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Mayhem and mischief at the counter

For an employee at Milt & Edie's of Burbank, it was a strange week for the ages. It all started after a hard week of Alexis feeling homesick (she recently moved from

the City of Lights to the City of Angels). Then, things got weird fast.

Not only did she wait on a sporadic Melissa McCarthy (star of *The Bridesmaids*

and *The Heat*), she then appeared on *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, received \$20,000 and was featured in a viral video that approached one million hits in less than a week.

Viewers of Ellen DeGeneres' daytime talk show are familiar with a prank she likes to pull on celebrity guests, having them visit a public place and agree to repeat whatever she says to them via a hidden speaker in their ear. She has played the hidden camera joke on the likes of Adele, Emma Watson and Bruno Mars.

However, McCarthy's version may have taken the cake. Dumping clothes on the front counter in front of Alexis, the star acted disoriented as the young counter worker asked her how she was doing.

DeGeneres told McCarthy to say she had accidentally taken two Tylenol PMs for her headache and then compounded her sleepiness by mistakenly drinking "sleepy-time" tea instead of green tea in an effort to wake up.

"Oh no, so you're like super tired now?" a concerned Alexis asks, then displays incredible patience and professionalism for several minutes as McCarthy repeats things like: "I'm [BLEEP] up! I'm seriously [BLEEP] up!"

On an extended cut of the prank on *ellentube*, McCarthy also explains to Alexis that there's a stain on her blouse that most people cannot see, but she needs it out nonetheless. Then she adds that it's her husband's blouse and laughs hysterically as Alexis maintains her composure, obviously perplexed by her erratic behavior.

The check-in stretches out much longer as McCarthy offers a few pitches for Milt & Edie's infamous outdoor sign that always features funny or inspirational messages. Her suggestions, however, were not really good enough to make the cut.

"Teach a man to press his shirt and we'll

hire him," says McCarthy before cracking up. She adds (thanks to DeGeneres acting as a mischievous Cyrano de Bergerac): "Oh, that's a good one. You can see why I'm so successful."

The more McCarthy strays off script, the funnier the video becomes. Another sign suggestion from Ellen: "When life hands you lemons, say, 'Hey, cool. Free lemons.'"

McCarthy's version comes out in a slurred manner as: "One lemon said to the other lemon" before she trails off and nods, adding: "That one's a thinker."

The next suggestion just gets worse as McCarthy fails to recall a long stretch of dialog from DeGeneres. "Fool me once, shame on you," she begins, before going off book. "Fool me twice, shame on you for fooling me, and shame on you. Shame on you."

"I like that one," Alexis smiles. However, her demeanor changes when McCarthy drops to the ground (on command) and she rushes to help. That's also when everybody in the store becomes concerned.

Once "revived," the Emmy-Award winning actress says "Emilio Estevez" emphatically before being helped back up. Thankfully, McCarthy finally spills the beans on the prank and Alexis is clearly stunned.

She quickly forgives the actress, who hugs her and says to blame Ellen for making her do it.

Naturally, the video went viral later that day, but that's far from the end of the story. On the following day, DeGeneres invited Alexis to appear on her show that has won 61 Daytime Emmy Awards to date.

Ellen begins the segment by explaining, "So, I felt so terrible about the poor woman having to take care of Melissa. I wanted to meet her, so I can apologize in person."

During the subsequent interview, Alexis

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Milt & Edie's staff rushed to assist Melissa McCarthy after she collapsed to the floor just before it was revealed that it had all been an elaborate prank for an Ellen DeGeneres show. A few days later, Alexis, who was working at the counter and was the main target of the prank, was invited to appear on DeGeneres' show to receive an apology, congratulations for handling the situation so well and, to top it off, a check for \$20,000.



Deviating from their normal routes to learn to do them better

In lieu of having their annual conference in Kansas City, MO, The Route Pros teamed up with two of their clients to host regional conferences.

The first was at Puritan Cleaners in Richmond, VA. Thanks to Gary Clover, Norman Way and Montell White, more than 20 participants were in attendance. Meeting at Puritan's Route Hub, the 2 ½ day course was filled with topics like wash-dry-fold and advanced sales training.

Two weeks later, Classic Cleaners in Indianapolis, IN, was the place for Round 2. Over 25 participants drove in for the Friday through Sunday Conference.

"What blows me away is the commitment of our clients," said The Route Pros' James Peuster. "Many cancelled their routes on Friday for ongoing training!"

Route Pros clients came from all over the country to see the route hubs and to network with many of the industry's best route leaders and performers.

Peuster offers his take-aways from the two conferences in his column on page 22 of this issue.



Cleaners gathered for the second Route Pro conference in Indianapolis.



Sneak Peek

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Evaluate carefully

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Shining when the spotlight is on

According to statistics from a social media survey by Buffer about two years ago, more than 500 million hours of video are viewed each day on YouTube alone. Forbes adds that over 500 million people also watch videos on Facebook every day (that figure is from 2018). If you have a Facebook page, that’s a lot of background noise to compete with, which makes the prospect of ever going viral with a post a slim one.

While it’s unclear just how many views make a video viral (like, say, a million in a relatively short amount of time?), it’s estimated that only about one percent of all of those videos posted on Facebook will end up with that highly coveted status. That information comes from two years ago when Wochit analyzed more than 5,000 social videos created between March and May 2017. When you consider how many professional companies devote a bulk of their resources to hit that magic viral video status, the rest of us ordinary, less savvy web users have little or no chance to make it to that one percent.

That’s precisely why it was such an extraordinary couple of weeks for Milt & Edie’s and the drycleaning industry. When the video of Ellen Degeneres pranking the staff of the company with the help of actress Melissa McCarthy exploded online, it was a win-win for all drycleaners. The video is highly hilarious and entertaining, but more important, it depicts a very professional drycleaning store that operates smoothly even when customers behave very unusually. The counter employee who waited on McCarthy — Alexis — showed patience, concern, professionalism and kindness even though she was oblivious to the practical joke. Then, when interviewed by Ellen on her daytime talk show, she comported herself very well. Kudos!

It could have gone down much differently from start to finish. Milt and Edie’s owner Michael Shader (the only one outside of Ellen’s camp that knew about the prank) took a calculated risk. It was the first time he opened his doors to a film crew (and there have been numerous requests). Normally, doing such a thing interrupts business and could negatively affect customer service, but it was Ellen, so Shader decided to take the plunge. It’s hard to argue with the positive final results.

Of course, it didn’t hurt that clearly the front counter staff at Milt & Edie’s are trained to be professional and ready to handle anything thrown at them. Shader knew that, and now, so do over a million people (and counting).

When it costs a lot to be cheap

Dolly Parton once famously joked (about herself): “It costs a lot of money to look this cheap.”

A variation of that quote comes to mind whenever we see a new product or gizmo that promises to help avoid “expensive” trips to the drycleaner. We think those who buy into one of these home drycleaning solutions will soon have to admit, “It costs a lot to be this cheap.”

It started more than 20 years ago when Procter & Gamble took aim at drycleaners with a product called Dryel. This “home drycleaning” product, promising to reduce trips to the cleaner and even remove stains, generated a lot of media buzz and even received a “Good Buy” award from *Good Housekeeping*. It had all the makings of a juggernaut product that could steal millions away from the industry.

But a funny thing happened to that juggernaut on its way to wiping out the drycleaning industry. Numerous media outlets performed side-by-side comparison tests between drycleaning and Dryel and drycleaning came out on top. Dryel’s ability to remove stains was spotty, at best, and any wrinkles left in the garment were the consumer’s problem. Any savings could quickly be lost in the time spent getting the garment ready to wear.

That didn’t stop the at-home drycleaning proponents. Since then we have seen all kinds of do-it-yourself home care products, from detergents and stain removers to steam cabinets to something that calls itself a shirt press. There is even a home drycleaning closet out there for about \$1,800.

Assuming these things actually do the job, then all one needs is the money, the space and the time to do drycleaning at home — inconveniently. We suspect that anybody who goes down this path will soon find out that the magic of drycleaning isn’t magic at all; it’s a lot of hard work. The stains don’t come out just because some liquid in a bottle promises to remove them. Dirt is not removed by tumbling in a dryer or dousing clothes with steam. Wrinkles will be there until you press them away. And as to savings, it costs a lot to be so cheap, especially if you value your time.

The fact that all these products exist tells us that people want to keep their clothes clean, fresh and pressed. It’s also the reason drycleaners exist. The important thing is to make sure people know drycleaners have the best and most convenient solution and, all things considered, it’s not that expensive. So don’t spend so much trying to be cheap.

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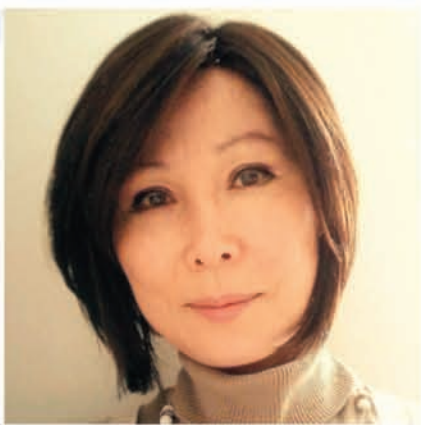


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Roots and routes

Even during last decade's recession, Curtis Cleaners of Grand Rapids, MI, enjoyed growing sales. The company, now 66 years old, has been in the hands of a third generation — brothers Andy and Chris Curtis — for more than ten years, though, the second generation owner, John "Bucky" Curtis, is still around to watch his sons steer the ship.

In the last decade, they've focussed on expanding pickup and delivery routes. The move was borne out of necessity when the Curtis brothers realized that the continuous growth of the family business hit a snag.

"During the recession years, we were always growing by 15, 20 or 25 percent because we were adding pickup and delivery even though retail might not have been going up. We were always growing new routes," noted Chris. "Then, a couple of years later it finally hit us. It was kind of a flat year and retail took a dive. Routes didn't grow for the first time and we thought, 'Whoa! What's going on?'"

For about a year-and-a-half, the downward trend persisted prompting the brothers to hire Business Development Manager Greg Cutler to reinvigorate the routes. Revenues soon began to climb back up again.

"I think Greg asked me to buy a new van in June. That was a pretty solid 'no.' Then, he wanted to start a new route and a new territory and then... well, now we have a new van and a new route," Chris said. "I hope by this time next year to have another man and another van."

Originally, when Chris joined the company he was a bit confused by the delivery concept. He asked Andy if it would be similar to pizza delivery. Andy explained that the idea would be more like a garbage truck, having specific routes to run on certain days.

It was not a bad analogy considering dirty laundry is about as desirable as garbage to some people. Regardless the Curtis family's roots were built on piles of unclean clothes.

Back in the early days, Andy and Chris's grandfather Richard Curtis (not to be confused with the director of *Notting Hill* and *Love Actually*) didn't mind dirty work; he just didn't want dirty attire.

