Palm Beach Gardens, FL*)

Finally, a solvent that is comparable to perc in cleaning strength, but gentle enough to handle all of the beads, sequins and faux finishes that adorn today's clothing. **intense**® is clean smelling, incredibly reclaimable and easy to use. We are 10 weeks+ in a new Union hydrocarbon machine with **intense**® solvent and extremely satisfied with the results. We still haven't had to change the filters or have the waste picked up because there is so little of it, but we look forward to the savings there as well. Probably the wisest decision we've made yet. Thanks Ken for all your help.

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

I've been waiting for a solvent alternative to PERC. I look for companies that have a proven track record of longevity. What's important to me is to partner with a company that believes in constant innovation, technology advances and unparalleled support. I have always found this with SEITZ, which gave me the confidence to embrace and convert to their new solvent. It is performing fabulously and will allow me to make the necessary changes to continue to improve my service and my business.

**Bill Wright** (*Royal Fine Cleaners / Northport, AL*)

For as long as I've been in dry cleaning, I've been using Seitz products. From their spotting chemicals to dry cleaning detergents, all performed beyond my expectations. So when it came time to make the switch from Perc to an environmentally friendly solvent, I turned to SEITZ. Their answer was **intense**®. It's cleaning and grease cutting ability made my transition from Perc very easy. I'm glad I chose SEITZ. Thank you for another quality product!

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

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# DATELINE

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DECEMBER 2019						
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**2019**  
**January 9** The Fine Art of Finishing, hands-on workshop with Paul Grippi, sponsored by the North East Fabricare Association.

ciation. Dependable Cleaners, Quincy, MA. Call (603) 635-0322.  
**January 15** Customer service excellence seminar with Jim Groshans, sponsored by the

South Eastern Fabricare Association. Fairfield Inn and Suites, Ft. Myers, FL. Call (877) 707-7332.  
**January 16** Route development seminar with James Peuster,

sponsored by the South Eastern Fabricare Association. Four Points by Sheraton, Tampa, FL. Call (877) 707-7332.  
**January 17-20** Brainstorming and Five Stars conference,

sponsored by the National Cleaners Association and the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute. Sonesta Ocean Point Resort, St. Maarten. Call (800) 888-1622.

**January 25-27** North Carolina Association of Launderers and Cleaners winter meeting. Pinehurst Resort, Pinehurst, NC. Call (919) 313-4542.  
**February 3** Wetcleaning seminar led by Dan Eisen, Modern Age Cleaners, Vero Beach, FL. Call (772) 579-5044.  
**February 22-23** Route development workshop presented by The Route Pro and sponsored by the California Cleaners Association. Napa, CA. Call (916) 239-4070.

**February 25** Introduction to Drycleaning one-week course at the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute, Laurel, MD. Call (800) 638-2627.

**March 4** Advanced Drycleaning two-week course at the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute, Laurel, MD. Call (800) 638-2627.

**March 22-23** Southwest Drycleaners Association board and members meeting. San Antonio, TX. Call (512) 873-8195.

**April 6** Mid-year conference and supplier exhibits, Independent Textile Rental Association. Galt House Hotel, Louisville, KY. Call (706) 637-6552.

**May 4-5** Spring Leadership Conference, Midatlantic Association of Cleaners. Founders Inn & Spa in Virginia Beach, VA. Call (800) 235-8360.

**June 20-23** Clean Show, New Orleans, LA. Call (404) 876-1988.

**July 15** Introduction to Drycleaning one-week course at the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute, Laurel, MD. Call (800) 638-2627.

**July 22** Advanced Drycleaning two-week course at the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute, Laurel, MD. Call (800) 638-2627.

**July 31-August 3** Textile Care Allied Trades Association annual conference. Ojai Valley Inn & Spa, Ojai, CA. Call (813) 348-0075.

**August 19** Introduction to Drycleaning one-week course at the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute, Laurel, MD. Call (800) 638-2627.

**September 22-25** Independent Textile Rental Association annual convention. Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort & Spa, Santa Ana Pueblo, NM. Call (706) 637-6552.

**October 19-20** Texcare 2019 sponsored by the National Cleaners Association, Meadowlands Convention Center, Secaucus, NJ. Call (212) 967-3002.

## Eisen to lead wetcleaning course in Vero Beach

The first in a planned series of spotting and wetcleaning courses with instructor Dan Eisen will be held next month in Vero Beach, FL.

The classes are being sponsored by Cleaners Chemical and local distributors.

Modern Age Cleaners in Vero Beach will host the first seminar on February 3 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The registration fee of \$100 will in-

clude a drycleaning handbook on bleaching and fabric restoration, instructional material on fabrics and wetcleaning and samples of chemicals for spotting and wetcleaning.

Lunch will also be served.

Courses in other areas and states are being planned.

For more information or to register, contact Dan Eisen, (772) 579-5044 or email cleandand@comcast.net.



