



National

# Clothesline

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## Time for training in Naples



Dan Eisen (right) leads a session at Platinum Dry Cleaners instructing, from left, Chris Bamberg, Magali Rodriguez and Bill Gutierrez.

Two Naples, FL, cleaners availed themselves of the expertise of Dan Eisen in recent seminars at their plants.

At Fashion Fresh Dry Cleaning & Alterations, Eisen led a three-day wetcleaning training program Nov. 30-Dec. 2.

"Drycleaners are learning the art of wetcleaning because many fabrics have stains and soil that can't be removed in a routine drycleaning process," Eisen said.

"Professional wetcleaning is nothing like home washing or laundering, he noted."

"The professional drycleaner uses state of the art wetcleaning machines, moisture control dryers and finishing equipment that returns the garment to the customer in a new and original condition.

"The staff at Fashion Fresh Cleaners are well trained and capable of using this technically advanced process," he said.

Fashion Fresh Dry Cleaners is a couture drycleaner and alterations service that is family owned and has been locally operated since its inception in 1987 by Nicholas and Paula Shirghio. The company specializes in delicate fabrics and gowns and hard to clean items.

After years of working to provide convenience, superior drycleaning quality and customer serv-

ice, Jeff and Marlaina Rhea, second-generation owners of Fashion Fresh, believe the pursuit of knowledge by and for their employees results in the best possible experience for customers.

At Platinum Dry Cleaners in Naples, FL, Eisen led a day-long session to help the company stay current with quality trends in drycleaning and wetcleaning on December 3.

Eisen advised the staff on the latest advanced techniques in spotting as well as enzyme bath, bleach bath, issues with problem bleeder garments, mechanical and mineral baths.

"This was so educational for us to maintain our high quality standards to keep meeting our customer's demand," said Chris Bamberg, owner of Platinum Dry Cleaners. "Dan Eisen is the absolute authority on quality garment care," he added.

Platinum operates a 12,000-sq.-ft. processing facility with 40 employees that serve three retail locations with five delivery vehicles.

The company is increasing its already established Naples, Marco Island, and Bonita Springs retail locations through further direction on home delivery of all services with an emphasis on convenient, affordable, and time-saving wash and fold garment care.

## SDA to host USA Best Practices awards program

An international program that recognizes top companies in textile care will come to the U.S. during the upcoming Cleaners Showcase trade show sponsored by the Southwest Drycleaners Association.

The Global Best Practices Awards is a program organized by CINET, a global umbrella organization with more than 100 members consisting of national associations, suppliers, research institutes and individual companies. CINET aims to build a global network of experts, stimulate the implementation of innovation by exchanging information and profile the capabilities of the industry.

CINET, in conjunction with Methods for Management and SDA, will present the Best Practices awards program on the opening day of the show, Thursday, April 16, from 2 to 5 p.m. which will be followed by the Showcase Sneak Peak Reception at 5:30 p.m. the same day.

The entire conference will be April 16-18, 2020 at the Fort Worth Convention Center in Fort Worth, TX.

"We are excited to host the USA Best Practices Awards and contribute to the sustainability and promotion of the textile industry," said Jess Culpepper, Cleaners Showcase Chairman and owner of Culpepper Cleaners in San Antonio, TX. "The heart of the awards is to share best practices and that is what the SDA and the Cleaners Showcase is about — sharing information we can all use to improve our businesses and industry."

CINET said the USA Best Practices Awards will be the American pre-selection event for the Global Best Practices Award 2020 Program which will take place during Texcare International in Frankfurt, Germany, in June. Overall winners in the U.S. will be invited to the Best Practices final in Frankfurt.

The deadline for submitting an entry in the program is March 1. Details and an entry form can be found at [www.cinet-online.com/awards](http://www.cinet-online.com/awards). Highlights of winners of the 2018 awards can also be found there.

There is no cost to submit an application for the awards program. All nominees will be invited as special guests of CINET at the award even in Ft. Worth. USA finalists will be reimbursed for their trip to Texcare in June if they attend the meet and greet one day prior to the event and participate in the presentations during the event.

The entry form asks for company information concerning the type of business and cleaning machines and solvents in use and details on the key areas targeted by the program.

Those areas include quality, sustainability, business model and concept, and innovation. Applicants are asked to describe their companies under these parameters.

In terms of quality, applicants are asked about their training, education and labor policy and any professional certifications they may have received and to tell how quality is controlled and guaranteed by their company.

Sustainability relates to using modern equipment, operations, optimal working methodologies and for professional textile cleaning and/or laundering. Specifically, it asks about equipment and how it reduces emissions, how the results are measured, what good housekeeping practices are used, and what sort of recovery and recycling methods are used.

Under the business model and service concept section, applicants are asked why customers choose their service over a competitor and what benefits are offered to customers. They are also asked to describe their key activities, how service is provided to the cus-

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## Sneak Peek

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Jeff Protheroe has continued the work started by his grandfather more than 100 years ago in Hoquiam, WA.



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Frank Kollman offers some resolutions that don't involve losing weight or exercising more but could help your business.



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Maintaining or replacing gaskets can stop leaks and save a bundle. Bruce Grossman explains how to do it.