As a lieutenant in the Marines, he had grown accustomed to impeccably crisp and clean uniforms. Starting Curtis Cleaners was essentially a way to make sure he could have his suit pressed to his liking.

"He couldn't get anything drycleaned in town. He couldn't get his suit pressed," Andy noted. "He didn't like that."

At about the same time he opened the business in 1953, he also utilized his tinkering skills to build fully stocked drycleaning plants and laundromats, including many Wash King franchises. That venture became a second business: Curtis Equipment Company. Richard set up stores all over Michigan, Indiana and Florida.

As gifted as Richard was with his hands, he also had a larger-than-life people-pleasing personality, which cer-

tainly doesn't hurt when you own a drycleaning plant. Also playing a big role was Kevin Smith (not to be confused with the director of *Clerks* and *Mallrats*) who married into the family and also spent most of his life with Curtis Cleaners.

Kevin was honored after his death about four years ago when Curtis Cleaners added to its sign: "Now Delivering to Pearly Gates. RIP Kevin."

"It was kind of sad," Chris recalled. "He and my dad were partners and

ends straight to the bays and clean them up and sweep the floors in the laundry. All the things that I complain about now that don't get done, I used to do."

He currently sits on the board for the Michigan Institute of Laundering and Drycleaning.

Chris, on the other hand, went another direction at first. He spent a few years as a residential realtor, but unfortunately those years were

the routes one day in ten or so years," Chris added.

Not all cleaning jobs are equal at a drycleaning plant, of course, but some are completely unique. Case in point: a person called the company out of the blue one day and said, "I've got some fire hoses... can you wash them?"

"A local firefighter goes around the country and collects used fire hoses that have failed their tests and they

www.curtiscleaners.com



Curtis Family

Chris, John and Andy Curtis

they worked out a buy-out. He was officially retired and he made it six weeks before he passed."

After Richard, Kevin and Bucky spent decades building the business up, about 15 years ago a load of rags almost ended its run.

"We had a fire in 2004, so we're kind of completely rebuilt at that point," Chris noted. "In the laundromat, there was a customer — a restaurant customer — had left their rags in the dryer. Our staff member removed them from the dryer and placed them in a paper sack and they spontaneously combusted."

He also noted the humor of the situation, especially the timing: "I always like to joke with them... we were blessed because of the fire because Kevin and Bucky had to deal with all of the headaches and now we have to deal with this brand new plant."

Of course, the Curtis brothers have had their own challenges to overcome. When revenue growth atrophied, they called in the Route Pro James Peuster for help.

"I went out with James that [first] day and I think we signed up the person at the first door we knocked on. James says, 'It's not always that easy!'" Chris recalled. Next, Peuster went to help Andy. "We met back up a few minutes later and they were running down a driveway getting oranges thrown at them."

"All the good things happened to James when he was with me," Andy laughed.

Andy is a "lifer" in the cleaning industry and if he had to wager a guess, he'd say he's been at the plant since the day he was born.

"I think I got my first official paycheck when I was in sixth grade," he recalled. "For a little while, we had a car wash, too, in front of the building. I would come after school and on week-

right on the cusp of the recession.

"I went into real estate right out of high school," he explained. "It was not a great time for an 18-year-old to try to sell real estate. I needed a paycheck. Then, Andy started telling me about this pickup and delivery thing."

The delivery routes have always been an area of focus for Chris with the company. He oversees a lot of the routes himself and finds time to work the front counter and the back office. Andy is the head drycleaner/spotter who runs the day-to-day operations of the plant and also shares times with his duties at Curtis Equipment, Co., which Bucky still manages.

The two siblings have worked well together so far. "It's certainly not always sunshine and rainbows, but at the end of the day, we're all in it together," Chris laughed.

Today, the company's main production facility takes up a little over 7,000 square feet in Lowell, plus they have two additional locations in Grand Rapids and Cascade. Overall, they employ roughly 30 to 35 people.

Approximately ten years ago, they had zero route customers. When Andy started the project, they put five good regular customers on it. That was the beginning of 2009.

After years of dodging slamming doors and flying fruit ("We try as much as we can to have our guys be door-to-door salesmen," Chris said.), they estimate about 60 to 70 percent of the business is from the delivery routes.

"We currently have six route vans on the road Monday/Thursday and Tuesday/Friday," Chris explained. "The total number of routes could be anywhere from 14 to 16."

Even when a foot of snow falls, the routes remain open (though the vans might carry salt buckets and be equipped with snow tires).

"I think we've only officially closed

can't put them in service anymore," Andy said. "He goes around and collects them and turns them into apparel: belts, rugs, wallets, all sorts of different stuff. They were power washing them for a while."

"It took some figuring out but we've got a system now. So, he brings in loads of fires hoses and we run them through some of our old washers in the back warehouse that we use for horse blankets and that kind of stuff. We run them through there and hang them up to dry. It's good money."

Originally, it was quite perplexing to receive "giant wads of 150-ft. long fire hoses." Now, they worked it out with the client (the business name is Ladder 34) to bring them in rolled up and folded up more neatly in containers.

According to Andy, it's jobs like that one that keep the work interesting.

"There's always something to do. If you're bored and you can't find something to do, you don't want to be here," he said. "There's always a stain you can't get out or a challenge on a delicate item and the way they make things now. It's always challenging. Most drycleaners don't keep up with the fabrics. They keep changing the way they make all the clothes and we don't change the way we're processing the clothes. That's one thing we've done in the last couple of years; we've really changed the way we process clothes. I think that's going to make a big difference in the long run."

The fire of 2004 was unfortunate, but virtually every piece of equipment has been upgraded since and the plant is running better than ever. In the end, just as it was for Richard in the beginning, it's about that final result.

"It's always about getting a higher quality and letting the machines do more of the work," Andy said.

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Exhibits, seminars by NCA in Secaucus

Texcare 2019, the National Cleaners Association's biennial drycleaning and laundry trade show, will take place Oct. 19 and 20 at the Meadowlands Expo Center in Secaucus, NJ.

NCA is also planning to hold its second annual Coats for Kids golf outing on Monday, Oct. 21 the day after the show closes.

The exhibit will offer opportunities to learn about new solvents and cleaning technologies, demonstrations of automation software and a chance to meet new vendors.

The exhibit hall will be open from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday. Admission to the exhibit hall is free for all cleaners.

Advance registration for TexCare registration can save time at the site. For information, email annhargrove252@gmail.com or visit www.texcareusa.com.

On both Saturday and Sunday seminars will begin at 9 a.m.

The first seminar on Saturday will explain how to grow your business with voice search.

"The world is changing and you have to

change with it to stay relevant," NCA said. "Gone are the days of the Yellow Pages and the Pennysaver; here are the days of the apps and voice search.

"Disruptors are counting on drycleaners to be unaware of the change happening around them. Prove them wrong. Find out what changes are happening in the world — from voice search to Alexa and Siri, and how you can use them to attract and keep customers."

A 10 a.m. panel presentation will cover computer systems. Attendees will learn how the industry's leading software providers can help you grow and control your business, from facial recognition to key performance indicators, to text messaging and garment tracking.

The first Sunday morning session will help answer the question "Is Now the Time to Get Out or Grow?"

Whether you are thinking about growing through acquisition or thinking you have had enough and want to sell, this seminar will offer tips and techniques in identifying likely buyers and sellers, negotiating and establishing a reasonable value.

At 10 a.m., a seminar will address diversification and things you can do to make more money.

From added services available for just a small investment to dramatic diversification opportunities exist that could change the entire trajectory of your business, this panel presentation will offer fresh new ideas and possible avenues of growth.

Also on Sunday, NCA will offer New York state-mandated sexual harassment training which has an October deadline. The training will be offered in both English and Spanish sessions on Sunday at 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Preregistration for the training sessions is recommended as space is limited. Contact Ann Hargrove at (800) 888-1622 to preregister or for more information.

NCA has secured special rates at two nearby hotels. Embassy Suites offers king suites at \$189 and double suites at \$199. Both rates include a cooked to order breakfast. Call the hotel, (201) 864-7300, for reservations.

The Holiday Inn Secaucus offers king or double rooms at \$149. Call the hotel di-

rectly for room reservations, (888) 231-5540.

Reservations and other information can be found on the NCATexcare website, www.texcareusa.com.

On Monday following the show, NCA's Coats for Kids golf outing will take place at the White Beeches Golf and Country Club in Haworth, NJ.

That event will begin with registration at 10 a.m. followed by a buffet breakfast before the noon shotgun start.

Evening activities will include a three-hour open bar beginning at 5 p.m. Dinner and carving stations will be available beginning at 6 p.m. with awards and raffles at 7 p.m.

Since 1967, NCA's Coats for Kids has facilitated the collection, cleaning and donating of coats for children in need, partnering with local drycleaners and other organizations.

To join the golfers or be a sponsor, contact Joe Hallak at jjh@hallak.com or Richard Aviles at Richard@kinggarment-care.com. Online registration is available at www.coatsforkidsusa.com.

Mischief at Milt & Edie's

Continued from page 1

notes that she has seen quite a few celebrities at the cleaners, but seeing McCarthy "was like a whole different level because that's like my favorite artist. I just love her so much."

Then, after a couple of days full of big surprises, she received the biggest one of all. DeGeneres adds at the end of the interview, "Well, we wanted to have you on just to apologize, but since then I learned that you owe some money in student loans. You're trying to save money for a car and you're such a good person, you were so patient with her. You didn't get frustrated. You didn't tell someone to come help. You just stayed there with her the whole time. So, I want to reward your kindness. So Shutterfly wants to give you \$20,000."

Overwhelmed by the gesture, Alexis cries and hugs Ellen. It's a nice ending to the story.

Behind the Scenes

Like most things out of Hollywood, there was quite a bit going on behind the scenes before McCarthy initially even showed up at Milt & Edie's.

Michael Shader, co-owner of Milt & Edies with his wife, Beth, was the only one outside of Ellen DeGeneres' team that knew about the hidden camera prank. It almost didn't happen, however.

"Because of the nature of how we conduct business, we are contacted a lot by the entertainment industry to come in and shoot and make commercials, or this or that, and the irony is they want us to shut down," he explained.

Closing down a 24-hour cleaners would prevent Milt & Edie's from giving the kind of service that draws such people's attention in the first place.

"For the sake of our customers, we say, 'No,'" Shader added. "This is the first time we've allowed it, because first of all it is Ellen and Melissa happens to be our customer... and I was the only one who actually knew that it was going down."



