

December 2019 Volume 61 Number 3 www.natclo.com

ooking for the pendulum to swii

The year was 1975. A young woman any kind of career out of it. After all, that by the wash-and-wear recession that of complying with environmental regulafresh out of school took a job in the drycleaning industry not expecting to make

was, as she remembers it, "an ugly time" for the industry which was being decimated

knocked out upwards of half of all the cleaners in the country. That temporary job turned into a life's work and now, 44 years later, Nora Nealis is the executive director of the National Cleaners Association and once again sees

> convention in October she offered her analysis of the state of the industry and

> some hope for the future. "If I look at those cleaners who were around in 1975 and are still around today, most recognized what was happening in the market and did some things differently,"

> an industry in trouble. At NCA's Texcare

So what's happening in today's market and what can be done differently?

Statistics from IBISWorld, a business forecasting service, show that there are about 22,000 drycleaners in the U.S. pursuing \$7 billion of drycleaning revenue, she said. And while piece counts have been declining the past few years, IBIS predicts they will continue to drop at an even more rapid rate over the next five years.

It's not just declining piece counts and revenue that threaten drycleaners. The cost of running a business keeps increasing. Cleaners have been dealing with the cost tions for a few years and now there is pressure for a higher minimum wage, which can push up wages in general along with more government mandates for paid time off and sick leave.

"This labor-intensive business is becoming really expensive," she said.

Add to that new types of competition for the drycleaning dollar, such as Rent the Runway and similar operations that now rent all types of garments and handle the drycleaning internally. Customers don't even own the type of garments they used to take to the cleaner; they just rent them.

And then there is "fast-fashion." People buy cheap clothes and just toss them out instead of having them cleaned. Once again, the drycleaner is cut out of the ac-

Nealis said cleaners have an interesting ally in the battle against fast fashion. Greenpeace attacked drycleaners in the 1990s on environmental issues, but now they are mounting a campaign to raise consciousness about the environmental problems caused by fast fashion.

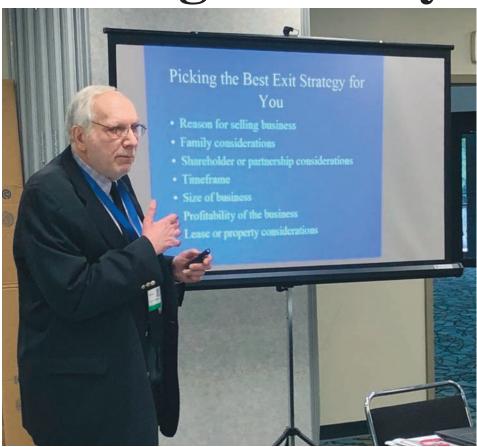
So cleaners and Greenpeace now have a common cause.

Continued on page 12

NCA Executive Director Nora Nealis discussed the current state and future possibilities for the drycleaning industry during NCA's Texcare exposition in

Consider

Looking for a way out of the business



NCA's Alan Spielvogel discussed exit strategies for drycleaners at Texcare.

While some cleaners are adapting their businesses to look to the future, others are thinking it may be time to fold the tent and retire. This means finding a buyer for the business they have spent years creating.

But the number-one strategy for cleaners looking to sell and get out of the business is, according to Alan Spielvogel, the worst of all possible strategies.

"I get calls all the time: 'Find me somebody. I want to get out," said Spielvogel, technical services director of the National Cleaners Association.

He discussed buying and selling strategies at NCA's Texcare Show in Secaucus, NJ, cautioning that the knee-jerk emotional "get out now" approach is the least desir-

"We are all victims of declining volume and expenses going through the roof," he said. "People are thinking about getting out or finding someone who has a decent volume that they can buy and fold into their business."

There are better alternatives to the quick exit approach, he said, but they require planning and thought.

"It usually takes three years to sell a business properly," he said. "Don't do anything emotionally.'

The rational, unemotional approach involves first talking to your financial advisor or accountant about how to maximize profit from the sale. In the run-up to selling, Speilvogel said a cleaner should look for ways to increase the value of the business, maybe by adding routes or drops stores that can boost revenue. And try to establish a stable management team which would be important for a new owner.

Also consider how leases and property will be handled. If you own the property do you want to sell it along with the business or do you want to retain ownership and lease it to the buyer? If you are operating under a lease, will the landlord transfer the lease to the new owner?

You can aim to sell the business for its appraised value. The appraisal will be based on your profit and loss statement, tax statements, and the value of equipment and fixtures. Assets and goodwill can be incorporated into the appraised value and a business that shows a profit will sell faster.

However, keep in mind that it can be difficult to make an accurate appraisal and that creditors will need to be satisfied upon closing of the sale. The selling price may be lower than expected.

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Sneak Peek

Giving second chances 1 6 A wish list for Santa 18

Renewing clothes for customers is Marty Moore's first job but he also helps others renew their lives.



When it comes to Santa, Don Desrosiers is not afraid to ask, even for things that may

not even exist.



James Peuster asks if you have a clear vision for 2020 or are you just sitting back and waiting to see what will happen.



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A national newspaper for drycleaners and launderers December, 2019

Volume 61 Number 3

Bring on the sustainable fashion

It's ironic that piece counts for drycleaners are in decline in a time when people own more clothes than ever before. That is due in part to a rise in the popularity of fast fashion — inexpensive clothing good for a few wearings but not made to last and probably not worth the price of cleaning. But that's not a problem just for cleaners. It's a problem for the environment as mountains of discarded garments pile up. On top of that, there is growing concern about microfibers being shed from these garments when they are cleaned, ultimately flowing into in our rivers and oceans.

This issue is coming to the forefront of concerns from environmentalist organizations who are now encouraging sustainable fashion over fast fashion. None other than Greenpeace, once the nemesis or drycleaners, is taking aim at synthetic fibers and fast fashion, as noted by NCA's Nora Nealis at the Texcare show. Twenty years ago, we never thought we would be citing a Greenpeace position positively, but we agree with their position that clothes "should be designed with durability in mind, so that they can be recycled only after many years of use." Further, they say, "We have a big part to play in preventing microfibers from polluting the oceans."

Drycleaners have a big part to play here, too. We can keep those durable clothes looking good for years and can clean them without discharging microfibers into the waterways. When it comes to sustainability and fashion, professional cleaners are ready to serve.

Avoiding the pink tax fallout

Historically, women have had to fight to vote, own property and shatter glass ceilings. As political activist and feminist organizer Gloria Steinem noted: "Feminism has never been about giving a job to one woman. It's about making life fair for women everywhere. It's not about a piece of the existing pie; there are too many of us for that. It's about baking a new pie."

The old pie was stale. Since then, strides have been made. Women are more empowered (at least in many countries), than they have been in any point in history. But considering how poorly they were been treated in the past, this is little consolation. Truth is, it's still a world that makes things more difficult for women, both intentionally and unintentionally. The gender pay gap still persists. A study from September of 2016 by Bernadette D. Proctor, Jessica L. Semega and Melissa A. Kollar noted that women were paid 80 percent less on average than their male counterparts. Not only do women typically make less, but they also might pay more for consumer products. This has become known as the "pink tax." As *Consumer Reports* noted back in 2010, women spend an average of \$1,351 more a year than men in extra costs and fees for items such as clothing, children's toys, deodorant and other toiletries.

Then there's drycleaning. As many in the industry already know, a major part of the problem can be the size of a women's blouse, which doesn't fit shirt equipment like men's shirts. There is also the issue of fabrics that require hand finishing. In the majority of such cases, drycleaners legitimately charge for the work performed, not based on the gender for which it was being performed. But when a population group has faced centuries of discrimination, it's hard to trust anyone who claims there is a sound reason for such a price difference. To those who are not running a drycleaning business, it sounds like another example of price discrimination. A well-rehearsed, but sincere explanation from a CSR can satisfy some customers, but if it doesn't, it could mean a court case.

Case in point: there is a lawsuit gaining attention in involving a St. Louis cleaner citing that an imbalance of charges for men's and women's shirts as a violation of the Missouri Merchandising Practices Act that was passed to combat legitimate pink tax scenarios. The plaintiff claims that the company charged \$2.90 for a man's shirt and \$6.55 for a woman's even though both had long sleeves, buttons and were made of 100 percent cotton. There may be an excellent explanation for the discrepancy and the plaintiff could very well lose the case, but at what cost? Bad publicity for months? Sometimes just the appearance of an impropriety is enough to convince people of the worst because they don't have all of the details.

So, if your current business model for this situation is working, you are either handling the situation well or have been lucky. This is an issue that is likely not going to fade away. Perhaps the best course is to handle these situations as honestly and delicately as you can, just as you have successfully in the past. Just keep in mind: women didn't start the discrimination; but they've very likely experienced it most of their lives.

It will be interesting to see what comes of this case. Odds are, it won't be the last one. If you want to avoid the situation altogether, perhaps it's time to rethink your pricing structure. There are no simple solutions and it's easier to say than to do, but ultimately, the time seems right to think about baking a new pie with a whole new set of ingredients.