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# Good luck in 2020. You’ll need it

As the new year begins, it’s time to take stock of our lives. We pick apart the past year and prepare for the next one. It’s also a good time for business owners to reflect on what is working, what is not, and what obstacles lie ahead. Unfortunately, the drycleaning industry doesn’t appear as if it’ll be getting any easier any time soon.

A quick search of drycleaning in the news today reveals that, among other things, drycleaning remains interesting. In December, some long-time cleaning businesses closed down, such as 74-year-old Coolidge Cleaners of Arizona that closed due to health issues with the family who owned it, and in Toledo, Ohio, Lincoln Drive-In Cleaners opted to shut down after 65 years in service. These incidents confirm what the U.S. census figures have already noted: the size of the industry continues to decrease.

Other headlines indicate that even those who remain open still face a wide variety of challenges... cars continue to crash through drycleaning storefronts with reckless abandon, robbers continue to target the industry that is heavy on cash flow, and over in San Jose, a fire burned down Bonita Cleaners for what the owner believed was “a total loss.”

It’s not an industry for the timid as danger seems to lurk around every corner. Fortunately, not all headlines declare doom and inevitable tragedy. You have to look closer, dig a little deeper to see some good signs, as well. Franchises continue to expand, which might not be the best news for the mom-and-pop shops, but it’s evidence that growth can be achieved even in this hostile market. Meanwhile, fresh new batches of professional cleaners are still coming into the industry, as evidenced by the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute’s recent 367th General Drycleaning course session. Other drycleaners are creating publicity by expanding their business and offering interesting new enticements, such as craft coffee or fashion rental cleaning, and it’s almost impossible to keep track of all of the businesses offering Coats for Kids charity drives to help the underprivileged this time of year.

In other words, things aren’t really that different than they’ve always been. Robert Zengeler, who passed away at 89, could attest to that fact, as could this month’s profile, Jeff Protheroe. Both men come from rare drycleaning companies with more than 100 years of history. They faced depressions, recessions, wars, polyester, changing technology, home drycleaning, Casual Friday, environmental regulations and even strange unforeseen threats that can hurt a business (such as spotted owls!). Threats arise generation after generation. The hard truth is, success in the drycleaning industry has never been easy, but the good news is that it also means it will never be boring. Good luck out there in 2020.

# When you have it all figured out

One of the pitfalls of running a successful business is coming to believe that you have it all figured out. Whatever it is that you’re doing, you must be doing it right because otherwise you wouldn’t still be here. Right?

Well, maybe. Or maybe you had it all figured out a few years ago, got complacent and while you were not paying attention some things began slipping. Or maybe you only think you have it all down but in reality you are leaving potential profits on the table, or worse, letting them slide into a competitor’s pocket.

Do you really know? Do you really know, for example, how much it costs to produce a clean and pressed shirt? Or a drycleaned suit? Do you know how many pieces per hour are processed in your shirt department or your drycleaning department? Do you keep tabs on labor productivity from day to day, week to week and month to month and find out why those numbers vary or how they could be improved?

Do you really know who your top customers are? Can you rank your Top 10 or Top 50 not by who you think they are but what they actually spend. And if one of the top customers stops coming in, how long does it take to realize it? By the same token, can you list the last 10 or last 50 first-time customers and tell what has been done to get them to return?

If you can answer yes to all these questions, you are halfway there. Only halfway? Knowing where you are is the starting point, but where are you going? Most cleaners can point to the things they do well and they build on those strengths. But are you aware of your weaknesses? It is those weak spots that leave you vulnerable to a competitor. Common complaints about drycleaners include inconsistent quality, inconvenient hours and confusing pricing. How do you rate in those areas? A weak spot in any of these areas is a point of attack for a competitor.

We all know that many cleaners have closed over the past few years, but there are some new players, too. Some are well heeled. Others are enterprising and aggressive entrepreneurs who are taking aim at what they see as an industry that has not kept up with changes in consumer demands and expectations. Even if they don’t succeed, they can wreak havoc with you while they are trying. So take a hard and honest look at those areas where you may be vulnerable. Shore up your weaknesses before you find yourself playing catch-up with a competitor who also has it “all figured out.”

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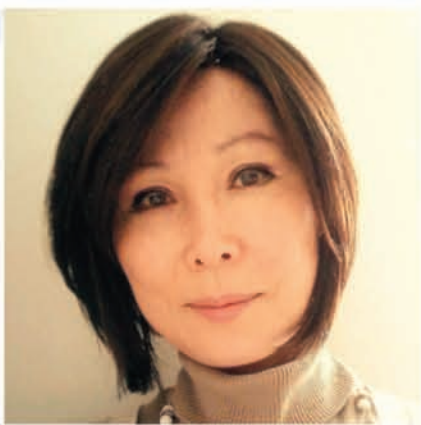


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# Hoquiam history

In the past century, Economy Cleaners of Hoquiam, WA, has been greatly influenced, for better or worse, by spotted owls, luxury yachts and even the 1906 San Francisco earthquake.

At least it's not a boring history.