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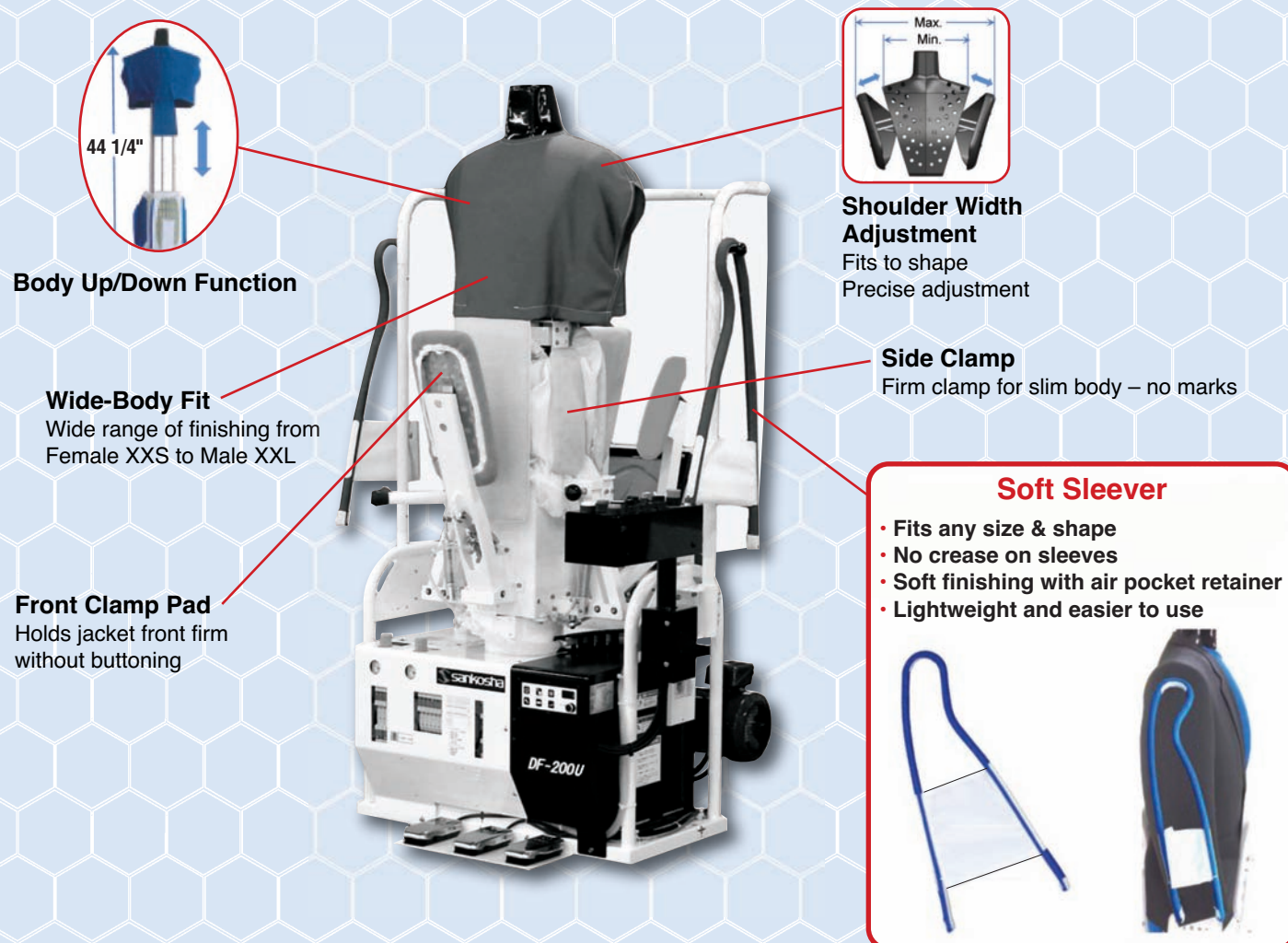
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NORTHEAST

NEFA heading to Worcester for Fall Fest

When the AC Hotel by Marriott opened in downtown Worcester in April of last year, XSS Hotels spent about \$30 million on the five-story property, making it an integral part of the city's downtown redevelopment plans.

With 170 guest rooms and a ballroom that can hold approximately 750 people, the European designed hotel offers luxurious accommodations.

It seems like an appropriate venue for the North East Fabricare Association's Fall Fest 2019, the first time the event will be held in Worcester, MA, in 14 years.

The event will take place from

Nov. 15 to 17 this year, which means there is still time for those seeking to make reservations at the AC Hotel.

"Capitalizing on Opportunity" is the theme of the conference with education sessions and exhibits designed to help attendees prepare for the new opportunities facing our industry.

The event gets underway at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday with welcoming remarks and an introduction of sponsors and exhibits for the weekend.

Sean Abbas, president of Threads, Inc. will be the first speaker with the topic "The Best

Culture Wins."

Threads, Inc. is a software company co-founded by Abbas to help organizations review employees on culture.

He has more than 25 years of experience managing people and leading companies. He believes in authentic communication and challenging the status quo and will use stories from his management experience to help leaders understand and improve the culture in their own organizations.

The next speaker, Rita Foley, will adopt the theme of the conference as the title of her talk.

A popular speaker at the Clean show in New Orleans, she is the owner of Regency Cleaners in Durham, NC, a six-store operation including laundromats and valet routes.

She also serves as the past president of the North Carolina Association of Launderers and Cleaners and is a member of the Coin Laundry Association and Methods for Management.

She will speak from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. which will be followed by a luncheon roundtable with discussion on industry best practices.

That will be followed by an operator spotlight featuring NEFA's 2019 "Spotlight Drycleaner."

A break to see the exhibitor's showcase will take place from 3 to 3:20 p.m.

Wrapping up the afternoon will be NEFA Executive Director Peter Blake who will discuss "Using All the Tools in your Toolbox" from



Chris Allsbrooks



Sean Abbas



James Peuster



Rita Foley

3:20 until 4:30 p.m.

Evening plans feature NEFA's Saturday night cocktail reception and silent auction.

James Peuster and Chris Allsbrooks will give presentations on Sunday morning following a buffet breakfast from 8 to 9 a.m.

Peuster will talk on "Turning Potential into Performance: Investing in Your Staff" from 9 to 10:30 a.m. He is the founder of The Route Pros and is a featured columnist for NATIONAL CLOTHESLINE. His expertise includes management, team building, and staff development.

In addition to his 15 years experience working in the fabric care industry, he has also been a training expert for a national restaurant chain.

Chris Allsbrooks, currently director of store operations for ZIPS, will speak at 10:45 a.m. on "Capitalizing on Opportunities: The Importance of Valuing Your Customers."

Prior to joining ZIPS in 2009 she worked in the textile analysis laboratory of the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute for 16 years. As a textile analyst, her primary role was to determine the cause and responsibility for damage on garments.

The conference is scheduled to wrap up by noon on Sunday.

NEFA has secured a discounted rate of \$149/night based on double occupancy at the AC Hotel by Marriott.

Full Registration for the conference is \$250/per person for NEFA members and \$300 for non-members. DLI Premier members can register one and get a second registration at no charge.

Registration for just Saturday, which includes breakfast, lunch and the cocktail reception, is \$199 for members and \$225 for non-member. Sunday-only registration is also available.

For more information or to register, visit www.nefabricare.com.



RAINBOW CLEANERS in Norwalk, CT, purchased a Unisec Model MS402NE through Yes Tech. Pictured from left are Robert Lee of Unisec, Mr. Park, owner of Rainbow Cleaners, and Kevin Jung of Yes Tech.

Obituary

Ennis Dawson, Philadelphia cleaner

Ennis G. Dawson, owner of Dawson's Cleaners in Philadelphia, died Sept. 5 at home. He was 81.

He was born on Nov. 26, 1937 in Bivins, TX, the middle child of the late Hiram and Zephyr Dawson.



The Dawson family moved to Philadelphia in 1946. Shortly after relocating, they joined Williams Chapel Baptist Church, presently known as Metropolitan Baptist Church. He was active in Sunday school and was baptized in 1954.

Dawson was educated in Philadelphia public schools and graduated from Bok Vocational-Technical High School in 1955 as a tailor.

Following graduation he began his career at Sears Northeast Philadelphia as the store's first African-American tailor, then a salesman, in the men's department. He later became the first African American manager of that department. In the late 1960s, he managed women's wear at Sears Upper Darby.

In 1973, he left Sears and opened Dawson's Cleaners on Lansdowne Ave., offering professional drycleaning and alterations. In the mid-

1980s, he opened a second store.

The two stores were staffed by members of the Dawson family, said daughter Crystal Blanco. "I helped for a few years. My husband, my mother, and my cousin worked there. It was truly a family operation," she said.

The business had a diverse customer base. "Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter was a customer. We had people from the Philadelphia Zoo, and Ringling Brothers when the circus was in town," his daughter said. "But the bulk of the business came from West Philly and Overbrook."

Dawson was an expert tailor and much admired for the mentoring of young people in the community, his daughter said. He was in business for 42 years before selling both locations and retiring in August 2015.

He was an avid fan of National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) drag racing. In his younger days he enjoyed racing cars, winning many trophies. As a spectator, he traveled all over the country to the major racing events, becoming acquainted with the professional drivers and their teams.

He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Marlene; his daughter, Crystal Blanco; a sister, Sandra Brown; sisters-in-law, Joan Dawson and Lorraine Brister; brother-in-law, Edward Brown; son-in-law, Julio Blanco; three grandchildren, and a great-granddaughter.

Services were held Sept. 14 at 10 a.m. at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church in Ardmore.

Three classes remain on NCA's 2019 slate

With a trio of classes filling out the remainder of 2019, the National Cleaners Association will end the year on a busy note.

Those seeking to obtain or update their DEC certification for New York State will have a chance on Oct. 6 and 13. The class will meet on those two consecutive Sundays from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. in New York City. The cost is \$809 for NCA members and \$1,309 for non-members.

The association has also scheduled two one-day seminars that will both take place in the Bronx.

On Nov. 24, NCA will offer an eight-hour class on "Basic Spotting 101 with Alternative Solvents."

Then, an eight-hour course on "Advanced Stain Removal and Bleaching" is set to take place on Dec. 15.

Both classes meet from 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. The cost to attend the basic spotting or advanced stain removal seminar is \$250 for NCA members and \$350 for non-members.

For more information on any of the association's upcoming events, or to register, visit them online at www.nca-i.com.