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Amazing Grace

arty Moore was enjoying being a salesman — a job he feels he was born to do — when his father purchased D&M Cleaners of Pharr, Texas, in 1976. It wasn't long before he was asked to chip in. He complied but got a little more than he had bargained for.

"He bailed out after a couple of years," Marty recalled. "He had a girl-friend and literally ran off on a Saturday morning. It was a real interesting situation and that's how I officially became an owner."

He bought out his father's interest and shared ownership with his mother. The only problem was, the business wasn't in the best of shape.

"He had created just a tremendous amount of debt," he said. "It was a crazy situation. It really, really was, but we had the opportunity to pick up the pieces and it's been a blessing ever since."

That was more than 40 years ago and Marty harbors no bad feelings. ("Really, my dad did me a favor — talk about growing up quick.") His newfound responsibilities soon developed into a full-fledged passion. He liked being able to help people keep their wardrobe looking new.

"We are going to mend the tears, sew the buttons, get the stains out, really clean it, press it properly — we're going to put it back in new condition," he said. "The second thing we do, and I think we do it better than anybody, is we build relationships with customers. I instill in all of our customer service people: 'Make your customer a friend first and a customer second.' Then, if there is an issue or a problem, it's not a problem because you can call a friend and say, 'Listen, while I was cleaning this garment, I ran it too long. I did something wrong, but we need to stand behind it and make it good.""

As a for instance, Marty remembered a new customer who brought in white blue jeans. Despite following the care label, black ended up bleeding all over them. He knew he just bought a pair of pants; he didn't know they cost \$1,100 new at Neiman Marcus. At least the customer had bought them at 50% off and brought in the receipt. Even the discounted cost seemed incredibly high, but Marty offered a \$550 check (plus tax) or \$650 in credit.

"She's been a consistent \$500 or \$600 a month customer. Besides, our reputation is worth more than a \$650 pair of blue jeans," he noted. "I'm sure we've been taken advantage of, but as long as I know I'm doing what's right, at the end of the day that's all I want."

Marty was at the business, not eager to return home after the death of his wife, Chris. Then, he had a surprise visit from a friend — a chaplain from one of the state prisons. He wanted Marty to help him preach and teach inmates looking to improve their lives. He accepted the invitation not realizing how much it would improve his own life.

That was over six years ago and Marty has found the work extremely rewarding, though it can also be quite challenging and eye-opening. "Once you actually go in and invest yourself in some of these men's lives and you hear the stories and realize that the guys are real, but made some stupid choices," he recalled. "God's given me the gift of communication with these guys and I had to prove myself. They see through fallacy pretty quick. They see through your hypocrisy. These guys can spot a fake."

Fortunately, Marty loves the challenge. At the plant, he often draws on all three of his DLI certifications (CPD,

there, but it's a world worth investing in because the success rate is astronomical. It really is," he said.

arly on, the warden asked Marty if he'd be receptive to teaching the inmates in a cell block devoted to the worst of the worst offenders. He relished the opportunity. After all, his own life had a few colorful, checkered incidents with alcohol, high speed driving and the view of the inside of a jail cell. He was just luckier. Although, to be

drycleaning and wakes up doing the same. "He's gotten the bug. He's such a blessing to us, so we're expanding our market range," Marty added.

D and M Cleaners is now in its 61st year (43 in the Moore family) and it's an area rife with expansion. It's located about as close to the Mexican border as you can get and as far south as Texas goes.

"Over the last many years, we've really had the privilege of distancing ourselves from our competitors as the



Marty Moore

CPW and CED) to wipe away stains; now, he draws on his life experience to help wipe slates clean for people too often overlooked or disregarded.

"Once I started connecting with these guys... a lot of them had never been talked to straight," he said. "A lot of them are hopeless. They have no hope."

hat lack of hope often extends even beyond prison life. Having a felony on your record limits your employment and living options. With a public who fears them and no money to start with, recidivism can seem like a forgone conclusion.

"When these guys get out of prison, they have to have an address to go to. They have to report to a parole office. The state won't just let them out on the street," Marty explained. "Once that process is done and they've met their release date, they put them on a bus with a \$50 gift card and a one-way bus ticket to go re-establish life. They can't do it. It's almost like a prescription for failure."

Marty created an inmate trust fund to help offset the financial burdens, but more importantly, he also gives his time. He talks on the phone daily to many of the inmates he's mentored who are struggling with problems in their post-prison lives. He also teaches twice a week at the prison, offering lessons of faith and rehabilitation.

Marty is humble enough to know that he wasn't the original draw for many inmates. In the state of Texas, the prisons have no air conditioning except where the classes are taught. At the start, he assumed many were attending because of that air conditioning (and not so much for Jesus). Regardless of what drew them in, the important thing is they stayed and came back. They also began recruiting each other on their own.

"It's a whole different world out

fair, Marty's own stories usually don't compare to those of the people he mentors.

Many are humorous, like what happened to an inmate named Kelly who told Marty: "I've always driven junk, so I borrowed my neighbor's new pickup and I'm hauling drugs and I'm going down the road and I run it off into a ditch. I'm sitting there in the ditch with my drugs and all of a sudden this lady speaks and says, 'Are you OK?""

Kelly didn't see anybody there. Marty continued the story, "He looked around and said, 'God's a woman! Where are you coming from?'"

Turns out it was OnStar who called Kelly by the truck's owner's name and said not to worry the police were on their way to help. Needless to say, he did not want that at all.

"You have all of these stories that are funny... and then you hear tragic stories, where they've lost their children at an early age and life kind of crumples on them. They end up hooked or committing a crime and life is just not fair," Marty said. "Some guys cope and some people don't."

One person who Marty taught early on had some difficulty dealing with the fallout of going to prison. His entire family had disowned him for his crime, but Marty saw something special in John.

He was working for Tyson Foods after his release when Marty asked him if he wanted to join D&M Cleaners and help him build an empire. From his first day, he has been the Chief of Operations. That was about two-and-a-half years ago.

"I knew exactly what he was capable of and it's an amazing journey. He's working until 1, 2, 3 o'clock in the morning on new computer systems, scheduling people, team building, innovating," Marty said.

Now, he goes to bed thinking about

cleaners of choice," Marty noted. "We deal in high end quality. We do what other cleaners won't do. We handle things that other cleaners are just afraid of. That's been a huge blessing. We really have a great reputation in the community."

Mistakes still happen, but as a person who has dedicated much of his life to helping people overcome theirs, Marty doesn't fear them. "When I make a mistake, it's a mistake of the mind, not the heart," he emphasized.

o far, there haven't been any mistakes he hasn't recovered from, unlike some inmates he's tried to help.

"I've been burned," he admitted. "We've had the guys who are either habitual alcoholics or they'll get back into the meth and they're right back to where they were."

It's a daily battle for many of them and Marty continues to encourage them to be better people. After all, there is no feeling quite so good as that of redemption.

"I've heard stories of redemption. We had a kid four or five years ago that was probably 19 or 20 (or maybe he was 20 or 21) — he'd been drinking — and he was going home and he hit a car that had three high school football players in it and he killed all three," Marty said.

"By the time he was getting ready to get out of prison — he had served his sentence. Of course, it was involuntary manslaughter," he continued.

"By the time he had served his sentence, two of the families reached out to him and had forgiven him. It ate on him. You could tell this kid's life had been changed. He wouldn't have intentionally done it."

Both the prisoner and the mentor were humbled by the amazing gesture. "That's grace. That's beyond what most of us have," Marty said.





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WEST



NEXT DAY CLEANERS in Post Falls, ID, installed a Realstar KM343 heated hydrocarbon cleaning machine, the first in northern Idaho. Pictured are Mark Bonsell (left) Pacific Northwest area manager for Fabritec International, and Adam Burton, owner of Next Day Cleaners.

CCA returning to Long Beach for 2020 Fabricare trade show

The Long Beach Convention Center is a familiar setting for those who have attended the California Cleaners Association's Fabricare shows in the past, so next year it should feel like returning home.

The association recently announced its intentions to return to the venue for 2020. Booth sales are currently open for the event that is set to take place Aug. 14-

"Exhibits like this are a tremendous undertaking," noted

Peter Blake, CCA executive director, "and the planning takes well over a year. I am really excited about the event, and I know it will be one of the best in the entire country.

"We have been looking at show improvements, great educational programs to hold in conjunction with the event, and some new ideas that will enhance the attendees experience."

CCA has retained the same show management company as it utilized in 2016, lead by show manager Leslie Schaeffer.

"This will be an event you can't afford to miss," added Blake. "We are fortunate to have Leslie back running the show. Her unique experience coupled with her familiarity with the venue from last year will gives us a great opportunity to really improve the show. I am confident the show will be one of the best in CCA's recent past, and I am excited about some of the enhancements we will be bringing to the attendees — and the exhibitors."

Details are still being finalized, but visitors can expects aisles full of the latest industry technology and services throughout the exhibit hall as well as several educational programs designed to help drycleaners be more profitable and continue to be strong in the future.

CCA will keep members and prospective attendees updated via its website located online at www.calcleaners.com.

The site includes a complete prospectus for companies interested in exhibiting (Early Bird pricing is still available), a floor plan, and an up-to-date list of exhibitors.