It begins with founder Edward Protheroe, grandfather to third-generation owner Jeff, who worked as a bushel man for the Levi & Baer clothing store in town in the early 1900s.

"It's like a tailor — and nobody uses that term anymore — but the difference is a tailor would take and measure you up to create a suit that fits you. A bushel man would take an already made suit off the rack and alter it to fit you," Jeff explained.

The city of Hoquiam erupted in unprecedented growth as a result of the San Francisco earthquake of 1906; the town, after all, was heavily steeped in the logging industry.

"The sawmills in Hoquiam cut all kinds of wood to rebuild San Francisco. That made kind of a boom in the area," he noted. "When that boom quit, there was kind of a recession created by that and my grandfather was actually laid off by Levi & Baer."

As he tried to find work in California, Edward remained in contact with his future wife, Stella, who was probably the precipitating factor that lead him back. With his friend, Bob Storey, he began Protheroe & Storey Cleaners and Dyeworks in 1916.

The name didn't stick. When the partnership only lasted a couple of years, Storey moved to the other side of town to start another cleaners while Edward dropped "Storey" off the name and then later decided on "Economy" in the 1920s.

From the start, the company, no matter its name, offered drycleaning services and pickup and delivery.

"At one point, they used a bicycle. Then they had a Model A," Jeff noted.

Edward and Stella's son was actually named Jeff, though he went by his middle name "Edward." He was in college in 1940 when his father died of cancer. At the age of 20, he stepped in to help his mother.

"They worked together until the war broke out," Jeff said. "My dad got drafted. Because cleaners were considered an essential business, he was an only son to a widow. They gave him a deferment to help get things in order so he could leave."

When Jeff's father later left to go to war, his grandmother kept the business going and even paid off the building that housed the cleaners.

"At that time, the building was split in two. There was a restaurant on one side," Jeff said. "The cleaners was on the other side of it."

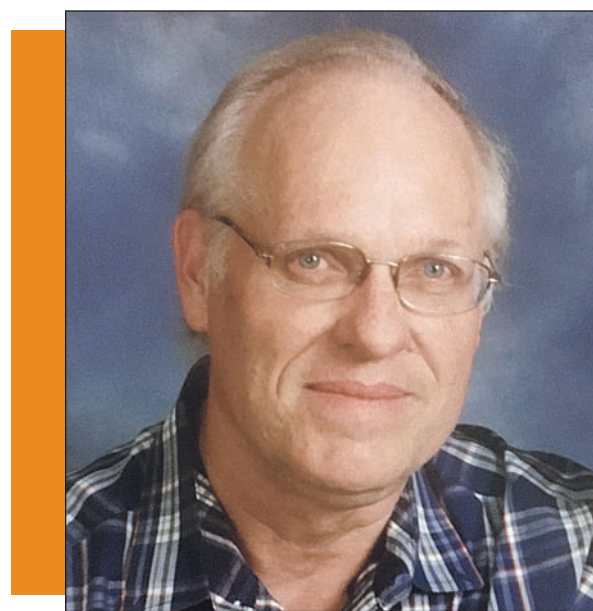
As he was growing up in the 1960s, the business became stronger than ever (now twice in size, literally, since the restaurant moved out and the dividing wall was taken out).

Like his father before him, Jeff pursued other interests (he was a music major in college) before coming to the business full time in 1980. He worked alongside his father for the next two

dozen years.

The elder Protheroe worked at a full-time capacity until he was 84; he didn't pass away until he was 95. He attributed his longevity to staying busy. Many of his friends had retired and passed away a few years later while Edward continued to outlive them.

When Jeff began to work full time in 1980, the business was at least 64 years old (though he knows the location housed another



cleaners as far back as 1906 in the same building). During the years that followed, the Protheroes spent considerable time upgrading equipment and offering new services.

"When I started, we had all manual presses," Jeff recalled. "We went to air-operated presses."

They also updated to a gas boiler, added a shirt unit and began doing their own shirts, as well as adding uniforms to their repertoire. They even added a pickup location in Montesano. Everything was going well until the northern spotted owl was doing badly.

In June of 1990, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service declared the owl "threatened" and it wasn't long before the government intervened.

Habitat land was set aside following various legal arguments, and it's hard to say if it has helped the spotted owl population much in the long term. Today, there is estimated to be less than 2,400 pairs left in British Columbia, Canada, Oregon, northern California and Washington. They are declining at a rate of almost 3 percent per year.

The local timber industry, however, declined at a much faster rate in the early 1990s.

"That really killed the logging industry, and so... a lot of support industries," Jeff noted. "A lot of loggers don't wear drycleaned clothes, but we had a number of corporate offices for big companies that were here and those people did use our service quite a bit."

It was the extra services that kept the business going when times were at their toughest. "If I hadn't diversified, I wouldn't be here now," he said.

One lesson Jeff has learned over the years is that you cannot prepare for everything (spotted owls, for example), but there is something else you can do to help make sure your business stays successful.

"I think the biggest thing is you've

got to treat people the way they want to be treated because if they like you, they'll keep coming back," he said. "Sometimes people bring something in here and they're like, 'How would you do this?' I can tell them how I do it at home, how they can do it at home. I'm not trying to turn business away, but sometimes that's just what it is. You give them the best way. They value that and they remember that so the next time they come back."