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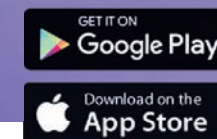
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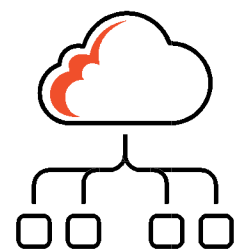
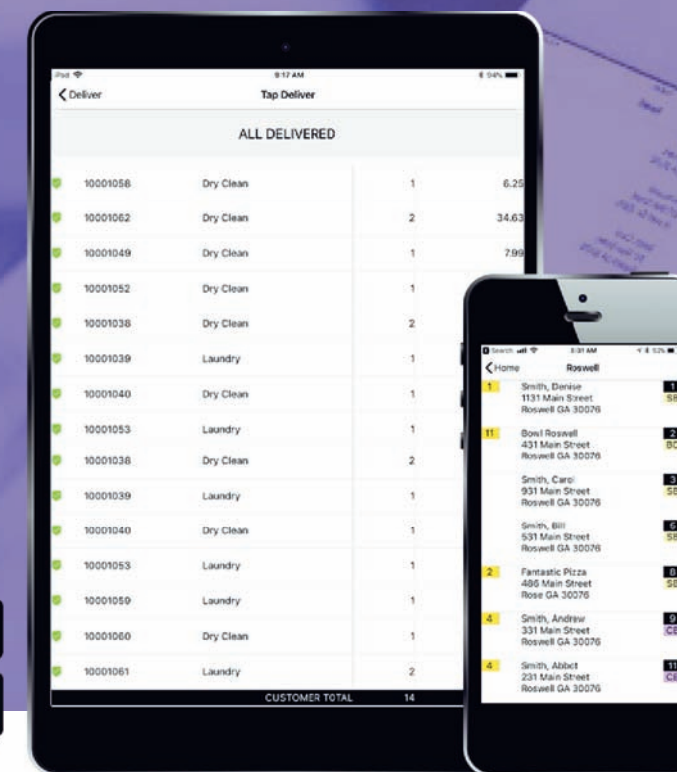
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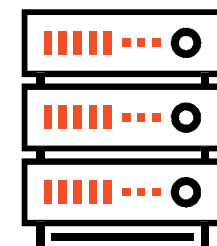


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KEEP IT LEGAL



BY FRANK KOLLMAN

The pitfalls of employee evaluations

The performance evaluation is the least understood and the most abused practice in labor and employment law.

If you attend a seminar on good employment practices, you will be told how important they are, how to complete them to avoid legal problems down the road, and how to get around them if you, as many employers do, screw them up. I wish it were that simple.

I have been formally evaluated only once in my legal career, which now spans four decades. I was 28 or 29, and I

was working at a large firm. The partner, a nice fellow, told me that I was really doing well, that my work was excellent, and that clients liked me. He added, however, that the partners believed that I “did not take criticism well.”

I do not recall if I said “OK, I’ll work on that,” or if I said “That’s nonsense, I take criticism very well.” It was probably the latter.

Evaluations are used to determine wage increases, correct deficiencies in job performance, and ultimately to show that the employee discharged

for poor work performance had notice that her choice was to improve or get fired.

More often, evaluations are used by plaintiff’s lawyers to show that your former employee was the victim of discrimination or wrongful termination. If your evaluations are more likely to hurt you in litigation, it’s better not to use them at all.

The first problem with evaluations is that they are rarely accurate. While there may be companies that employ only top notch, honest, and motivated employees, the odds of your company being one of them are not good. Even the best of companies has employees with different skills and ability, and while one person may be a fantastic performer when he’s there, that does not mean he is always on time, a good team player, or someone who is good at paperwork. Nobody is perfect, even your best employee.

Essentially, evaluations of a workforce should show a few outstanding performers, a large group of satisfactory employees, and a small group of soon-to-be former employees.

One of the reasons why they do not is because of the rating systems found on typical evaluation forms. No employee wants to receive an “average” rating, and no employer wants to give an “average” rating because “good enough” is not the goal. Giving an average employee five stars or an “outstanding” rating, however, en-

courages everyone to be just “good enough.”

It’s like recreational council soccer — make sure every kid gets a trophy. In the workplace, employers do not want to upset average performers by tell them the truth.

Unfortunately, when it comes time to terminate a poorly performing employee, those prior outstanding evaluations become a major liability.

How do you explain at a deposition why this five-star 67-year-old employee with diabetes went from outstanding in 2018 to unemployed in 2019? And if the idea of evaluations is to make the employee improve, what sense does it make to give five-star reviews in any category?

For this reason, if you use evaluation forms with ratings, consider changing to a form that reports performance in a more objective way. “John averaged 10 widgets an hour last quarter, but is expected (or required) to average 15 this quarter” is a better evaluation than a star rating, and outstanding employees can be noted by stating “John regularly exceeds 20 widgets per hour, and it will be reflected in his wage increase this year.”

Using words instead of ratings to describe performance is not without its risks.

First, vague conclusory language is not always helpful. Words like “satisfactory,” “inappropriate,” “attitude,” “difficult,” etc., should be avoided

without more explanation. It would be better to say that “John needs to avoid vulgar language and lower his voice to coworkers when he has a problem” instead of “John has a bad attitude.”

Second, editorial language or overblown explanations can be dangerous, especially in the hands of plaintiff’s lawyers. For example, “Beth is doing as well as she can given that this is normally a man’s job,” “Andy needs to spend less time complaining about discrimination,” “Ron’s performance has deteriorated since his hunting accident and medical leave,” and “Habibe needs to act more like an American” are comments that are dangerous even if you are only thinking them.

What is the perfect evaluation? I cannot describe it, but I know it when I see it. It is helpful to the employee who needs to improve and reaffirming to the employee who is doing a good job. It accurately places the employee in the spectrum from satisfactory to great without using ratings. It contains no language that is subject to torture by a clever plaintiff’s lawyer. It contains language that is helpful to your lawyer if the employee is about to enter the ranks of the unemployed. It is done on time (annually, for example), and it is consistent with the evaluations of other employees in structure and tone. It is shorter than this article.

Finally, evaluations can be excellent devices at any point in an employee’s tenure with the company.

If it is clear that an employee is not going to make it during her first 30 to 90 days, that first and final evaluation should explain why. If an employee is starting to slip in his performance, the evaluation should be a warning shot. If slippage continues, the evaluation should set goals that, if not met, will result in the termination of his or her employment.

Again, badly constructed evaluations are far worse than no evaluations at all. Use them as an opportunity to make your company better.

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. It has articles, sample policies, news and other information on employee/employer relations.



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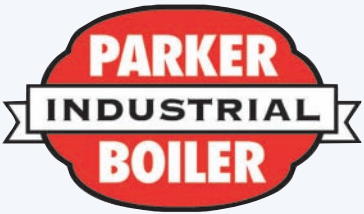
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THE SPOTTING BOARD

Old techniques give way to the new

I have been teaching spotting and drycleaning more than 50 years.

At the time I was director of the New York School of Drycleaning, the spotting techniques I taught were the law of the land. These procedures that were taught are now inefficient, time consuming, unsafe to some fabrics and not completely EPA friendly.

In my consultations and training, I now teach entirely different spotting techniques, but it is my understanding that

the old techniques are still taught.

Old spotting process for unidentified stains

The thought process was to first treat it as a dryside stain, then a wetside stain. The black brush was designated for dryside stains and the white brush for wetside stains.

- Oily type paint remover.
- Mechanical action.
- OTPR and amyl acetate.
- Mechanical action.
- Flush with volatile dry

solvent or dryclean.

The stain is then worked as a wetside stain.

- Flush-steam gun.
- Neutral lubricant.
- Mechanical action.
- Flush.
- Neutral lubricant plus acetic acid.
- Mechanical action.
- Flush.
- Oxalic acid — test.
- Heat.
- Flush.
- Rust remover — test.
- Heat.

- Flush.
- Neutral lubricant plus ammonia.
- Mechanical action.
- Flush.
- Peroxide plus ammonia — test.
- Heat.
- Flush.

Reasons why this method is inefficient

1. White and black brushes do not have to be separated since new environmentally safe dryside agents can be

The old spotting procedures that were taught are now inefficient, time consuming, unsafe to some fabrics and not completely EPA friendly.

flushed wetside.

2. There are substitutes for amyl acetate that are environmentally safe.

3. Since most unidentified stains are wetside, it is more time consuming to treat dryside.

4. Acetic acid often leaves odor in fabrics and is capable of causing color change.

5. Ammonia is not completely environmentally safe and can cause color loss on some fabrics.

6. Too much testing of chemicals is time consuming.

7. Sodium perborate is a more effective last step bleach than hydrogen peroxide.

New spotting processes

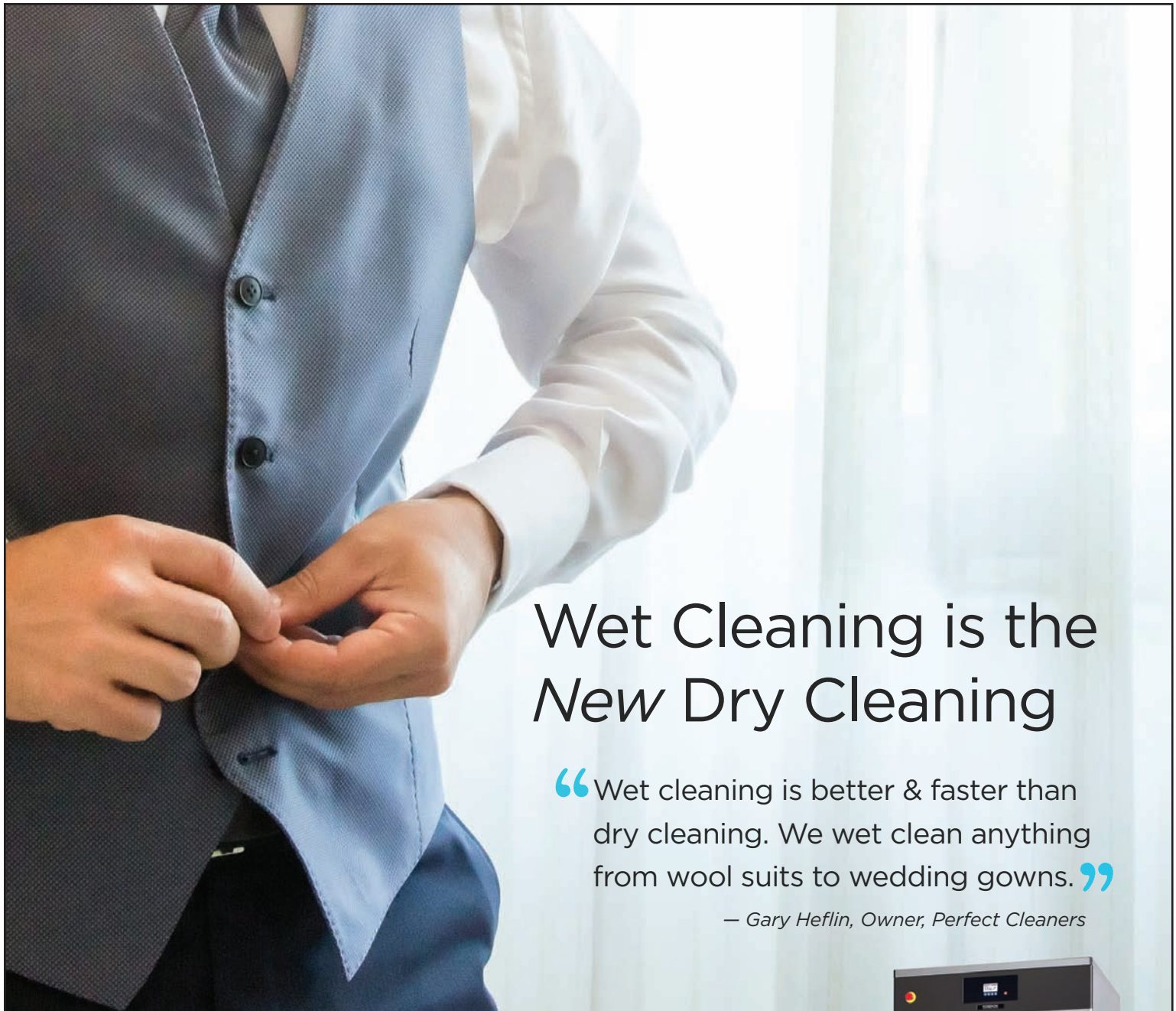
Work a stain wetside then dryside. The process used entails prepared protein and tannin formulas that are relatively safe and do not have to be tested. Rust remover and oxalic acid are used as last steps if needed.