Information may also be obtained by calling show management, (215) 830-8467.

The Long Beach Convention Center is located at 300 East Ocean Blvd, adjacent to the Hyatt Regency Long Beach Hotel.

CCA has a block of rooms at its host hotel, Renaissance Hotel, at a rate of \$195 per night.

Zips opens 1st of 11 planned Portland stores

The locals like to "Keep Portland Weird," but Zips Dry Cleaners is hoping to keep Portland clothes clean as the franchise has opened its first store in the city.

"We are very excited to bring Zips to the Portland area," noted Justin Andrews, vice president of OKTA Dry Cleaning, who opened the first of a proposed dozen locations. "We saw that Portland was in need of a same-day, high-quality, low cost drycleaner that provided outstanding service. Zips is able to provide customers with huge cost saving because of our flat rate cleaning fee for all clothes. Instead of spending that money on clothes, they can now spend it on other experiences that may be more enjoyable for them."

The first Zips store opened on Nov. 8. Eleven more are already in the works to be distributed throughout the Portland metro area, all to be owned by OKTA Dry Cleaning, LLC.

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Looking for the pendulum to swing

Continued from page 1

"Politics makes strange bedfellows," Nealis remarked. "You have to take your friends where you find them. At this point they are ringing the bell on the problems of the textile industry.

"It's a dark, dirty environmental story. You have an amazing opportunity to communicate to customers," Nealis said.

"Polyesters shed microfibers when washed," she noted. "That doesn't happen in drycleaning. The microfibers don't get in waterways.'

This ties in with the environmental concerns of Millennials, that segment of the population that provides the future customers of cleaners.

"Instead of banning plastic straws, tell them to give up fast fashion," she suggested. "Buy natural fibers. Buy quality so you can wear it for a couple of years."

Greenpeace has claimed that doubling

the useful life of an item from one year to hours, uninspired store fronts, confusing ers? How about their ubiquitous backtwo years reduces carbon emissions by 24 percent, a pitch that should appeal to environmentally-minded Millennials. But it will take more than that to bring in the younger customers.

Nealis believes the pendulum that has been swinging away from drycleaners the past few years will swing back with a return to natural fibers and quality garments and as Millennials age and move into the next stage of their lives - marriage, home ownership, children — they will be part of the pendulum swing coming back to dryclean-

"You have to be positioned to do business the way they want to do business," Nealis said. "They like nice. They demand convenience."

Drycleaners will need to correct some of their weaknesses if they want to benefit from that pendulum swing. Inconvenient pricing, slowness to adapt new technology and a lack of communication and marketing are issues that can keep the industry from reaching its future potential.

These are all areas that a disruptive competitor will target when moving into a drycleaning market.

So what should cleaners do?

"We gotta act now. Reacting doesn't help. You've gotta be ahead of the curve. Otherwise you are a day late and a dollar short and you're copying them," she said.

Add services, such as wash-dry-fold and hand-washing. Offer pickup and delivery. Upgrade the appearance of your store. Become an active part of your community. And promote and advertise what you do.

Consider new services that younger people would be interested in, she suggested. They may not care about cleaning that \$6 sweater, but what about those \$200 sneak-

Ignore offering wash-dry-fold or cleaning athletic wear at your peril, she said. They want one-stop shopping for all their cleaning needs.

"By not offering quality wash and fold, you are sending them somewhere else," she

She also suggested that cleaners expand they way they think of software.

"It's not just a cash register and inventory control," she said. "It is the nervous system of your business. It's for communicating with customers, staff and drivers, it ties together your marketing effort. Open your mind to the possibilities. To get the benefit, you've got to use it."

"It's never going to be like it was. We have to take it like it is," she said. "We have to figure out how to make what is work for us."

Looking for a way out of the business

Continued from page 1

Some cleaners will choose to optimize personal income while planning for a sale. In this scenario, you can maximize cash withdrawals from the business and maintain your lifestyle while preparing to sell, but the resulting reduced growth may impact the sale price while the money you draw from the business is taxed as personal in-

Another common strategy is to sell to a family member. This can lead to a seamless transition as you groom a son or daughter to take over while easing yourself out.

"This is a good way to keep your legacy going," Spielvogel said. But it could become a problem in the family if one son or

daughter is qualified and the another is not. Or it may be that the offspring just don't have the talent for running a business, or they may not even be interested in or like the business.

This could lead to another possibility: selling the business to employees. Employees are familiar with the business and have established relationships with the customers. You can also mentor an employee to ensure a smooth transition.

This assumes that the employee would be capable of running the business, a different skill set than being a good worker, and is financially capable of buying the

Another possible buyer would be a com-

petitor. This can lead to a quick sale to a competitor who is interested in acquiring your customer base. But beware of the unscrupulous buyer who just wants to steal your customer base, Spielvogel said. Get earnest money upfront from the buyer as a deposit.

"Be careful and talk to a lawyer before entering into an agreement," he said. A mutual confidentiality agreement should be in place before going into this type of trans-

Another downside to selling to a competitor is that existing employees may not be retained after the sale.

Develop an exit plan based on your needs and circumstances, he urged. Don't make a decision based on emotions.

Looking at his own experience in selling his drycleaning business, Spielvogel said, "I was the stupidest person in the world because I sold a business based on somebody giving me more than what I thought it was worth, I was 43 years old and I sat home and watched soap operas."

Go into it with open eyes. Consider the impact of the sale on your needs and lifestyle and make sure you have a plan that fits your needs, consult your accountant and financial advisor and make sure your financials are in order.

And finally, be flexible. "You may not get exactly what you want, but if it fits in with your plans, do it," he said.



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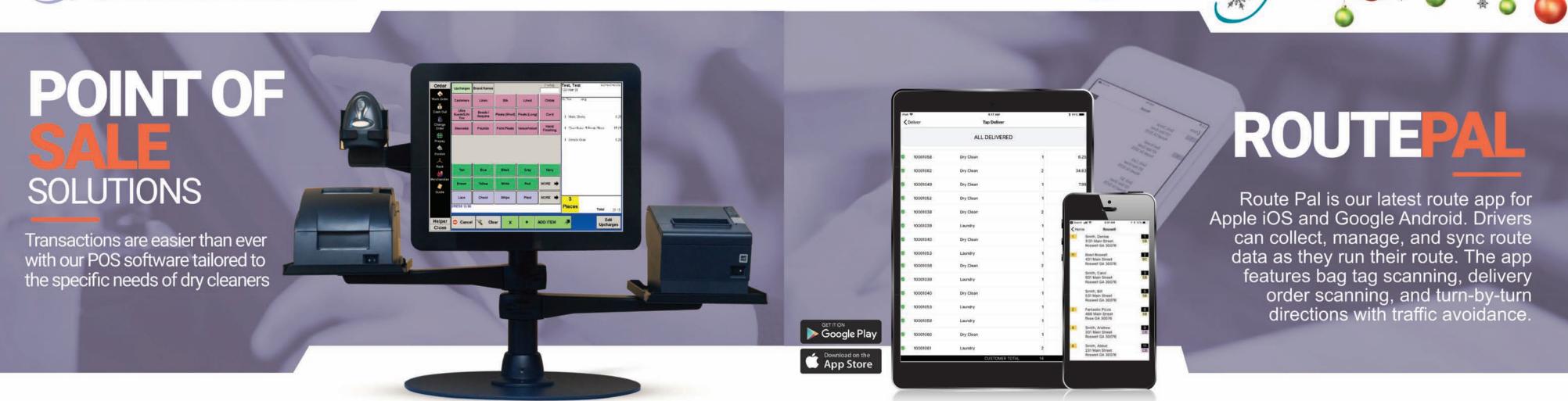
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SHIRT TALES



BY DON DESROSIERS

Dear Santa: It never hurts to ask

round the holiday season, it is an appropriate time to write a wish list to Santa Claus.

My wish list is for things that don't exist but yet sound to me like plausible, usable inventions. These are products or modifications that would help those in the shirt business and/or improve the product.

I wish to extend my apologies to those that may actually be producing the products that I pine for. If they exist and I don't know about them, perhaps a more boisterous marketing plan is in order.

When I ran and owned a shirt plant, I guess that I hated folded shirts as much as you do. We would cringe at the sight of a freshly pressed shirt that needed to be folded. Not

only for the extra time that was needed, but we always felt like we were surely about to ruin the press job.

I believe that we did. In spite of valiant efforts to avoid it, it seems impossible to prevent neat folds from turning into horrific scrunches.

For years now, I have been on the consumer side of the folded shirt and I don't like what I get. No, I don't need to impress someone in a board room, but my business is shirts and therefore mine is expected to be top-notch.

Better folding

The way that shirts are folded using currently available equipment and packaging is unacceptable. So, the first item on my wish list is some

sort of packaging that would protect a folded shirt from looking lousy when it is unfolded.

Maybe this would include lightweight cardboard that would fit into the sleeves that would prevent unsightly folds in the sleeves. Perhaps we would also have a very durable collar support that would stand up to the cramped quarters of a suitcase.