Sometimes, they keep coming back

"For 12 years I volunteered at the school and I ran an afterschool jazz band for the Hoquiam school district so I met a lot of kids through that," he said. "A lot of those kids that I met through the band program there know me and come here."

In fact, Jeff still plays live music every week for his church and with an 18-piece big band known as the Dukes of Swing playing everything from drums to guitar to a variety of brass in-

## Jeff Protheroe

even after they move over 200 miles away.

"I have a customer who lived here who moved to the Dalles, Oregon, and they still have friends here," Jeff said. "They bring me their cleaning when they come to visit because they can't find anyone down there who does the quality of work that I do."

The word-of-mouth for the business is so strong that Jeff hasn't seen enough need yet to create a website or a Facebook page. He may be right; there were close to ten drycleaners around the area when he was a kid, now only two remain.

"I have a pretty good reputation around here," he noted. "I have lots of people who come in and say, 'I just moved here and talked to my neighbors and my neighbors said this is where you should go.'"

It has now been about 40 years since Jeff opted to follow in his family's footsteps, and he has no intention of leaving anytime soon. After all, he really enjoys what he does, especially "fixing things that people think are hopeless."

Work tapered off a few years ago, as it has in much of the industry, but lately the volume has seemed to stabilize. Jeff believes the future will still be strong for drycleaners because they do a job that people will always need.

"There are a lot of things that we do that a number of people are not going to want to do themselves," he explained. "I know a lot of these companies are trying to invent ways to eliminate cleaners, like how do you make a suit that doesn't have to be cleaned or pressed, but even at that, there's a lot of wash and wear shirts that come through here because people don't want to mess with them."

It doesn't hurt that Jeff has found a way to connect with Millennials in the area by going back to one of his first loves: music.

struments.

Hoquiam may be a small town (about 8,500 people), but it's strategically located, which of course helps Economy Cleaners. As part of Grays Harbor County, its nestled near the coast of the Pacific Ocean, which has resulted in a surprising boost to business from an unusual source.

"There's a luxury boat builder that has two manufacturing facilities, one in Westport, which is out at the coast from here, still in Grays Harbor County," he noted. "When they build a new boat, they want all of their sheets, towels, all that stuff, cleaned and pressed, because they dress the boats when they send them out with the new owner."

These aren't just regular boats, either. Westport Yachts' grandest offering is its Westport 164' Tri-Deck Motoryacht that "accommodates twelve guests in unsurpassed luxury."

"Some of the sheets are a thousand dollars a set, thousand count sheets that are Italian made," Jeff said.

With a small crew (he does the spotting and runs the drycleaning machine, his wife Liz and employee Joyce Bryant work as pressers), each time one is sold means a lot of extra work for the week, not that Jeff would complain. It's a challenging job, too.

"Usually they're on a time crunch and they want it fast," he laughed.

Everything on the yachts is of super high quality, from the towels to windbreakers and super plush (but weather-resistant) bathrobes that are embroidered with the name of the boat on them. Some yachts go on the market for well over \$20 million.

It's quite a change of pace from over 100 years ago when his grandfather started the business, but as always with the Protheroes, it's about treating people the way they want to be treated.



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## Obituaries

# Robert Zengeler, Sr.

## *A lifetime dedicated to the family drycleaning business*

It's no exaggeration to say that drycleaning was the life's work of Robert Zengeler, Sr.



The patriarch of Zengeler Cleaners, who died Nov. 13, 2019, he began by accompanying his father Ralph to work. In his last year of life, at age 89, he was often the first employee to come to work at the historic cleaners' Park Avenue store in Libertyville, IL, where he'd turn on the lights, fire up the boiler and make sure the plant was ready as the rest of the staff arrived for the day, even as he remained involved in production.

As it says on the company's website, "Drycleaning is the only life he's ever known."

That life began on March 21, 1930 in Lake Forest, IL. By the time he was in high school, he was making deliveries for the family business after the school day ended and on weekends.

After graduating from high school, he joined the Navy, serving four years during the Korean War years.

"I wasn't particularly interested in going to college, I wasn't ready to go to work full time and I wasn't ready to get married and settle down," he recalled in later years in explaining why he joined the Navy.

College probably wasn't a necessity for him, anyway, since by that time he'd received the equivalent of a graduate degree in drycleaning.

"I grew up around the business, and my father and grandfather were my role models," he said. "As a young child, my grandfather Art (A.W. Zengeler) would take me down to the plant in Winnetka, where he did the dyeing. He was a master dyer. I'd watch him dipping clothes into the dye kettles, which we have preserved to this very day. He was meticulous, never satisfied until he could proudly present it to his customer."

He would also watch his father "removing spots on the spotting board, the place where we keep all the specialized chemicals we use for that purpose."

By the time his four years of service in the Navy ended, he was ready to settle down and go to work — in drycleaning, naturally.