- Flush.
- Neutral lubricant.
- Mechanical action.
- Flush.
- Tannin formula.
- Mechanical action, flush.
- Protein formula.
- Mechanical action, flush.
- Citrus based spotting agent.

- Mechanical action, flush.
- Oily-type paint remover — environmentally safe.
- Mechanical action.
- Flush.
- Ink remover.
- Mechanical action.
- Flush.
- Sodium perborate-test.
- Heat.
- Flush.
- Neutralize.
- Flush.

- Mechanical action.
- Flush.
- Ink remover.
- Mechanical action.
- Flush.
- Sodium perborate-test.
- Heat.
- Flush.
- Neutralize.
- Flush.

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 or through his website is www.garmentanalysis.com.



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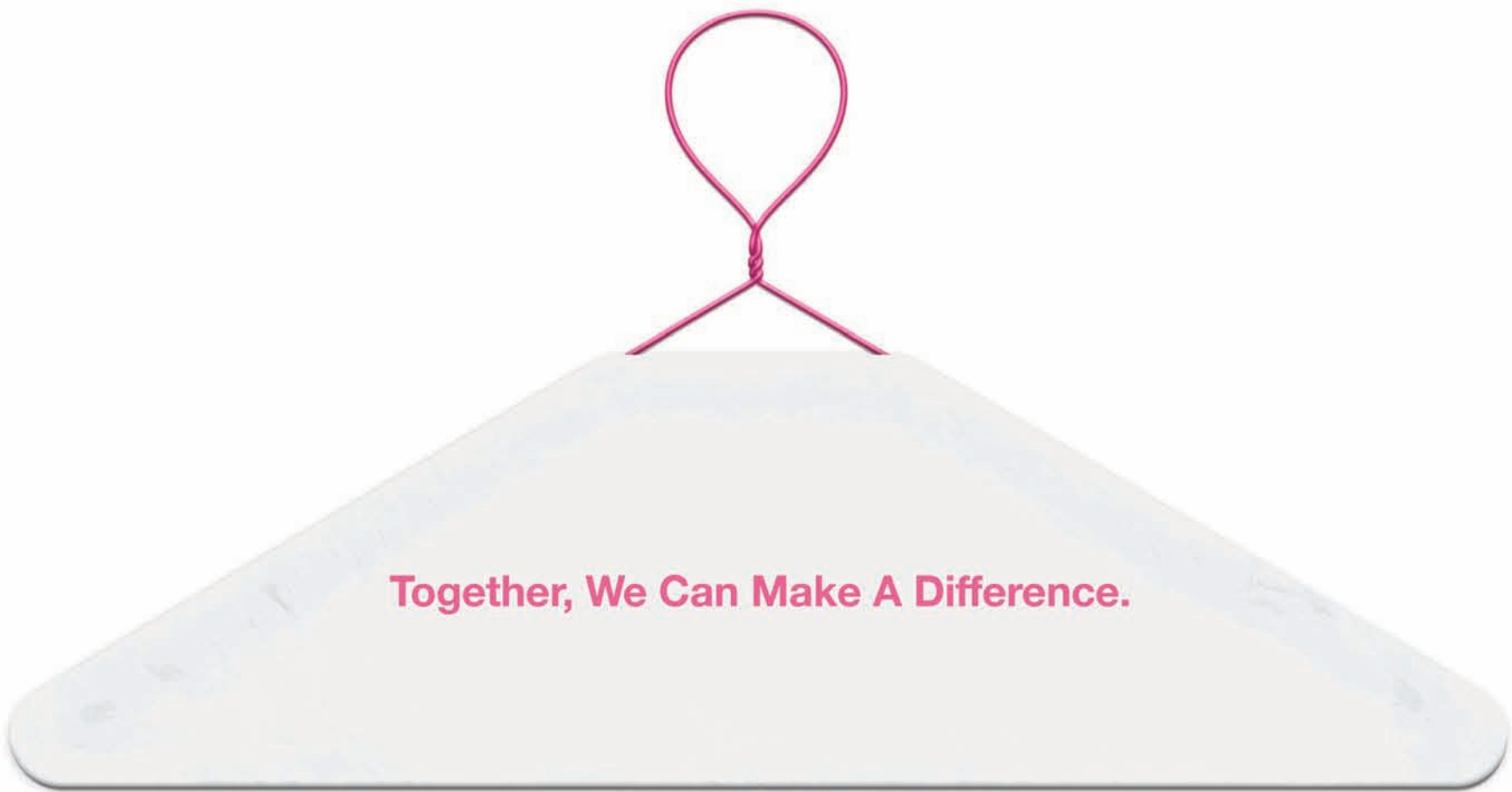
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MIDWEST

State grants help Ohio cleaners comply

Several Ohio drycleaners have received assistance from the state in replacing cleaning equipment to help with clean air compliance. The financing assistance comes through the Ohio Air Quality Development Authority's Clean Air Resource Center that helps small businesses comply with the Clean Air Act.

"OAQDA offers a variety of financing opportunities to Ohio businesses seeking to become

clean air facilities," said Christina O'Keeffe, OAQDA executive director.

Recent recipients include Esteem Cleaners in Parma Heights, Mercury Cleaners in Defiance, Henry Cleaners in Columbus, Long Cleaners in Miamisburg, and Clifton Cleaners in Cleveland.

Esteem Cleaners is replacing its current drycleaning equipment with a new machine that uses GreenEarth and a wetcleaning

machine.

"The new equipment we will purchase thanks to the CARC financing from OAQDA is an effective and environmentally sound alternative to traditional solvents," Thomas Fuller, owner of Esteem Cleaners, said. "Using these safe, alternative solvents allows us to maintain our high quality customer service standards while eliminating hazardous waste."

"We appreciate the State of Ohio's commitment to sustainability in awarding this grant to Esteem Cleaners," said GreenEarth President Tim Maxwell. "Providing top-quality garment care while reducing water, electricity, and natural gas consumption using an environmentally non-toxic solution will benefit Thomas, his employees, and the community for years to come."

In March, OAQDA approved Mercury Cleaners for up to \$76,000 in funding to replace an old drycleaning machine with a new system that will reduce energy consumption and also cut hazardous emissions.

Long Cleaners in Miamisburg was approved in 2018 for financing to replace their old cleaning machine with a non-perc alternative. The company has been in operation since 1942 and has three locations in the Dayton area.

"This financing through OAQDA provides significant operational improvements for our business," said Tom Perry, owner of Long Cleaners. "With the ability to use these alternative solvents, we will be able to switch to a cleaning system which will eliminate hazardous waste."

Henry's Cleaners in Columbus was approved for up to \$48,000 to purchase and install equipment that uses environmentally-friendly cleaning solvents.

"The Henry's Cleaners project is a wonderful example of the partnerships that OAQDA develops with small Ohio businesses through the Clean Air Resource Center to help them tackle the financial challenges of meeting federal regulations and encourage their economic growth," Christina O'Keeffe, OAQDA executive director, said.

The business was established in 1969 by Henry Bufford, grandfather of current owner Eric Warren, and has operated at the same location for 50 years.

"I began working with my



Christina O'Keeffe, OAQDA executive director, and Thomas Fuller, owner of Esteem Cleaners, are pictured in front of the machine purchased with help from an OAQDA grant.

grandfather in 1994, and we worked diligently together in the business and in the community. When my grandfather died in 2005, I became sole proprietor of the business and continue his commitment to the community in customer service," Eric Warren, president of Henry's, said.

"This financing from OAQDA allows us to create a safer environment for employees and customers by eliminating hazardous waste and preserving the quality of the air," he added.

Clifton Cleaners received financing approval for up to \$60,000 from CARC.

The business, established in 1954, plans to purchase new cleaning equipment that will help the business reduce hazardous emissions.

A business can qualify for the CARC program if it has 100 or fewer employees, maintains offices or operating facilities in Ohio with its principal place of business in the state, has financial difficulty complying with the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, and emits less than 75 tons per year of all regulated pollutants and 50 tons or less per year of any regulated pollutant.



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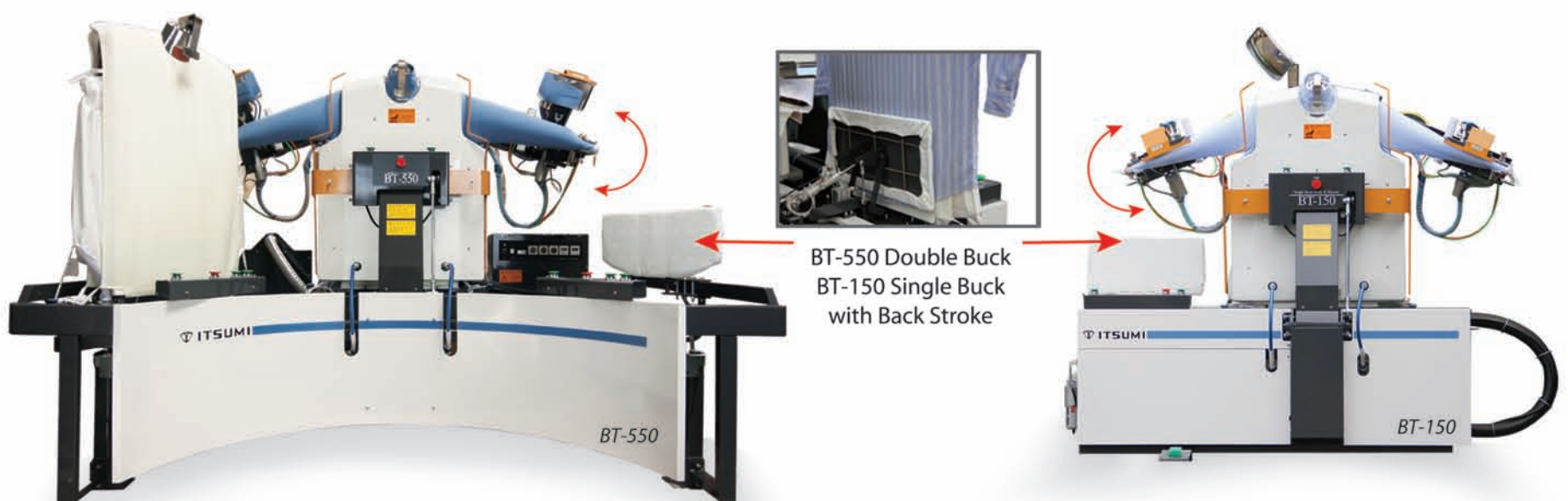
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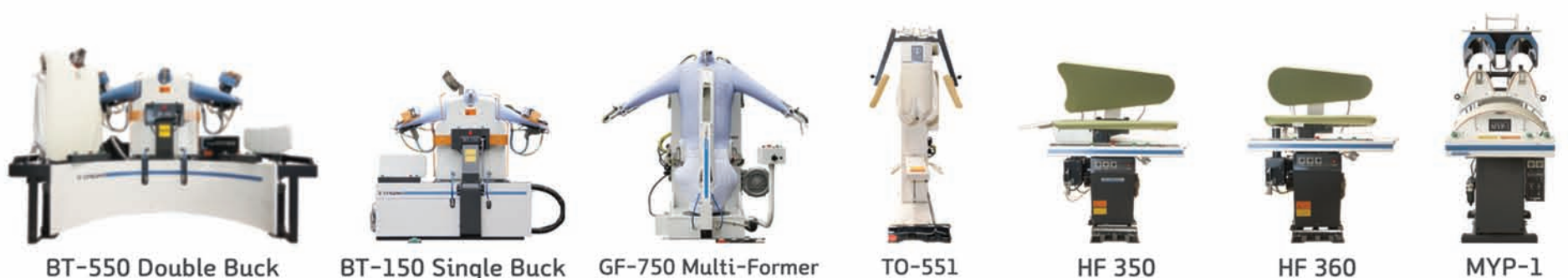
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THE ROUTE PRO