If the plastic bag that contains the shirt fit more snugly, lightweight shirts would not slip and partially unfold. Maybe a self-adhesive strip that allowed one to tighten the width of the bag after the shirt is in it would help.

As a business traveler, I want to open up a folded shirt and see one that looks "hot off

the press." Do you think that this is possible?

Tangled hangers

Back in the days when folded shirts were far more common — in fact all shirts were folded — a three-piece shirt unit actually consisted of five pieces of equipment: A sleeve press; a collar and cuff press; a body press; a folding machine; and, the most obscure, a machine that stored a stack of shirt boards.

With each press of the pedal on the folding machine, this machine would separate one shirt board from the stack, making it easy for the operator to select exactly one shirt board.

I want something like that for hangers. Tangled hangers can drive anybody bonkers. Wouldn't it be great if your presser could consistently grab a hanger from the rail and it didn't get tangled with the next two or three?

I bet this would increase productivity 5 percent by itself. I can't even imagine the contraption necessary to make this wish come true, but I want this!

Adjustable buck height

How about a shirt press that has a buck that is at a better working height for shorter pressers? I think there should be a hydraulic adjustment that will raise or lower a buck to best suit the operator. This will result in less fatigue and better production. This doesn't sound like something that would be that hard to do. Would it be expensive? Who knows? I'm not engineering today, I'm just dreaming.

And the collar block

And while we're on the subject of shirt units... Manufacturers have found a way to accommodate a wide variety of shirt sizes by using side expanders and air bags. Sometimes the shirt is molded to fit the shape of the steam chests, like some manufacturers have done, and other times the steam chests are flat and different parts of the shirt are pressed in different ways.

What never changes on any shirt unit is the size of the collar block. It is the same size whether you are pressing a size 14 or a size 22 and everything in between. This means that the shirts can not fit the buck the same way. Some need to be overlapped, some not.

Maybe different size shirts would fit better and press more perfectly if the collar block expanded somehow like on a shirt folding machine. Or maybe the shoulders expand like on a suzy.

Buttonhole tags

This next item on my wish list actually does exist, but it has little or no presence in this country. Several years ago, maybe even ten years ago, the Japanese invented a shirt buttonhole tag that didn't need a staple. They were self-adhesive. I think that, provided the cost is in line with today's tags, these tags would play a big

I can remember a time when all I wanted for Christmas was my two front teeth.

"If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you always sot."

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.



Bibbentucker's the Dry Cleaner in Dallas, TX, purchased two Union HL-880s with solvent heating through Gulf States Laundry Machinery. Pictured from left are Mohammed Kabrane, director of operations, John Palms, the owner, Lasharon McDonald, plant manager, Mike Wilson, general manager and Matt A. Lipman of Union Drycleaning Products.



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NORTHEAST



CONCORD CLEANERS in East Islip, NY purchased a Hi-Steam shirt finisher, TURBO-440 and CB-520 collar & cuff press through Metro Dry Cleaning and Laundry Equipment of Patchogue, NY. Pictured is Scott, general manager of Concord Cleaners.

NY cleaner pays \$650k to settle stool-tripping accident case

Charming Cleaners of Staten Island recently agreed to settle for \$650,000 in a lawsuit levied by Roberta Keohane, who tripped over a stool in front of a dressing room door and injured her shoulder on the premises back on April 28, 2014.

The story, first reported on Staten Island Live, is an unusual one. In 2014, Keohane was at the cleaners with a friend who was having a dress hemmed.

Keohane's friend, a member of the law firm Jonathan D'Agostino & Associates, was trying the dress on in the dressing room when she

asked for Keohane to help her zip

At this point, a stool used for the customer to stand on while having the dress fitted, was off to the side.

While Keohane and her friend were both in the dressing room, the owner of Charming Cleaners purportedly placed it in front of the dressing room door, which was made of plastic and could be guided open and closed on an accordion-style track on the floor.

It was while stepping over the track that she tripped over the stool and fell. She required replacement surgery for her left shoulder.

The trial was held before Justice Kim Dollard. During the liaiblity phase of the trial, Charming Cleaners and the defense contended that Keohane was negligent for backing out of the dressing room without turning around; the plaintiff countered that there was no room in the dressing room to turn around and that the owner was negligent for placing the stool in front of the door while both women were inside the room.

Keohane was represented by Edward J. Pavia, Jr. D'Agostino and Associates.

The judge found that there was no negligence on Keohane's part and that Charming Cleaners was responsible.

Then, the settlement was reached before the trial in the state Supreme Court could resume to the task of determining liability

NCA plans courses in **early 2020**

The National Cleaners Association will close out 2019 with a stan removal seminar before beginning 2020 with a several of other offerings.

The association will host a one-day program on "Basic Spotting 101 with Alternative Solvents" on Sunday, Dec. 8. The cost is \$250 for members and \$350 for non-members.

NCA will resume its schedule in 2020 with another one-day offering, this time on Sunday, Jan. 12 in the Bronx and focusing on "Advanced Stain Removal and Bleaching."

The one-day classes begin at 8:30 a.m. Tuition is \$250 for members and \$350 for non-members.

Next up will be a five-day course on "Radical Drycleaning/ Stain Removal" that meets daily from 11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. in the Bronx from Feb. 3 to 7. The cost is \$750 for members and \$995 for non-members.

A two-day "Pressing and Finishing" course will be held on Feb. 8 and 9 in the Bronx. The cost is \$455 for members and \$595 for non-members.

NCA Platinum members can enroll in these courses at no

NCA has planned four offerings of its two-day, 16-hour DEC certification courses in 2019. Dates will be Jan 12 and 19, May 17 and 24, Aug. 2 and 9, and Nov. 15 and 22. The course is required for perc drycleaners in New York State. The cost is \$809 for members and \$1,309 for non-members.

For more information, visit

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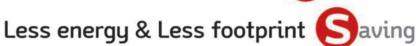
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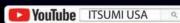


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THE ROUTE PRO



BY JAMES PEUSTER

Do you have 20/20 vision for 2020?

can't believe that 2020 will mark my 20th year of being in the industry.

So much has changed while others have stayed the same.

It's hard to imagine what the next 20 years will bring to drycleaners.

In an industry that has seen shifts in the economy, technology and employees, it's time for all of us to get our vision checked. It's important to know whether you are nearsighted, far-sighted or even blind to what's in store for 2020.

stuck in our own world and miss what's going on around us. I see so many operators trying to do their own thing that they end up making mistakes that are not only costly, but hard to get back on the right track for success.

Routes are here — they are not like Dipping Dots that was the ice cream of the future. It is in the now and forever will be. Some owners have a van and say they do routes.

While the world is changing, the insanity cliche exists get stuck within your own walls and expect growth. It just doesn't happen that easily. Pay attention to your competitors and to the changing industry.

Second, looking for new and better things may not always be the best visionary game plan you can get. Sure, you want the best practices, but changing for the sake of change isn't always the best game plan.

For example, many look to larger cleaners to follow their success stories. However, they

First of all, many of us get in all of our operations. Don't may have more than one plant and six vans vs. your one, a higher density of customers or a price point 50 percent more than you. Too often we want to follow the program of another cleaner that just won't work in another situation. Be very careful on this one.

> Third, your bottom line is your bottom line. Reading an eye chart at the doctor's office is like looking at your profit and loss statement in your own office. While we tend to want to grow — does it help your bottom line?

What is in **store for 2020?** There is much going on but many cleaners are still sitting back and waiting to see what's next.

However, trying to cut corners and save money often diminishes your top line. This is where I see the biggest success in our industry. Those who grow profitably know the difference between costs and investments in terms of route development. This is why we always tell our Route Pro members that we are a profit group — not a cost group. Not trying to do a shameless plug for my company, but it is what

Lastly, what is in store for 2020? If we could look into a crystal ball or have binoculars that let us see into the next 12 months, what should we expect?

There are a lot of things going on while many are still sitting back and waiting to see what's next.

Wash-Dry-Fold is a perfect example. It's time to do something about it instead of wait-

We all know piece counts are down for many - hint, hint — so go out and either get more customers or get more from your current customers. Your future depends on it.

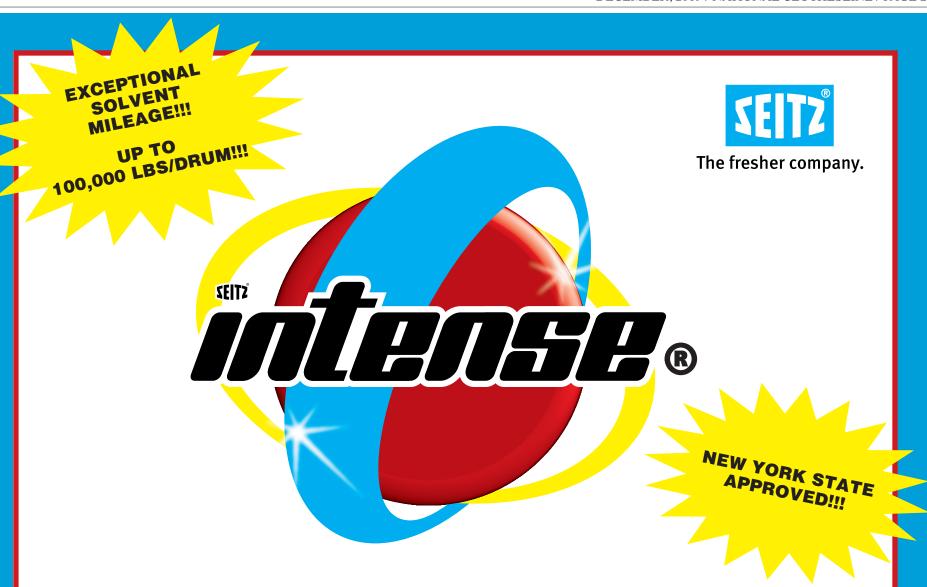
2020 looks to be great for hose who are "doing routes right or not at all." But that is the key.