"My father offered me \$70 a week, pretty good pay for a 22-



**Robert Zengeler, Sr., was already an experienced cleaner at the time of this photo in 1952 as he unloads a washer. He represented the fourth generation of the family business that was started by his grandfather in 1857. He cut his teeth in the business as a school boy and continued working regularly up until the last year of his life. He died in November at 89 years old.**

year old in those days, and it was, as it had always been, the natural place for me to be."

By 1962, he was ready to assume the reins of the company which by then had been around more than 100 years.

"When it came time for me to run the business, I tried to lead by example," he said. "Our business is pretty simple. Once you have the right technology in place and

you've mastered the very best cleaning methods, the business is all about stressing quality, doing it right, never cutting corners."

Under his leadership, the company expanded into several new communities, starting with Libertyville in 1962 and the opening of the Northbrook facility and corporate office in 1967.

"Treating people with respect has been as important as anything else to our longevity," he said. "I was brought up, and my children were brought up, to respect and appreciate our fellow workers. Family members have always been on the plant floor, working side-by-side with employees. We would never ask anyone to do something we wouldn't do ourselves."

His son, Tom Zengeler, eventually succeed him as president of the company. Tom's brothers Michael and Robert Jr., also continue in the family business.

"Zengeler Cleaners was founded in 1857 and has remained a family business for 162 years,"

Tom said. "My father always put the loyalty of his customers before monetary considerations."

He devoted himself to his community, Tom said, giving to church organizations and sports teams. He was a charter member of the Libertyville Rotary Club, where he served for 57 years. He enjoyed the outdoors, fishing, hunting, cutting his grass, traveling to Palm Beach, and his nightly old fashioned was a nod to a good day.

Surviving are six children, Robert Zengeler, Deborah Creigh, A. William Zengeler, Michael Zengeler, Thomas and Kathleen-Lang; 12 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren; two sisters, Jane Dietrich and Marie Brady.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Ralph and Mary Zengeler; and his wife, Elaine in 2015.

Funeral mass was held at St. Mary of the Annunciation Church in Mundelein. Memorial contributions can be made to [www.rotary-international.org](http://www.rotary-international.org).

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## William "Pete" Rountree Drycleaner and beekeeper

William Perry "Pete" Rountree, of Twin City, GA, died Nov. 19 while tending his bees. He was 76 years old.



He owned and operated Southern Laundry and Drycleaners for 30 years before his retirement in 2007. He was a member of the South Eastern Fabricare Association and served as its president in 1991 and 1992. He was also a former president of Swainsboro Rotary.

Since his retirement, he enjoyed his hobby of beekeeping. As a member of three different beekeeper clubs, he loved mentoring new or beginner beekeepers.

He is survived by his wife, Sandra McCranie Rountree of Twin City, GA; two sons, William Perry Rountree, Jr. and Stephen Hardy Rountree, both of Atlanta; a sister, Mary Jane Rountree Faulk of Vidalia, GA; three brothers, John Rountree of Twin City, Lee Ellis Rountree of Statesboro, GA and George Holland Rountree of Statesboro, GA; and many nieces, nephews and cousins.

Funeral Services were Thursday, November 21, 2019 at the Swainsboro First Baptist Church. Condolences may be submitted on-line at [www.durden-hudsonfuneraldirectors.com](http://www.durden-hudsonfuneraldirectors.com).



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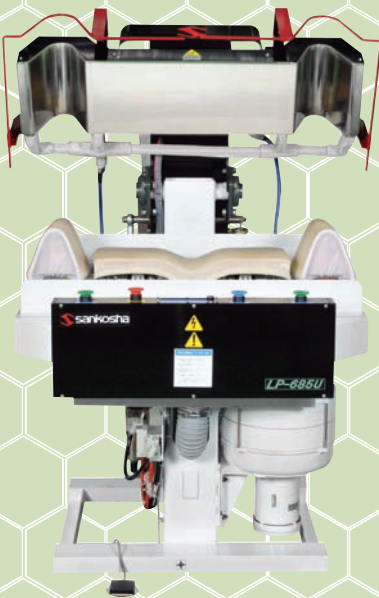


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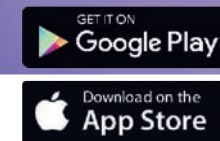
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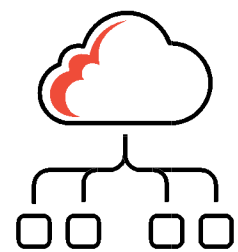
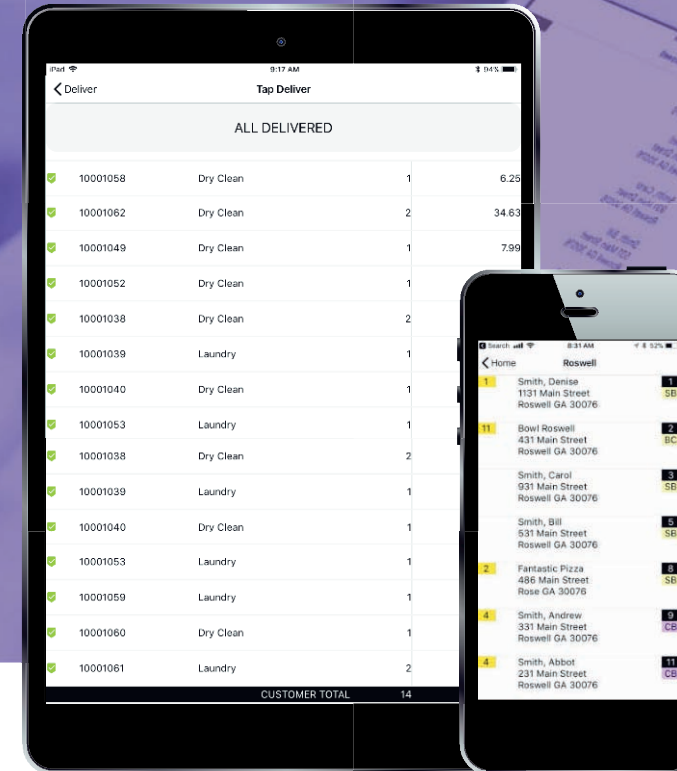
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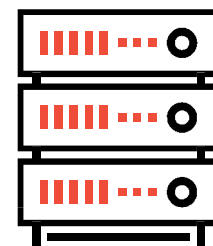