BY JAMES PEUSTER

Small improvements that add up

Raise the bar on 100 things 1 percent and you can grow 100 percent.

I am a huge baseball fan as a well student of the laws of probability. You put the two together and you see the difference between good and bad luck, taking chances and making choices that all define the pathway to success.

Major League hitters and pitchers listen to their coaches as they strive to get better and better, which in turn means more financial success. What

does this have to do with drycleaning?

Well, after having two regional conferences with some of the best in our industry, I was able to take away many little adjustments, changes, new ideas and motivational practices that I know will add up to increased profits and decreased costs.

The key to all of this is the willingness to learn more to earn more, a key ingredient for anyone who wants to succeed.

One thing that I continue to see in the success equation are

the three main elements of a route developer: driving, customer service and sales. They have to learn how to be inventory specialists, good drivers and focused on not hitting cars while not missing bags or misdelivering clothes.

They have to communicate with route customers from the very first bag they get to when they are missing in action.

Third, they must strive to make sales attempts and get new starts.

That is a lot of responsibility for one individual to follow.

The manifest is the key. Whether you still print or use a mobile device to go from A to B to C To Z, having the manifest in order and detailed makes it more efficient and accurate for the driver to use and the manager to have access to.

From simple notes on delivery instructions to making sure the piece count is correct, the driver can eliminate many mistakes during the delivery process. If you have a driver who refuses to use the manifest, then you write them up.

The manifest is the one tool that leads to success or failure, depending on if it is used correctly. If a driver says, "I know this like the back of my hand" and doesn't use it as a reference, mistakes will be made. Also, they are holding you hostage in regards to making sure they are "irreplaceable."

When it comes to customer service, make sure you are addressing new customers, core customers, missing customers and lost customers.

Automated reminders for communication are nice, but a more personable interaction goes 10 times further. Every little thing you can do with retention increases the probability growing internally. Handwritten thank-you notes to simple hellos during the route add up.

Sales is the biggie. This is where some hit a grand slam while others get only the occasional hits. This is where it's so critical for each part of the sales cycle to be analyzed, critiqued, coached and the necessary adjustments to be put in

place.

One tip is to simply start off by handing the brochure right away to the prospect. This will allow time for the prospect to aesthetically look over your material as well as to hold something in their hand then staying in contact with you for another 10 seconds. That could be very valuable.

Having "free pick-up and delivery" on your van makes a big difference. Some vans leave off pick-up and that can confuse some. This is another example of how one or two little things can make all the difference in the world.

The bottom line is that cutting corners can cut your chances of growth.

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 information, call (816) 739-2066 or visit www.theroutepro.com.



The Route Pro conference in Richmond, VA, hosted by Puritan Cleaners, drew more than 20 participants.



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SOUTH WEST



TWIN OAKS CLEANERS AND LAUNDRY in Houston, TX, installed a Quicksort from Garment Management Systems. Brett McLeod (left) of GMS is pictured with Aaron Nishizaki, owner of Twin Oaks.

Deciding your future will be SDA’s topic in Tulsa

The Southwest Drycleaners Association will be posing the following question at an education seminar later this month: How do you know whether to sell your business, franchise or expand? On hand will be a panel of experts who will discuss ways you can assess your business and what you can expect from different scenarios. There will also be time for a Q&A session from the audience afterwards. CCK Strategies will show at-

tendees how to value their business and steps they can take on how to choose whether to sell or not, or even expand. Based out of Tulsa, CCK Strategies is a CPA firm that specializes in estate and succession planning as well as business appraisal and evaluation. Martinizing Drycleaning will be at the seminar, as well, to explain the benefits of franchising and the specific advantages such a partnership contains. The company can trace its root

back more than half a century and currently operates more than 400 stores in the U.S. and other countries around the world. The seminar will accompany SDA’s upcoming Membership Meeting, which will take place on Oct. 25 and 26 at the DoubleTree Warren Place in Tulsa, OK. It will kick off on Friday evening at 5:30 p.m. with a Happy Hour Welcome Reception. Then, members will meet in the lobby to head to dinner at the Bistro at Seville at 7 p.m.

Following an 8:30 a.m. breakfast on Saturday morning, SDA will host a board meeting beginning at 9 a.m. The expert panel will take place after lunch at 1:30 p.m. There is also time set aside at 3:30 p.m. for a discussion of legislative issues facing the industry. The evening will conclude with dinner at Pub W Tulsa. Those planning on attending can utilize a discounted rate by mentioning the Southwest Drycleaning Association.

The cost is \$119 per night at the DoubleTree Hotel Warren Place. Reservations have to be made prior to the cut-off date of Oct. 9. Call (800) 801-1317 or visit the link on the SDA web page at www.sda-dryclean.com. Looking ahead to next year, SDA has already secured a date and location for its Cleaners Showcase 2020 convention. It will run from April 16 to 18 at the Fort Worth Convention Center in Ft. Worth, TX.

Exhibitors can take advantage of early bird pricing on booths through Dec. 31. Visit www.sda-dryclean.com or call the SDA office, (512) 873-8195, for details. Millennial expert and Ted Talk speaker Jeff Butler will be the keynote speaker, focusing on creating authentic customer service and cultivating products and services that sell to this generation.



MELANIE’S CLEANERS in Little Elm, TX, purchased a Union HL-860 cleaning machine through Gulf States Laundry Machinery. Mahesh Derashri, the owner, is pictured with Matt A. Lipman of Union Drycleaning Products.

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SHIRT TALES



BY DON DESROSIERS

More highlights from New Orleans

The Clean Show in New Orleans had a lot to offer as far as shirt pressing equipment goes with many players in the game.

In the last two issues we have covered many of the offerings from these players. I took lots of photos at the booths and made movies of the equipment which include video of yours truly pressing on the shirt equipment. It is

one thing if you see an experienced factory representative pressing flawlessly on a shirt unit, but it is another thing entirely when you see a completely different person (me) with very short training pressing excellent shirts.

We have already covered offerings from Unipress with a brand new shirt unit at price point that is less than last year's model; Sankosha which

had a new tensioning steam form and a must-see stationary washer; Pony with at least

shirt on the buck and clamp the collar. No need to pull down the back or adjust any-

press. Weishi Fujistar continues to offer the most unique shirt on the market. See it in

A wide array of shirt finishing equipment was on display at Clean '19 with nearly every maker introducing new features.



Forenta's shirt unit does all the work — no need to pull down the back or adjust anything. A number of new features have been added, too.

three shirt units and their black Teflon coated steam chests; Hi-Steam which now features a pneumatic collar clamp and double heat exchangers; Itsumi with a new multi-former model which, if it could only do pants, would be the only press you would need in a plant; and Barbanti, a new name in the shirt equipment business that making shirt units for other brands for 30 years;

This month, let's take a look at Forenta, YAC and Weishi.

Forenta really should sell more shirt units. Their shirt units are great!

There is no fiddling with the back of the shirt when dressing the buck. You simply place the

thing. The shirt unit does all of the work. It really is a joy to press on this unit.

Forenta also introduced a heaping handful of new features to its entire line. To name a few:

- Pneumatic steam and vacuum valves.
- Pressure selector switches.
- Hanger racks available.
- An optional built-in vacuum.

All this is groundbreaking for Forenta!

YAC has always been famous for its high-production shirt unit.

This model year, they have added a feature that no other unit on the market has. After the shirt is dressed and queued on the buck, a wand that literally wipes the back of the shirt downward to assure a smooth

action on my website.

You can see videos of this and all the other units mentioned above on my website, www.tailwindsystems.com.

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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-Mike Astorino, Fabricare Cleaners

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YAC has added a wand that literally wipes the back of the shirt downward after dressing and queuing on the buck to assure a smooth press.



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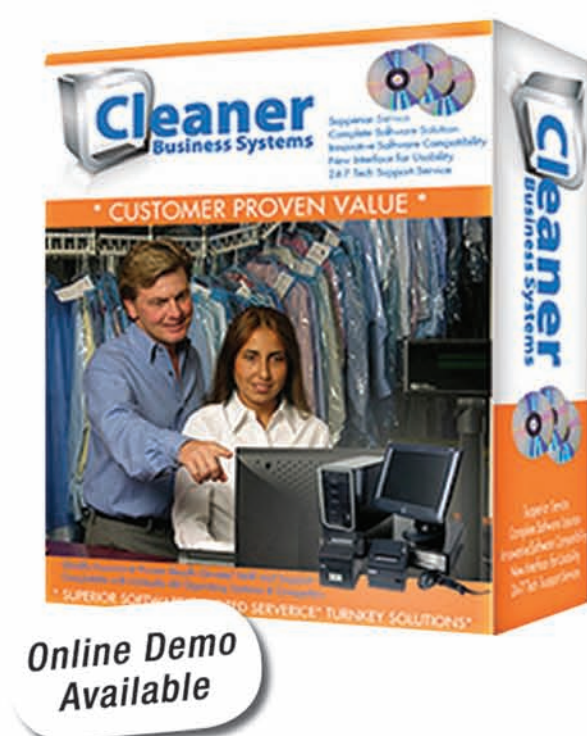
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NEWSMAKERS

The board of directors of **Richclean** announced the promotion of **Matthew Gilman** to president of the company on July 1.