I have said my piece about on-demand. While you get some volume, the time and effort speaks loudly on your bottom line. Unless you have high-priced items, the profit is not always there.

But those with a route development culture are the ones who will be thriving in 2040, but let's take it one year at a time.

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.





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 $\textbf{Bob Hamila} \ (\textit{Lighthouse Cleaners} \ \textit{I} \ \textit{Palm Beach Gardens}, \ \textit{FL})$

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. <code>intense®</code> is clean smelling, incredibly reclaimable and easy to use. We are 10 weeks+ in a new Union hydrocarbon machine with <code>intense®</code> 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 <code>intense</code>®. 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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MIDATLANTIC

DLI ready with full slate of 2020 courses



Many students attend DLI courses on scholarships from allied trades firms and associations. Pictured are Julie Puente-Mata of Tiffany Couture Cleaners in Las Vegas, NV, and Kelly Crapser of Wedding Gown Preservation, Co., in Endicott, NY, who studied under scholarships from Kreussler.

Whether you need to learn the basics or simply want to expand on your existing drycleaning knowledge, the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute has released its educational schedule for the coming year that is equally suited for

The association's five-day introductory course will be back in session as early as February to help those who are new to the drycleaning industry or who have only a couple of years of production experience.

The class will run from Feb. 24 to 28 and cover a lot of ground: sorting loads, using tensioning equipment, pressing pants, coats and skirts, removing coffee, ink, grease and other stains, operating a drycleaning machine and cleaning silk, satin and other fabrics.

Immediately following, DLI will host its advanced course for those who have completed the introductory class or who have a few years of production experience. It will run March 2-13.

All classes at the school meet from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The study matter will be more comprehensive in the advanced outing, offering instruction on identifying cotton, silk, polyester and other fabrics, using bleaches without damaging color, wetcleaning wool, silk and more, maintaining and changing filters, current regulations facing the drycleaning industry, getting clean, white laundry, designing a drycleaning plant with the most effective work flow, understanding the difference between solvents and much more.

Both classes will be offered again in the summer as the introductory course will take place from July 13 to 17 and the advanced will be from July 20 to 31. In the Fall, the introductory class will be hosted from Oct. 19 to 23 and the advanced will follow from Oct. 26 to Nov. 6.

The cost to attend the five-day introductory course is free for Premier members and \$1,595 for non-members. The advanced course cost \$2,195 for non-members, but is also free for Premier members.

DLI Premier members can receive four free self-study courses and three certification registra-

Students can save additional money by taking both classes concurrently, which comprises the full 15-day General Drycleaning course, which costs \$2,895 for non-members. For more pricing options, contact DLI.

In addition to the general drycleaning courses, the association will also present a two-anda-half day class on practical application of stain removal, from identifying types of stains to removing them properly.

The class will meet from Sept. 23 to 25.

Tuition for all classes covers classroom instruction, lunch, notebook and other materials.

Also throughout the year, DLI will continue to offer its self-study classes. Subjects include: Fibers and Fabrics, Stain Removal Tech-Wetcleaning Drycleaning Fundamentals.

For more information on any of DLI's upcoming classes, or to register, contact the association by calling (800) 638-2627 or visit them online at www.dlionline.org

Scholarships are available for DLI members located in the United States and Canada. For example, students at the recent courses attended on scholarships through Kreussler, the Lucky Amatore Memorial scholarship through the Pennsylvania and Delaware Cleaners Association, the Michigan Institute of Laundering & Drycleaning scholarship, the R.R. Street & Co. Scholarship, and the Illinois Professional Drycleaners and Launderers Association scholarship. More information on scholarships is available through DLI and the various state and regional associations.

The DLI School of Drycleaning Technology is located at 14700 Sweitzer Lane in Laurel. There are three airports in the vicinity for air travel options. DLI has information on hotels and airport shuttles.







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Forenta Mushroom

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Sankosha LP-690U Collar & Cuff

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NEWSMAKERS

Textile Care Allied Trades Association (TCATA) has announced that Leslie Schaeffer, the



Leslie Schaeffer

nounced plans to open the first of

six northwest suburban Chicago

by friends Dan Patel, Neel Patel

and Kamlesh Patel, has agreed with the Maryland-based chain to

open six ZIPS Dry Cleaners over

locations in mid-November

ZIPS Dry Cleaners an-

Bharmani Cleaners, operated

The Board of Directors of the current president of TCATA, will become the association's CEO effective January 1, 2020.

Schaeffer owns BPS Commu-



Fred Schwarzman

the next several years. The first is planned for 1531 Deerfield Parkway in Buffalo Grove.

No other addresses have been announced, but Bharmani Cleaners is eyeing the Northwest Chicago suburbs for the other five locations.

"Working with the ZIPS team

Alliance Laundry Systems has announced that it will serve customers for its UniMac and Speed Queen commercial brands direct in the state of Texas.

The announcement comes as Alliance marks its second acquisition in Texas, following the recent purchase of Commercial Equipment Company's (CEC) distribution business from the Smith family in Dallas. CEC will continue to focus on building its laundry services division to serve the region's fast-growing multi-housing industry.

Texas customers will benefit from the factory-direct linkage, which will translate into improved access to a variety of Alliance resources, greater equipment and parts inventory, and professional sales, service and install staff.

nications, publisher of NATIONAL CLOTHESLINE, and manages three regional drycleaning and laundry association trade shows. She re-



Luci Ward

has been a wonderful experience," Dan Patel said. "Growing up in Joliet, the Illinois suburbs are a big part of who we are. Now, we get to give back and serve the community. We couldn't be happlaces **David Cotter**, who passed away unexpectedly in August.

In a related move, Fred Schwarzmann, TCATA's current president-elect, will replace Schaeffer as the association's president effective January 1, 2020. Schwarzmann is chairman and CEO of the A. L. Wilson Chemical Company.

The board also promoted Office Manager Luci Ward to business manager. Ward's duties will include helping create a more member-driven culture as well as supporting the goals and objectives of TCATA's strategic plan.

The Chicagoland expansion comes as ZIPS continues to expand its national footprint. There are more than 60 locations open and operating in eight states and the District of Columbia, with more than 250 additional loca-

The board issued a special thanks to Schaeffer, Ward and Past-president Bill Odorizzi of Sankosha USA for the extraordinary work they did for the association during this transitional pe-

TCATA represents manufacturers and distributors of drycleaning and laundry equipment and supplies. The association will celebrate its 100th anniversary at its annual conference in Hilton Head Island, SC, April 29-May 2, 2020. Distributors and manufacturers are encouraged to join the celebration.

tions in various stages of development across the country.

Founded in Greenbelt, MD, in 1996, ZIPS promotes a same-day, one-price business model.

For more information, visit www.321zips.com.

Gibson's Cleaners of Toronto, ON, received the award for Overall Best Practices in the Textile Care Industry during the Canadian Fabricare Association's annual conference in Toronto in October.

Gibson's will be among international entries in the Global Best Practices Awards in Frankfurt, Germany, during Texcare International in June of next year.

Gibson's was one of seven Canadian firms selected from among nominees for best practices.

The Canadian Best Practices Award for Sustainability was won by Fishman's Cleaners of Calgary, AB, and Award for Innovation was won by TSC Wetclean of Mississauga, ON.

Other nominees included North Park Cleaners, Park Lane Cleaners, Premier Dry Cleaners and Trillium the Leather Cleaner.

CFA is partnered with CINET, the International Committee of Textile Care, a global association made up of professional textile care cleaners that sponsors the best practices program. The program is based on stimulating the implementation of best practice measures, service aspects, marketing and quality of the professional textile care industry, demonstrating the industry's capabilities, and providing a benchmark and platform for the new state of the art in modern professional textile care.