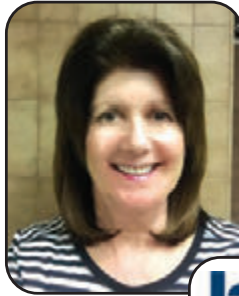
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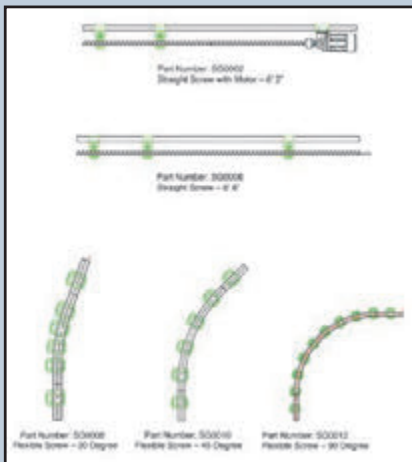
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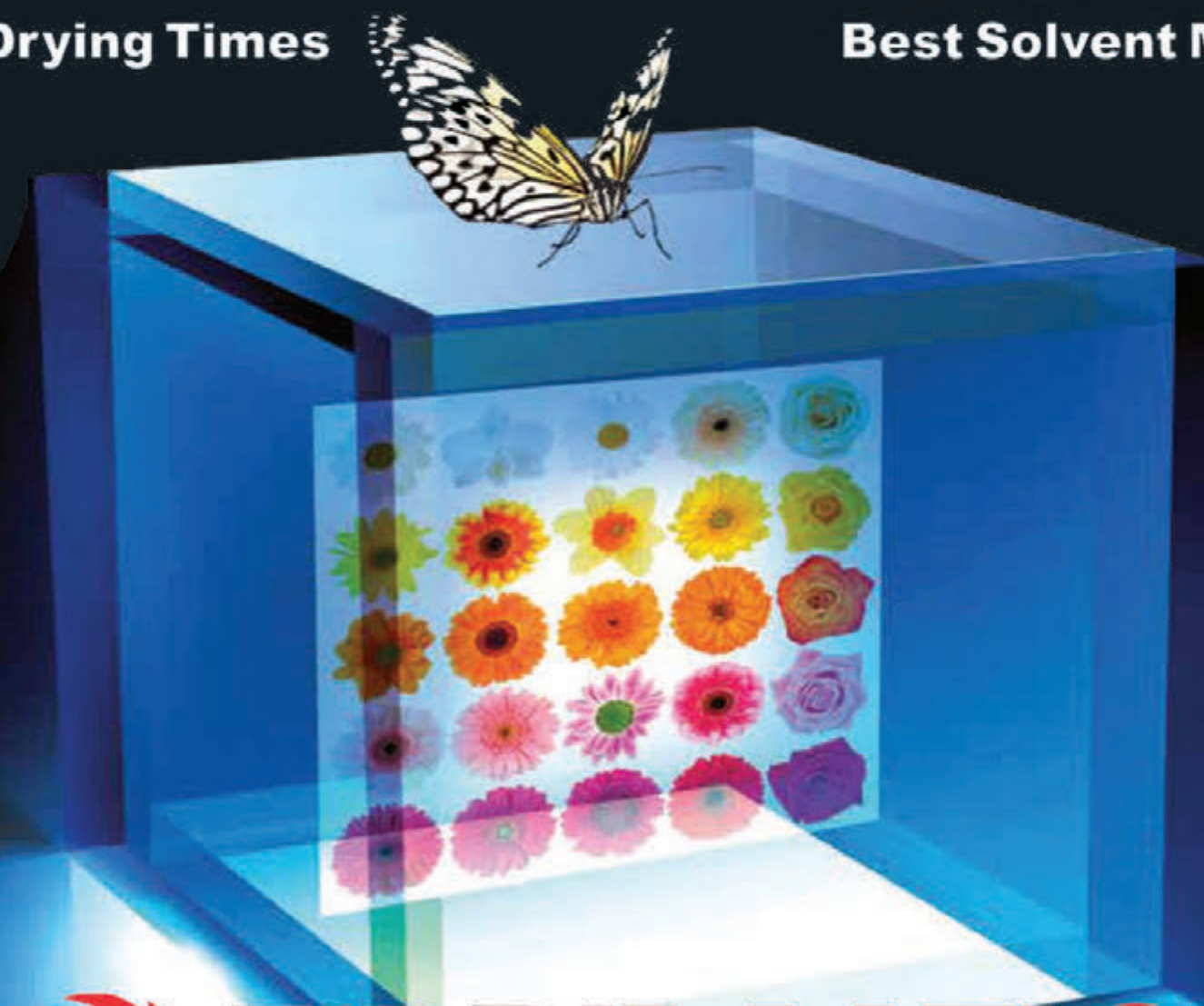




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The first machine that can finish the entire pair of pants **INCLUDING THE CREASE** with one operator at a level of quality superior to conventional equipment.

- For All Types Of Pants;
  - Creased Or Uncreased
  - Pleated Or Unpleated
  - Men's Or Ladies
- No Experienced Operator Needed
- Requires Less Floor Space Than Conventional Equipment
- Rotating Cuff Clamps For Creased/Uncreased/Flat Front Finish

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