He succeeds his father, **Barry Gilman**, who held the leadership position since the company began in 1975.

Barry decided that it was time for him to scale back his activities and responsibilities at Richclean and partially retire. There has been a long-time strategy in place for Matthew to step into the position when his father retired.

For the last 21 years, he has been learning the ropes and the Richclean board of directors felt that he was ready to step up to the leadership position.

Vernon Norris, chairman of the board, said, "I am proud of Matthew's accomplishments over the years and have full confidence that he will successfully lead Richclean going forward." He added that "Barry will still be around, fulfilling various roles and offering advice and wisdom when needed."

Richclean serves the cleaning industry in Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia with supplies and expertise for drycleaners, laundries, lodging, health care and coin-ops.

The company operates from a 20,500-sq.-ft. warehouse facility in western Henrico County just outside of Richmond, VA.

Keith Aune of Clean N Press in West St. Paul was elected president of the Minnesota Cleaners Association at MCA's annual meeting.

Also elected were **Nathan Hansen** of American Cleaners in Alexandria, vice president; and **Andrew Gaspard** of Skylark Cleaners in St. Paul, treasurer. **Polly Nemec** of St. Croix Cleaners in Stillwater, MN is the immediate past president.

Directors include **Dave Colehour** of Best Cleaners in Eden Prairie; **Janet Dynan** of Wayzata

Home Laundry and Dry Cleaning in Wayzata; **Laura Grahme** of Wayzata Pennhurst Cleaners in Wayzata; **Bill Kleinman** of Roxy Cleaners in St. Paul; **Dart Poach** of Don's Leather Cleaning, Inc. in Minneapolis; and **Dan Tollefson** of Schwegman's Cleaners in Willmar.

Allied Trades representatives on the board are **Tony Crain** of Minnesota Chemical, **David Weinberg** of E. Weinberg Supply Company and **Brent Hendrickson** and **Ken Bazille** of SoapTech Corporation.

Three stain removal specialists at **Milt & Edie's Cleaners** in Burbank, CA, have been recognized by long-time educator **Dan Eisen** as exceptional practitioners of their craft.

"Not all spotters are equal," Eisen said. "In my travels while doing training I encounter many spotters with unusual and exceptional ability. These spotters rise above the normal and are able to accomplish things that others can not."

At Milt & Edie's there is **Rafael Montano**, the manager and person in charge of all the spotters.

"Rafael makes sure all the spotters working at Milt & Edie's Cleaners use only the chemicals that he has tested and deemed safe for usage. He makes sure that all the spotters know its limitations and proper usage," Eisen said. "He checks and gives ongoing lessons on safety."

"How exceptional is it that this drycleaner who is open 24 hours a day can boast a near to zero percent spotting damages?" he asked.

Commercial laundry equipment manufacturer **Alliance Laundry** has purchased a former Manitowoc Crane plant of more than 330,000 square feet which will be used to help grow production at its Ripon location.

The action will create up to 250 positions, helping to boost the local economy. The move is not intended to reduce positions in Ripon, according to the company, as staff will be redeployed elsewhere



Top spotters at Milt & Edie's are pictured from left: Emilio Perez, Maria Jacobo, instructor Dan Eisen and Rafael Montano.

Emilio Perez is Rafael's right-hand man. He is also in charge of helping spotters who are having difficulty removing a stain. He oversees the cleaning and spotting of delicate fabrics and museum articles.

Maria Jacobo is a capable spotter and is an expert in fabrics limitations.

She also has a talent for identifying stains correctly using her sense of feel, odor, and appearance of the stain, Eisen said.

in that facility.

Cost of the project, which also includes upgrades to the Ripon facility, is approximately \$30 million.

Mike Schoeb, CEO of Alliance Laundry Systems said that by shifting some functions to the new facility, Alliance will be able to grow high-value production locally and increase the output of this factory with additional job creation in both communities.



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MIDATLANTIC



NEW EASTERN CLEANERS in Voorhees, NJ, installed a Columbia drycleaning system using Sensene solvent. Pictured are Jack O'Mara of O'Mara Brothers Equipment with the owners, Lisa and Philip Porras.

Last round of basic, advanced DLI courses for 2019 begin this month

Those seeking to attend an upcoming course on either basic or advanced drycleaning from the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute will have the option of this month or next year.

The association has one offering each for the remainder of the year: the one-week basic course will run from Oct. 21 to 25 and the two-week advanced course will be held from Oct. 28 to Nov. 8.

The introductory course, much as its title suggests, is suitable for newcomers to the industry or those with a few industry years of

experience or less. It will run from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The 40-hour course covers a lot of basics, from sorting drycleaning loads to operating a cleaning machine to cleaning silks, satins and other fabrics.

Students will also develop some stain removal skills including coffee and grease. Pressing pants, coats and skirts will be covered, as will using tensioning equipment to improve overall finishing quality.

The cost of tuition for the course is free for Premier mem-

bers of DLI and \$1,595 for all non-members.

Students who complete the course, or workers with a few years of production experience can learn more advanced knowledge and skills in the ten-day course.

Some of the main topics to be explored include: identifying cotton, silk, polyester and other fabrics; using bleaches without damaging fabric color; pressing blouses, dresses, ties, pleated garments, silks, velvets, corduroy; wetcleaning wool, silk and more; maintaining and changing filters; troubleshooting the drycleaning machine; current regulations facing the drycleaning industry; customer service techniques for drycleaners; getting clean, white laundry; cleaning and preserving wedding gowns; understanding the difference between solvents including perc, GreenEarth, hydrocarbon and SOLVON K4; pressing laundered shirts; and designing a drycleaning plant with the most effective workflow.

Tuition is free for Premier Members and \$2,195 for non-members.

Those seeking a complete drycleaning education can opt to take both the basic and advanced courses concurrently at a discounted overall rate of \$2,895 for non-members.

Course fees cover classroom instruction, notebook and other materials and lunch.

For more information or to register, call DLI, (800) 638-2627 or visit www.dlionline.org.

DLI offers self-study on its website

While the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute will conclude its 2019 classes at the School of Drycleaning Technology soon, the association also offers four online self-study classes.

Drycleaning Fundamentals presents basic information to help students understand the drycleaning process, regardless of their position in it.

Another offering, Fibers & Fabrics, is ideal for anyone handling fabrics, from the front counter to production.

DLI's Wetcleaning course is intended for beginners seeking to understand the wetcleaning process and veterans seeking to fine-tune it.

Lastly, there is a Stain Removal course. Self-study classes costs \$139 each for members and \$249 each for non-members.

For more information, visit www.dlionline.org and click on the "Education" link at the top of the homepage. A link for online Self Studies can be found there.



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SOUTH



MCDOWELL CLEANERS in Atlanta, GA, purchased a Union HL-860 heated hydrocarbon drycleaning machine through Gulf States Laundry Machinery. Ben Prema (left), president of Gulf States Laundry Machinery-Georgia, is pictured with Reg Kirk, owner of McDowell Cleaners.

Plans take shape for NCALC’s annual convention in Raleigh

The North Carolina Association of Launderers and Cleaners are trying offer a little bit of everything at their upcoming annual convention.

In his “From the President’s Column” from the Spring/Summer edition of Carolina Clean, NCALC President David Makepeace summed up the association’s plans: “It is going to be held in Raleigh on October 25th and 26th at the Embassy Suites in Brier Creek. We will have a roundtable discussion on the latest in equipment technology on Fri-

day before dinner, 4 educational sessions on Saturday morning, a host of activities to choose from for Saturday afternoon and of course, excellent fellowship Friday and Saturday night.”

Then, there is the keynote speaker at the Friday dinner: Stan Phelps, a Forbes contributor, TEDx speaker, IBM futurist and author of the *Purple Goldfish* business series.

His program will be called “Purple Goldfish: Little Things Make the Biggest Difference in Driving Loyalty and Sales.”

Essentially, he will focus on how customer experience and employee engagement can drive differentiation, increase loyalty and create positive word of mouth in business.



Phelps

Topics that will be explored in the seminar sessions on Saturday morning include employee recruitment and retention, marketing and advertising, plant equipment maintenance and improving plant production.

Later in the evening, NCALC will present its President’s Reception and Recognition Banquet. Also throughout the weekend, the association will host its annual membership meeting and there will be tabletop vendor exhibits.

Those with spare time on their hands will have plenty of local Raleigh attractions nearby such as the State Capitol, the North Carolina Art Museum and the Museum of Natural Sciences.

For more details or to register, contact NCALC by calling (919) 313-4542 or them at visit www.ncalc.org.

SEFA hosts board meeting in Nashville

Board members of the South Eastern Fabricare Association recently gathered in Music City — Nashville, TN — for the annual summer meeting.

The agenda focussed on four major areas of concern: membership, member services, education and the Southern Drycleaners and Launderers Show that will be hosted next year in Orlando, FL.

“This was a great meeting and I’m really excited about the future of SEFA. This meeting laid the foundation for a great 2020,” said SEFA President Rhonda Eysel.

A top priority for the association will be membership growth and retention, which they hope to achieve with educational programs in each member state (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina and Tennessee).

During the meeting, it was also noted that SEFA Executive Director Peter Blake will give the association a stronger “in-the-field” presence for better interaction and more feedback.

“I am really excited about getting out more to the members,” he said, “and this will give me a better understanding of what our members are looking for and what services will best assist their success.”



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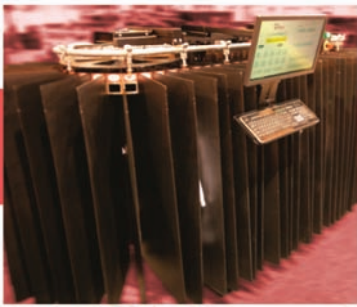
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Bob Hamila (*Lighthouse Cleaners / Palm Beach Gardens, FL*)

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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INFORMATION CENTRAL

Products and Services for Drycleaners



Self-contained scissor press

MORRISTOWN, TN — Forenta has introduced a fully self-contained drycleaning press that meets ETL approval for use in the U.S., Canada and Mexico. This press is ideal for small shops where central steam and vacuum are not available.

The press utilizes all the recent product improvements to the Forenta scissor press line and is available in multiple head and buck configurations.

The optional integrated vacuum is available in 120- or 230-volt single phase. An easily accessible pressure selector switch provides for a firm or soft pressure mat.

To learn more, visit www.forentausa.com.

Customizable promotional video marketing

CONKLIN, NY — Cleaner's Supply has launched a new video marketing program designed to help drycleaner's increase their sales, elevate their online presence and take advantage of search engine optimization (SEO) algorithms that will increase their search ranking results.

The program offers drycleaners up to eight professionally produced videos to promote many of the most sought-after services that drycleaner's offer. These videos can be used as in-store TV advertising, embedded on the drycleaner's website or on social media.