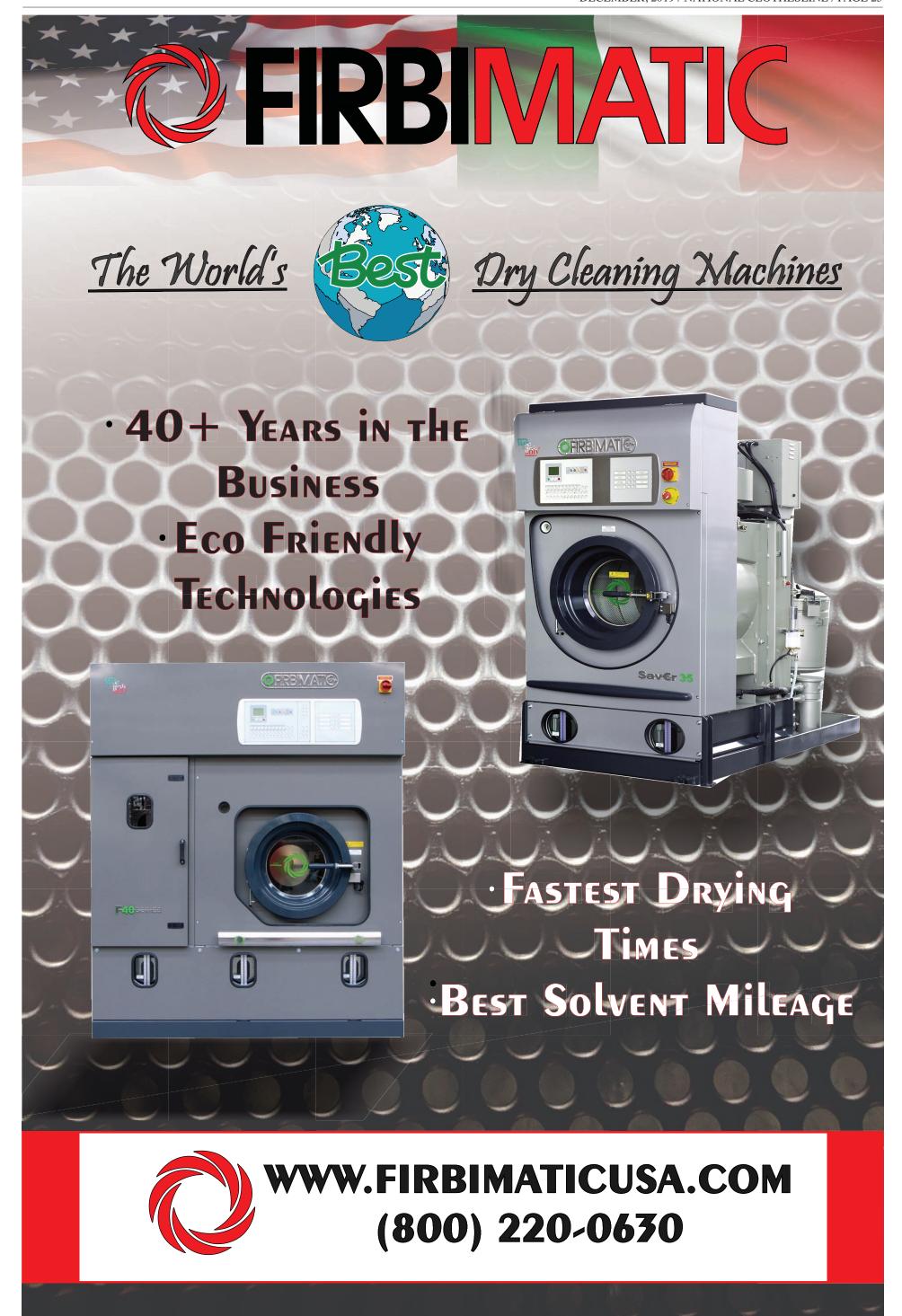
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WRENCH WORKS



By Bruce Grossman

Keeping the compressed air dry

correct piping for compressed air systems. This month I will be talking about other components in the compressed air system which remove water from the compressed air stream.

First, a quick note about air and temperature. Put simply, the hotter the air the more water vapor it can hold.

As air cools, this water vapor condenses out in the form of liquid water. Liquid water in compressed air systems is a contaminant that strips away helpful lubricants, degrading rubber and plastic parts as well as corroding and rusting metal components. It has been my experience that liquid water is the leading cause of failure for air operated machinery.

There are several devices available that are applicable to the drycleaning industry that can be used to reduce the

the compressed air components of machinery.

Often compressors are located in boiler rooms and boiler rooms characteristically have high levels of heat and humidity. If possible, locate the air intake of a compressor as close to an outside vent as possible. Usually, it is fairly simple to provide the compressor air intake area with a vent line to the outside of the boiler room to provide cooler, dryer air at the compressor air intake.

1. Drains and auto-drains. Somewhere, usually at the bottom of the tank on which the compressor pump is mounted, there is a drain valve of some sort. Water that has condensed out of the hot compressed air as well as fugitive oil from the compressor pump collects in the tank.

When this drain valve is opened, this water-oil mixture

ast month I covered the amount of water that gets to is blown out of the tank, removing it from the compressed air system. This water and oil may be considered a hazardous waste.

> Opening the drain valve and draining the compressor tank should be done on a regular basis — at least once a day.

> There are very effective, inexpensive and easily installed automatic drain valves widely available. These auto-drains contain an adjustable timer that regularly opens an electric solenoid valve to allow the tank to drain.

> Besides the obvious advantage of knowing your compressor is being drained regularly without you having to squat down in a hot boiler room to open, wait and then close a hot greasy valve, you have also spared the maintenance on this hard-to-reach

> Even a small leak in the compressor drain valve will have a big effect on your compressor cycling more often, thus incurring greater wear as well as higher electric bills.

> 2. Aftercoolers and refrigerated dryers. Compressed air exiting the compressor pump is extremely hot and therefore capable of holding lots of water vapor. As this air cools, some of the water vapor condenses out as liquid water in the compressor tank, requiring the draining procedure discussed above in paragraph 1.

However, the air is still hot and lots of water vapor remains in the air stream which

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REFRIGERATED AFTERCOOLER

will later condense in the cooler air lines and equipment.

In the drycleaning plant, the most effective way to reduce the remaining water vapor before it condenses and travels into the machinery is to further cool the airflow.

The simplest method of achieving this is using what is termed an aftercooler. An aftercooler is usually a finned coil with a fan mounted on it.

Compressed air leaving the compressor pump enters the tubing with the fins attached while the fan blows air across the coil, cooling the compressed air. This condenses out much of the remaining water

A variant of this method uses a water-cooled heat exchanger instead of a finned air cooled coil.

Refrigerated dryers are the most effective device to remove troublesome liquid water from the compressed air stream. They apply the same principal as the aftercooler but a refrigeration system is used instead of using air or water for cooling the compressed air. This provides a much lower condensing temperature, hence lower levels of water vapor in the compressed air stream to later condense into liquid water.

Keep in mind you still are going to need some type of drain on any system used. Aftercoolers and refrigerated dryers need to be properly sized to the air compressor.

Well that's about it for this month. I will continue discussing compressed air next month with more easily accomplished tasks that save big bucks.

Bruce Grossman is the chief of **R&D** for **EZ**timers 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. For saving money on handling waste, the Sahara and Drop in the Bucket line of high purity separator mister/evaporators provide a thrifty, legal method to get rid of the separator water generated by the drycleaning machine. Address questions or comments to bruce@eztimers.com or call (702) 376-6693.



cleaning machine through Jim Welsh, Inc. Pictured from left are Brian Freia of Jim Welsh, Sun Wetmore, store owner, Dawn Smith, store manager and Matt A Lipman of Union **Drycleaning Products.**

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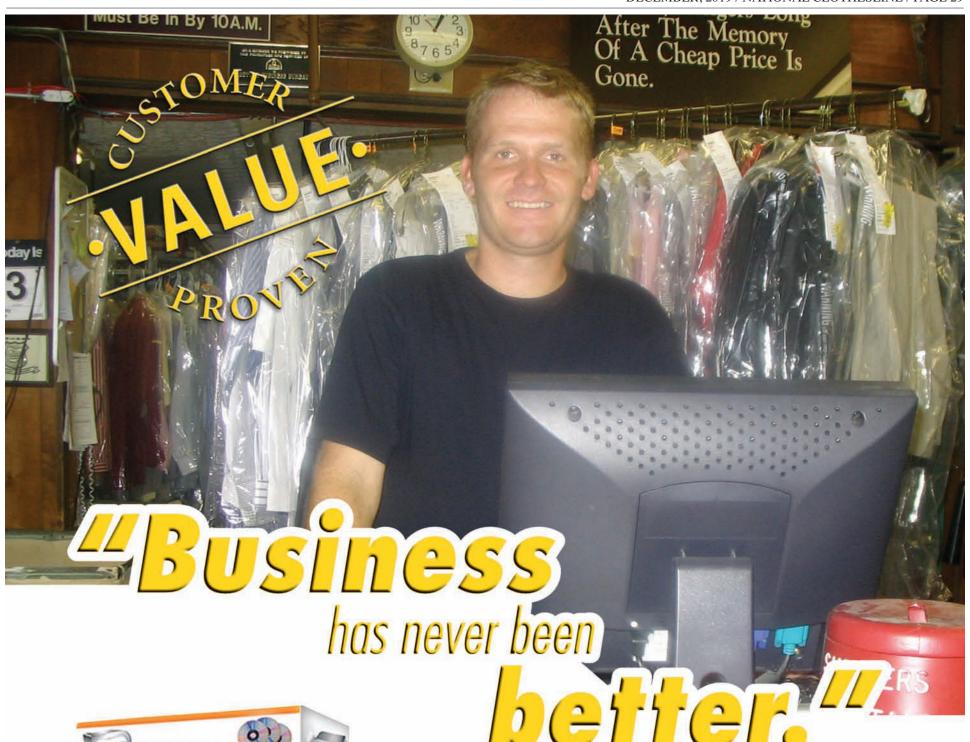
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KEEP IT LEGAL



BY FRANK KOLLMAN

Should rude behavior be tolerated?

magine an employee telling engaged in protected conyou in vulgar language to leave him alone. Also imagine an employee accusing you of being racist or sexist.