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# Best Practices awards comes to Texas

*Continued from page 1*

tomers and to describe their key resources, e.g., human resources, infrastructure, machinery, IT, etc.

Under this section they are also asked to tell what their cost structure looks like and how the business model is generating income, and to explain how they promote their services and how effective they believe those channels to be.

Finally, they are asked to explain the customer relationship they aim for and what they can say about their brand.

In the innovations category, applicants are asked to tell what they are doing to cope with changing customer demands on quality and services or to meet legislative and environmental requirements.

Finally, applicants are asked to tell in what ways their company stands out in ways other than mentioned in the previous sec-

tions.

CINET said the objective of the program is to demonstrate the capabilities of the professional textile care industry worldwide to meet customer expectations and to provide a benchmark and a platform for new state-of-the-art in modern professional textile care services.

“For professional textile care operations, quality, service, innovation and last, but not least, sustainability are the key issues to meet customer demands,” CINET said on its website. “By stimulating the best practice approach, CINET intends to contribute to a modern and sustainable textile care sector.

“Changing customer demands require new services and business models. Upgraded quality and sustainability, well-trained human resources, comfort and high-tech

functionalities are important aspects to meet these changing demands,” the organization said.

CINET expects the 2020 awards program will have more than 400 participants from over 50 countries. An independent international jury will evaluate the nominees based on the five criteria and their presentations. Each nominee entered in the competition will be visited personally by one of the jury members.

CINET has also announced a working partnership with America’s Best Cleaners to work on areas of mutual interest such as an international exchange of sharing best practice standards, market developments and international travel experience at Texcare International 2020 in Frankfurt, Germany.

The key areas of the information and knowledge sharing part-

nership are related to CINET’s main initiatives for the Professional Textile Care industry, including research and development of the World of Professional Textile Care Business School, international certification, a new online platform where partners of professional textile care come together and find information on business development and the Global Best Practices Awards.

America’s Best Cleaners is an independent agency for quality certification and provides a team of consultants who work with both ABC affiliates and non-affiliated businesses to assist owners, managers and team members realize their potential while striving for continued personal and professional success.

ABC’s website is [www.americasbestcleaners.com](http://www.americasbestcleaners.com).

## Four regional trade shows in 2020 plans

While there is no Clean Show to look forward to this year, there will be no shortage of opportunities for cleaners to see equipment and learn how to put it to its best use during 2020.

But the first all-industry gath-

ering for the year will not involve an exhibition of equipment. It will take place this month at the Grand Velas Riviera Nayarit resort in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico as cleaners gather for the Five Star/Brainstorming conference sponsored by the National Cleaners Association and the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute.

The Jan. 16-19 program will feature speakers on several business-oriented topics in the mornings and plenty of time for social interaction for cleaners and allied trades people who will come from all over the country to participate.

The first live equipment trade show opportunity of the year will come in April when the Southwest Drycleaners Association hosts its Cleaners Showcase in Ft. Worth, TX. This year SDA will run from Thursday through Saturday, April 16-18 in the Ft. Worth Convention Center. Exhibitors and cleaners interested in participating can call SDA, (512) 873-8195 or visit the association’s website, [www.sda-dryclean.com](http://www.sda-dryclean.com).

A new venue is in sight for the South Eastern Fabricare Association’s Southern Drycleaners and Launderers Show. The Gaylord Palms in Kissimmee, FL, near Orlando will be the location for the June 12-14 exhibition.

Information about the show is available on the SEFA website, [www.sefa.org](http://www.sefa.org), or by calling show management at (215) 830-8467.

The California Cleaners Association will return to its familiar venue in Long Beach for Fabricare 2020 Aug. 14-16. Potential exhibitors can download a prospectus for the show at CCA’s website, [www.calcleaners.com](http://www.calcleaners.com). Information for attendees will become available as the dates near.

The last scheduled U.S. trade show of the year will be Nov. 6-8, the Drycleaning and Laundry Expo sponsored by the Pennsylvania and Delaware Cleaners Association. PDCA is taking its show to a new venue this year, too — the Gaylord National Harbor in Maryland. Watch for more information on this at PDCA’s website, [www.pdclean.org](http://www.pdclean.org).