Video has proven to be an effective way to increase search ranking in Google when placed on company websites, Cleaner's Supply noted and the company will also customize these videos with the drycleaner's business logo. Studies have also shown that viewers retain 95 percent of a message when they watch a video compared to 10 percent when reading it as text.

These videos can increase business with current customers and attract new ones. The eight videos available are Wash N' Fold, Express Bag Drop-Off, Keepsafe Wedding Gown Cleaning & Preservation, ECO2GO reusable 2-In-1 Bag, Comforter Cleaning, Museum Quality Wedding Gown Cleaning & Preservation, Pick-Up & Delivery, and Tailoring Service.

To learn more, visit www.cleansupply.com.

All-purpose ink remover

NAPERVILLE, IL—R. R. Street & Co. Inc. has launched Inktastic, a new addition to the company's line of stain removal products designed specifically for the removal of inks.

Inktastic is a newly formulated solution designed to overcome a wide variety of both wetside and dry-side ink and dye stains.

No matter the type of ink or dye, the company said Inktastic effectively penetrates, loosens, and removes stains from almost any fabric.

Its all-in-one efficiency eliminates the costly and tiring process of using various different stain removers and procedures, saving the customer both time and money.

Beyond ink removal, Inktastic's versatile and

quick-action formula also eliminates autoclave tape and adhesives, and stubborn combination stains, including heavy greases, oils, make-up, sauces, and condiments.

Inktastic was introduced to distributors and customers at the Clean Show in New Orleans and the company said it is pleased by the interest and feedback from customers.

Available through authorized Street's distributors in filled 12-ounce bottles and single-gallon jugs, Inktastic extends garment life, and increases productivity by quickly and effectively removing a variety of stains with one product, reducing labor and costly recleans.

To learn more, visit www.4STREETS.com.

DATELINE

2019

- October 5** Rocky Mountain Fabricare Association, Fall Conference, Marriott Hotel in the Denver Tech Center. Call (970) 330-0124.
- October 5-6** Canadian Fabricare Association educational conference, Holiday Inn Hotel (Yorkdale) in Toronto. Call (416) 573-1929.
- October 6** DEC Class, two-day course on consecutive Sundays, sponsored by the Neighborhood Cleaners Association, New York, NY. Call (800) 888-1622.
- October 15-17** Gulf Laundrex, Dubai World Trade Center, Dubai, United Arab Emirates <http://mectw.com/>
- October 19-20** Texcare 2019 sponsored by the National Cleaners Association, Meadowlands Convention Center, Secaucus, NJ. Call (212) 967-3002.
- October 21** Introduction to Drycleaning one-week course at the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute, Laurel, MD. Call (800) 638-2627.
- October 25-27** North Carolina Association of Launderers and Cleaners annual convention, Embassy Suites by Hilton Raleigh Durham Airport Brier Creek, Raleigh, NC. Call (919) 313-4542.
- October 25-26** Southwest Drycleaners Association fall board and membership meeting. Doubletree Hotel, Tulsa, OK. Call (512) 873-8195.
- October 25-26** Southwest Drycleaners Association membership and board meeting. Tulsa, OK. Call (512) 873-8195.
- October 28** Advanced Drycleaning two-week course at the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute, Laurel, MD. Call (800) 638-2627.
- November 15-17** Fall Fest '19, sponsored by the North East Fabricare Association. AC Hotel, Worchester, MA. Call (603) 635-0322.
- November 24** Basic Spotting 101 with Alternative Solvents, course sponsored by the Neighborhood Cleaners Association, Bronx, NY. Call (800) 888-1622.
- December 15** Advanced Stain Removal and Bleaching course sponsored by the Neighborhood Cleaners Association, Bronx, NY. Call (800) 888-1622.

2020

- January 16-19** Five Star/Brainstorming Conference, sponsored by the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute and the National Cleaners Association. Grand Velas Riviera Nayarit resort in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. Call NCA (800) 888-1622, or DLI (800) 638-2627.
- April 16-18** Cleaners Showcase, sponsored by the Southwest Drycleaners Association, Ft. Worth, TX. Call (512) 873-8195.
- April 29-May 2** Textile Care Allied Trades Association annual conference and 100th anniversary celebration, Hilton Head, SC. Call (813) 348-0075.
- May 13-14** Excellence in Laundry Conference, sponsored by the Coin Laundry Association. Rancho Bernardo Inn, San Diego, CA. Call (800) 570-5629.

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WRENCH WORKS



By BRUCE GROSSMAN

What's inside the air compressor?

Last month I discussed the basic components of a reciprocating compressor — motor, pump and receiver (tank) — which you'll find on every machine in this family of compressor.

This month I will explain the function of other components which, when combined, make up a complete air compressor.

tank) that permits the air to flow into the receiver but prevents the air from flowing back out.

- There is a pressure relief valve (see item #2) guarding against excessive pressure building up inside the cylinder. When the pressure setting of this valve is exceeded, this safety device opens venting to the atmosphere, thereby relieving

tor when the desired air pressure is reached.

An electrical air pressure control switch (see item #5) is generally used to accomplish this. This switch opens an electrical circuit either controlling a motor starter (see item #9) on larger compressors, or directly opening the power circuit to the motor on smaller compressors.

Contaminants accumulate in the tank and must be removed through a drain valve at the bottom of the tank.

In review, the electric motor is connected to the pump using belts. The rotary motion of the motor turns a flywheel on the pump linked to a crankshaft which moves piston(s) inside the pump cylinder up, compressing air and down sucking air into the cylinder to be compressed during the next compression cycle.

The compressed air leaves the cylinder through the top portion called the head and is pushed into a large vessel called a receiver or tank.

In order to familiarize yourself with air compressors, descriptions of the individual component parts are as follow:

- To prevent the air from just flowing back from the tank then into the cylinder when the piston moves down to suck in more air, there is a check valve (see item #1 generally in the

ing excessive pressure inside the cylinder.

- A valve provides a means of shutting off the air flow out of the compressor (see item #3). Ball valves serve nicely for this purpose.

- Contaminants in the form of small amounts of oil as well as water accumulate in the tank and must be removed. This is accomplished by a drain valve located at the bottom of the tank which, when opened, provides a path for pressurized air to blow contaminants out of the tank (see item #4.)

I highly recommend installing an auto drain type valve to accomplish this, however a ball valve will do nicely if you remember to use it.

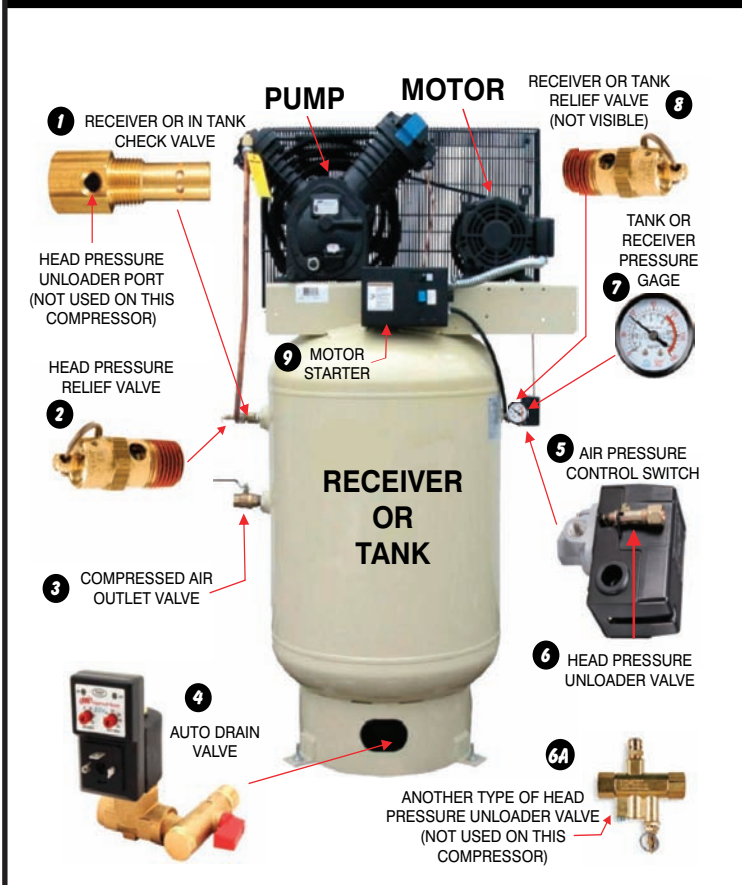
- As air pressure increases inside the tank there needs to be a method to shut off the mo-

- When the air pressure in the tank has reached the setting on the pressure control switch, shutting off the motor, pressurized air is trapped between the top of the cylinder and the tank check valve.

When the air pressure in the tank drops and the motor restarts, this pressurized air would resist the piston from moving up inside the pump cylinder, thereby placing an extremely high load on the motor while it is starting.

To prevent this, a small valve called an unloader (see item #6) is used to bleed off this high-pressure air when the pressure control switch opens. In some compressors, usually larger types, when the desired pressure is reached the motor continues to run; however, the cylinder head is unloaded to the atmosphere using an un-

AIR COMPRESSOR COMPONENTS



loader valve (see item #6a) so there will be no further increase in tank pressure

- Located near the air pressure control switch is a gage that indicates the pressure inside the tank (see item #7).

- To protect the tank from excessive pressurization, a relief valve is used. These valves are generally calibrated to open at a preset pressure, exhausting to the atmosphere, and should never be tampered with and always be replaced by valves having an identical pressure rating (see item #8).

- To safely control the motor switching on and off, a motor starter is used (see item #9).

The term "motor starter" means that there is a magnetic motor contactor (switch) which does the actual switching of the motor as well as some form of motor overload protection, usually in the form of a resettable thermal overload device combined in one control.

If excessive current flows through the motor, the circuit automatically opens, shutting the motor off before damage can occur.

That's it for this issue. I'll be back in the next issue with more good stuff on air compressors and compressed air systems.

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 troublesome ball float valve in the condensate return tank. A new addition to the family of boiler products is the EZ-Dose, which, in addition to controlling return tank level automatically, pumps the exact amount of boiler compound required for new water added to the 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 the drycleaning machine. Address any questions or comments to bruce@eztimers.com or call (702) 376-6693.

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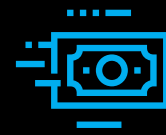
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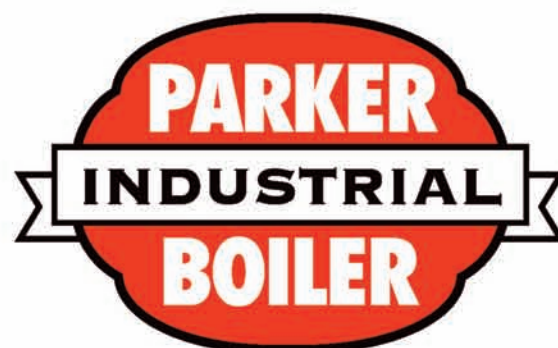
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