Now imagine that you may not be able to fire those employees under the National Labor Relations Act.

Recently, the National Labor Relations Board found that an employee's rudeness and disrespect toward his supervisor (in this case the president of the company) did not necessarily warrant termination if the employee is exercising statutory rights. The employee, after a somewhat heated exchange with the employer, said: "I don't think that you really care about our jobs or what we are doing because you are not allowing us to do our jobs."

The employee was fired.

Many employers are not aware that the National Labor Relations Act protects employees engaged in what is called "concerted activities."

Any time two or more employees act together with respect to wages, hours, and working conditions, there is a strong argument that they are

certed activities. Firing two employees who complained that the plant was too hot, for example, would probably be

whether "disrespectful" comments toward the boss negates the employees protected

The board looks at four fac-

the outburst, is even more subjective. In the case before the NLRB, the comment was considered lukewarm versus a

The third item, the nature of a bright line standard that permits employers to discipline employees for outbursts that would not be tolerated whether they involved pro-

You have a reasonable expectation of civil, respectful and polite conduct, but firing an employee for rude comments needs to be carefully evaluated

an unfair labor practice under the National Labor Relations

A rule prohibiting non-supervisory employees from discussing their wages (and consequently disciplining them for discussing wages) would be an unfair labor practice, as would the discipline.

These rules apply to nonunion and unionized companies alike. In fact, employees seeking to unionize a company are engaged in protected "concerted activities."

Because discussions of wages, hours, and working conditions with employees can frequently get heated, the National Labor Relations Board has adopted rules to determine

tors: where the discussion took place; what the conversation was about; how bad the employee's outburst was; and whether the outburst was provoked by the employer's unfair labor practice.

With respect to these factors, a discussion in private between the employer and the employee is better for the employee than making disrespectful statements in front of other employees. Public acts of disrespect are less protected.

As to the subject matter of the conversation, if the discussion was over serious workplace concerns, the outburst has more protection. A discussion about parking spaces or uniform colors might not.

profanity-laced tirade with threats of violence.

The last item deals with whether the employee was reacting to the employer's proper behavior or conduct that was unlawful.

The EEOC takes a slightly different approach. The EEOC says that the NLRB should permit employers to discipline employees for engaging in racial or sexual misconduct while also engaging in protected activity under the NLRA.

To summarize the EEOC's position, the commission believes that employers not only should but must take corrective action in light of employee activities that involve racial and sexual harassment.

Even if the employee is engaging in protected activity under the NLRA, the EEOC says the employer is obligated to "do something" to remedy the Title VII violations, and that "do something" might include discipline. It is not clear how the NLRB will balance behavior that is protected while at the same time illegal under another federal statute.

The NLRB is currently reviewing its standards. It is my hope that the NLRB will adopt

HL 860

tected subjects or not. If the outburst violates the Civil Rights Act, it should extinguish any protections provided by the NLRA.

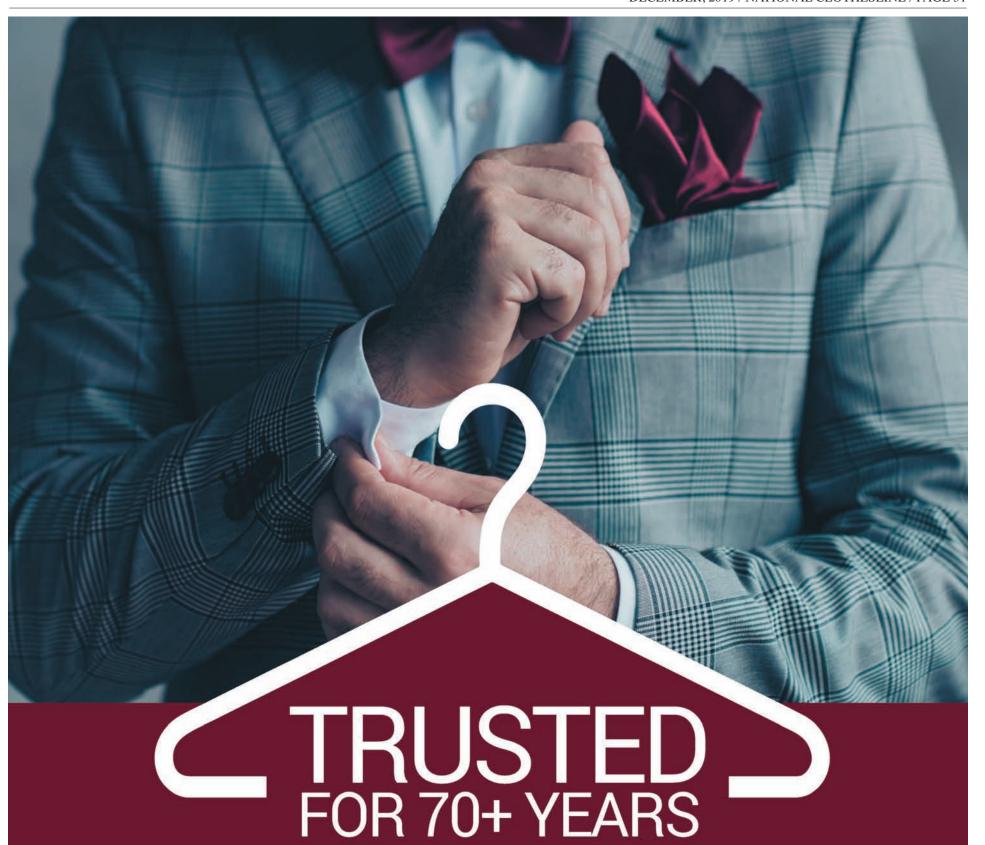
When dealing with your employees, you have a reasonable expectation of civil, respectful, and polite conduct. Most employers expect a little push back from employees from time to time, including a little profanity.

Firing an employee, however, for rude and disrespectful comments needs to be carefully evaluated to make sure the four elements above are considered. Even without a union, the National Labor Relations Board protects employees whose exuberance is explained by the exercise of their rights. In any event, the actual comments should be evaluated to determine if they are clearly disrespectful and rude, no matter what the subject.

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.



THE CLEANERS OF KELLER in Keller, TX, purchased a Union HL-860 with solvent heating through Gulf States Laundry Machinery. John FitzGibbon, the owner, is pictured with Matt A. Lipman of Union.



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SOUTHWEST



KLASSIC KLEANERS in Big Spring, TX, purchased a Columbia cleaning system that uses perc through Mustang Enterprises. The owners, JohnPaul and Kristen Nichols, are pictured with the machine.

SDA signing up exhibitors for Showcase in Ft. Worth

The Southwest Drycleaners Association will be taking its Cleaners Showcase back to Ft. Worth next year and exhibitors who sign up early will receive a discount on their booth space.

"We are offering more benefits to exhibitors than ever before as a thank you for their dedication to our industry," said Jess Culpepper Cleaners Showcase Chairman and owner of Culpepper Cleaners in San Antonio, TX.

New perks for exhibitors this year will include free customer

passes, multiple booth discounts and exhibitor suites for client meetings.

The show will be at the Fort Worth Convention Center April 16-18. Booth prices are 20 percent off until Dec. 31.

"Being back in the DFW area, we expect a record attendance since there hasn't been a cleaner-focused trade show or conference in this area since 2016," Culpepper said. "SDA is planning more education sessions for this show with industry experts and many of

them will be on the trade show floor to draw attention to our exhibitors."

Early-bird rates for booth space through Dec. 31 is \$999 for members and \$1,150 for nonmembers. Thereafter the rate will be \$1,250 for members and \$1,400 for non-members. The association is also offering one free booth for every four purchased and two free booth for every seven purchased.

More information is available on SDA's website, www.sda-dryclean.com, or by calling (512) 873-8195.

The Omni Fort Worth Hotel, located near the Ft. Worth Convention Center, will be the head-quarters hotel. Rates for the conference start at \$189 per night.

San Antonio sick leave law awaits ruling

A San Antonio, TX, ordinance allowing workers to earn paid sick leave was left in the hands of a Bexar County District judge after a hearing last month.

The Sick and Safe Leave ordinance was set to go into effect on Dec. 1 unless an injunction is granted. The ordinance allows workers inside the San Antonio city limits to earn one hour of sick leave for every 30 hours worked.

The ordinance would apply to businesses of all sizes on December 1, 2019 with an enforcement of April 1, 2020. The cap for leave accrual would be 56 hours per year. If an employee is absent three consecutive days, an employer can seek verification of the need for leave. However, the employer cannot ask for the verification until the fourth day.