Of course there will be many other opportunities through the year for cleaners to gather and learn. DLI and NCA have a full array of their usual courses and many state and regional association’s will be holding non-exhibit conventions.

A full listing of this year’s industry events can be found on page 33 of this issue.



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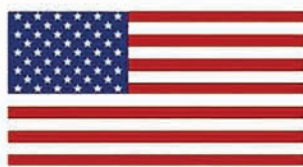


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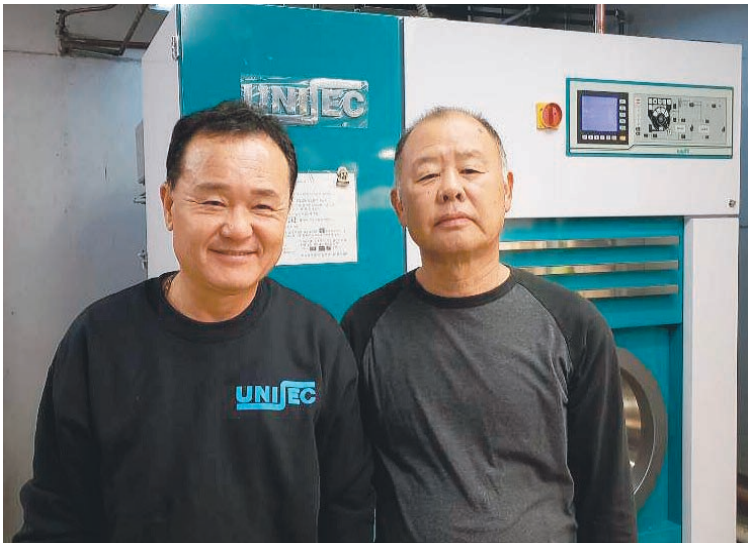
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# NORTHEAST



**SUNNY CLEANERS in Pine Brush, NY, purchased a Unisec Model MS-402N through New York machinery. Pictured are Robert Lee (left) of New York Machinery and Mr. Hwang, owner of Sunny Cleaners.**

## NCA gets started in 2020 with cleaning courses

It's early in the year, but there is no shortage of classes to take from the National Cleaners Association in the next couple of months.

First up is a one-day course of "Advanced Stain Removal and Bleaching" set to take place on Sunday, Jan. 12 in the Bronx.

It will meet from 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. and cost \$250 for members and \$350 for non-members.

At the same time, the association will offer the first of four in-

stallments of its two-day DEC Certification courses that meet for a total of 16 hours on two consecutive Sundays (from 9 a.m. until 6 p.m.) in New York City.

The cost is \$809 for members and \$1,309 for non-members.

Upcoming class dates include: Jan. 12 and 19, May 17 and 24, August 2 and 9, and November 15 and 22.

Also coming up is a comprehensive five-day, 40-hour course on the topic of "Radical Dryclean-

ing/Stain Removal."

It will take place from Feb. 3 to 7 in the Bronx, meeting daily from 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m.

Tuition is \$750 for members and \$995 for non-members.

Finally, NCA will offer one more course in February, a two-day examination of "Pressing and Finishing" that will meet from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. on Feb. 8 and 9 in the Bronx.

The cost of the class is \$455 for members and \$595 for non-members.

All offerings, except for the DEC Certification courses, are eligible for free admission for the association's Platinum Members.

For more information on any of the association's upcoming classes, contact them directly by calling (800) 888-1622 or visit them online at [www.nca-i.com](http://www.nca-i.com).

### Rental app teams with NY cleaners

It's all about having access to high fashion with a low investment. Wardrobe rental companies such as Rent the Runway are growing in number.

Many Millennials continue to have designs on designer clothing but don't want to pay full price and view fashion rental outlets as cheaper, more sustainable and a viable way to enjoy donning luxury brands that, in many cases, are only worn on a couple of occasions.


Now, one of the latest players in the market — Wardrobe — wants to partner with local drycleaners for their peer-to-peer fashion app.

Customers sign up for the service via the app and then have an option of about 40 hubs throughout Manhattan where they can go and pick up or drop off items of clothing.

According to the company's website, "Some fashion rental apps want you to conduct swaps at coffee shops or public parks. This pretty inconvenient, not to mention awkward. Others deliver your clothes in a cardboard box. We think that's wasteful. Plus, who's going to clean it? We've solved these issues by partnering with local dry cleaners to create our Wardrobe Hubs, which act as pick ups, drop offs, and professional cleaning services, all in one."

The service also encourages customers to lease out their own stylish garments to help offset costs — and those who want to wear their own outfit can simply "rent" it through the app where they pay only the delivery and cleaning fees.

For more information on the company, visit them online at [www.wardrobe.com](http://www.wardrobe.com).



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# SHIRT TALES



BY DON DESROSIERS

## The pain of shirts is in the training

**S**hirts are a pain because it takes a while to train a presser.

Pressing shirts is more of a specialty than other items, so much so that we sometimes overpay a shirt presser just because we have found someone that is good and we want to keep that person on the staff.