The employee, not the employer, would choose the documentation of verification to submit which could simply be a written statement.

Under the ordinance. an employee would begin accruing paid sick leave on the first day of employment but would not be able to use the sick leave until 90 days of employment care completed. The San Antonio City Council approved the initial paid sick leave ordinance in August of 2018.

This is the second time the ordinance has been in court. In July, a judge approved delaying the ordinance until December. The city spent the interim revising the ordinance but the changes did not satisfy the plaintiffs before the November court hearing.

The plaintiffs hope to block the ordinance until the Texas Supreme Court rules on a similar Austin ordinance, but there is no guarantee the high court will take it up.



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THE SPOTTING BOARD



BY DAN EISEN

Training CSRs to talk to customers

representatives (CSRs) represent the face of your company. They create a trust between your customer and the work you do.

You know the importance of the CSR when you look at the chemical and equipment manufacturers you deal with and the people that represent them. I know that Bob Edwards of A.L Wilson Chemical Company has many loyal followers because of the knowledge he imparts.

Î do a lot of training for prestigious companies that constantly train their CSRs. This includes Sudsies, Oceanside Cleaners, Wedding Gown Preservation, Milt & Edie's Drycleaners, etc.

The proper format I find that is effective is as follows:

- 1. Fabric knowledge.
- 2. How to interact with the customer.

This is the same format that I use when I train 26 CSRS at Oceanside Cleaners in Jacksonville, FL.

Fabric knowledge

our customer service about fabrics but the CSR should receive a sample of the fabric you are talking about. They should know the difference between silk and polyester as well as the characteristics of the weave, including

For example, if a customer comes in with a fancy dress with fancy buttons, how should the interaction between the customer and CSR be?

The CSR might tell the customer, "We will take the butpopular. It is soft and lustrous, smooth, resilient, absorbent and comparatively strong for its fineness.

Silk fabric is luxurious in appearance and feel. It can range from a fine and smooth store feel and depth of color to silk.

Ask your spotter to give the silk a mineral oil treatment.

4. My colored silk is faded on the shoulders. Can it be re-

The CSR should not be afraid of customer's questions and should be able to accept garments with confidence and knowledge that is transmitted to the customer.

satin, velvet and chiffon. They should know the feel and texture of the fabric they are dealing with.

Interaction with the customer

It is one thing to give the CSR knowledge of fabrics but it is equally important to know how they relate this information to the customer.

I created a common question and answer series to show the best way of relating this information to customers. I very often find myself in disagree-It is not enough to just talk ment of how others teach.

tons off for safety and we will charge you a dollar a button to resew it."

I found this approach might be offending to some customers. A better approach might be is to tell the customer that we will guarantee that the buttons will be safe and not tell them what you are doing.

Talking silk with a customer

Silk remains a popular fabric even with the ability of polyester. Silk has the combination of properties which makes it very desirable and

fabric made from cultivated silk or the rough textured irregular slubbed yarn of raw silk. The vividness and depth of color is unequal when dyes are used on silk.

Common questions posed by customers

1. Will the perspiration stain come out of my silk?

Answer. We can take out the perspiration stain but unfortunately the ingredients in perspiration can affect the dyes in silk fabrics. This includes fatty acids, chloride salts, and possible alcohol usage. The cleaning process will ensure that no further damage will occur on the silk.

2. Can my silk be cleaned safely without color loss?

Answer. The mild and environmentally safe solvents that we use do not affect the dyes on silk.

3. My silk seems to have a washed out and faded look. Can it be restored?

Answer. Yes. We have a finishing treatment that will re-

Answer. Unfortunately light and impurities in the air permanently affect the dyes on silk. We can remove these impurities preventing further damage and give you more extended wear.

5. Can my silk be wetcleaned safely?

Answer. Yes, We have state of the art wetcleaning equipment and special finishing agents that einsure the silk is returned to you in a new and wearable condition.

Summary

The CSR should not be afraid of the customer or questions the customer may ask. They should accept garments with confidence and knowledge that is transmitted to the customer.

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 cleandan@comcast.net through his website is www.garmentanalysis.com.



FASHION CLEANERS in Oklahoma City, OK, purchased a fourth Columbia MC340VG perc machine from the GoHard Group. Peter Gianos (left), the owner, is pictured with Chris Hogard of Columbia.

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MIDWEST



PRONTO CLEANERS in Chicago, IL, purchased a Unisec/E Model MS-402NE through All Pro Machinery. Pictured are Mr. Lim (left), owner of Pronto Cleaners, and Roger Kim of All Pro Machinery.

Gough Lamb Cleaners of Ohio closes after a 108-year run

Gough Lamb Cleaners of Ohio has closed down after operating for 108 years. Founded on June 28, 1911 by Lawrence Gough, it was one of the oldest businesses in Middletown, OH.

Gough Lamb Cleaners merged with another business, known as Lamb Brothers Cleaning Company 12 years after its founding.

In 1930, the business was robbed, not an altogether atypical occurrence in the industry, though this time the perpetrators were a bit more famous. A man named Clyde Barrow (of Bonnie and

Clyde fame) broke into the business with his gang in an attempt to steal eight suits, an overcoat and a dress.

According to the *Journal-News*, a security night watchmen thwarted the theft, but the criminals dropped the clothing and managed to escape.

Undaunted, the following day, Barrow and two men were soon back at it again but were captured during the robbery of another Midtown business. After being extradited to Texas, Barrow was sentenced to 14 years in prison, though he was paroled after only two. Barrow and his partner Bonnie Parker would go on to be shot and killed in May of 1934 by lawmen in Louisiana. They were credited with a crime spree that included killing at least nine police officers and four civilians. In two years, the couple committed over 100 felonies together.

The business, however, would continue for another 85 years.

David Francis became the owner 58 years ago; his father Les had bought it in 1938. It would grow to include nine Gough Lamb locations in Middletown at one point. More recently, there were only two after Francis closed a third down. Then, after suffering a stroke, he became physically unable to continue and announced that Lamb Gough Cleaners would close on Saturday, Nov. 2.

In the interim, Donna Mull, who has worked for Francis for about four years, has been contacting customers about picking up their clothes.

She told the *Journal-News*, "Everybody is sad. It's a family affair. Everybody works together. It's like family."

MILD making plans for 2020 convention

The Michigan Institute of Laundering and Drycleaning held its October board meeting to handle regular board business and to focus on how to make its 2020 summer convention its best ever.

MILD has received a \$10,000 sponsorship from the Michigan Cleaning Fund to allow MILD to bring in a national speaker. Motivational speaker and comedian Charles Marshall will identify seven abilities that everyone can use to reach personal and professional success with content from his book, *The Seven Powers of Success*

The board is making efforts to provide content that will benefit the entire membership, including car washes, carpet cleaners, drycleaners, industrial laundries, janitorial and suppliers. Registration rates for the 2020 convention are being set to allow owners to bring staff and family to participate and take advantage.

The convention will be held July 24-26, 2020 at Crystal Mountain Resort in Thompsonville MI. The resort provides a great educational venue and a fine atmosphere for networking with many activities for the whole family.

The board ended its planning weekend on a wine and beer tour in Traverse City. The group knows how to have fun, so plan on joining them in July and engage with the cleaning industry in Michigan.

Check the MILD website for updates: www.mildmi.org.



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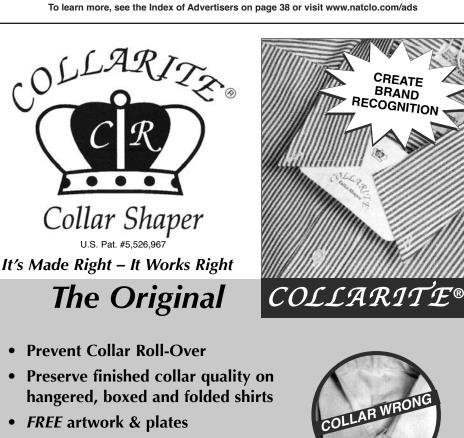
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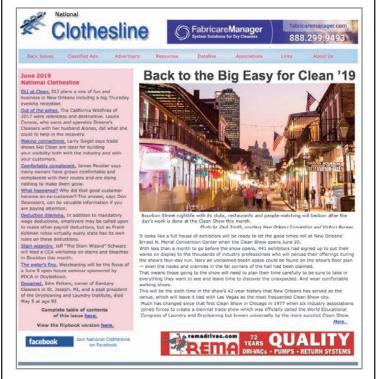
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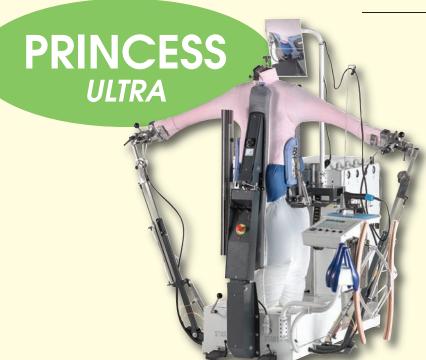






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