If a presser does an inferior press job on a shirt, the touch up necessary may take longer than it took to press the shirt (correctly or incorrectly) in the first place. This is important and contributes heavily to the making shirts a royal pain.

Conversely, when an inspector finds a pressing defect on, say, a pair of pants, the touch-up necessary to bring the garment from unacceptable to acceptable often takes mere seconds. A quick pass with the all-steam iron or dancing the pants — still on the hanger — over a puffer and you're done. Try that with shirts. It will yield poor results.

I remember the manager of a competitor telling me about 25 years ago that it took her one year of working with a new employee before she felt like that employee could hold her own on a shirt press.

She was actually much more blunt: "I gotta carry them for a year before they're any good to me."

I'm not sure that I agree with that, but they did have old clunky equipment that is very hard to train on. It isn't so difficult with the newer equip-

ment. But when a drycleaner has three drycleaning pressers and one shirt presser, who is most expendable? Hard to say, I suppose, but I guess that you'd rather hold on to the shirt presser.

I have been to many plants and am told that the person pressing pants (or some other garment type) is a brand new employee — first or second day. I can't immediately tell.

I admit that the smaller the plant, the more evident this would be, but the fact is that drycleaning pressers can often cover each other.

The shirt presser is on her own. If several pressers in the drycleaning department are contributing to the total output of the department, a new presser — or a weak one — will not slow down the others.

In some shirt departments, the total output is only as fast as the slowest presser. I don't think that this is ever true in the drycleaning arena.

Also, if a new drycleaning presser needs to be trained, it usually does not require 100 percent of a trainer's time. That is, a trainer will show a newbie how to press a pair of pants or a sweater in an hour or less. Then the trainer can return to his own station.

The trainee may not be perfect, but if they are merely slow, sheer repetition might make them a little faster.

If the quality is substandard, it is unlikely that re-doing a drycleaning piece will

take longer than pressing it in the first place.

Also, the new employee doesn't have a negative impact.

If a new employee is being trained by your best pants presser who usually presses 36 pants per hour, but can't today

this way: If you are doing 90 shirts per hour, you are producing a shirt in 45 seconds.

If the press job is unacceptable, how often can you take that shirt and make it "perfect" or acceptable in 45 seconds or less in the touch-up area?

To make all this even more

bad for a cornucopia of reasons, not the least of which is the wedge that it cements between employee and employer.

You surely lose control over the employee if you are incapable of doing his or her job. When you see a substandard

**Often these training issues arise due to the managers inability to train because they aren't capable of pressing.**

because he or she is training the newcomer, you get a double-whammy: no 36 pants per hour plus entry-level productivity from the new presser.

This probably doesn't happen. What is more likely is an introductory training session, followed by intermittent follow-ups. Speed will come with practice.

Conversely, in the shirt department, it takes a concerted effort to train a presser. An introductory training session will not make the grade lest we plan to accept poor quality.

If a new employee is allowed to "learn as they go" the resulting quality will likely be very poor.

Worse still, is the all-important fact that touch-up time will exceed the original press time. This is the most distressing fact about training a shirt presser.

If you doubt this, look at it

distasteful, picture a two-person unit with a new presser and an experienced one.

Does the experienced presser make up for the deficiencies of the new employee? Or does the inexperienced presser slow down the new one? You already know the answer.

I think that a key reason for all of these training issues is that in many plants, the managers can't train because they aren't capable of pressing. Many times, I ask the manager to press. Usually I ask this so that I can evaluate the supervisor's ability to train, figuring that the first step to assuring that they can train is assuring that they know the job in the first place.

Some of them are not only incapable of training or pressing but actually look down upon the chore and the people who are paid to do it. This is

press job, you can not tell the difference between equipment errors and operator errors. You don't know if this defect can be prevented by follow-up training or not.

Frankly, you take the presser's word for it. That is like a bookkeeper auditing himself. With the manager's inability to train, you breed laissez-faire quality and worse, declining quality standards. Raising the quality standards is completely out of the question. How much does that suck?

So, in the final analysis, when we find an employee who doesn't need much training (which is extremely important because we may not be able to train her anyway), we pay her too much. We do this to keep her around.

By itself, that isn't such a bad thing. A presser who can't press is worse than a singer who can't sing or a dancer who can't dance.

If you have a good quality employee, you want them around and you want to keep them. But is the presser "good" for the right reasons? Is the presser "good" because she doesn't call out sick or give you a hard time.

Or is a presser "good" because she is reliable and proficient at her job?

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



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# SOUTH



ONE HOUR KORETIZING in Fayetteville, NC, purchased a Vantage C 540 VGH and an Ipura cleaning machine through WC Bullock of WC Bullock and Associates. Pictured are the spotters and machine operators Fred Medina and Mr. Lee with store owner Young Bang and WC Bullock.

## Personal branding will be Rashid’s topic for SEFA

If one of your New Year’s resolutions is to improve the brand of your business, here is your chance.

The South Eastern Fabricare Institute is presenting a seminar by branding and marketing expert Brian Rashid called “The Future of Personal Branding for Business.”

The one-day event will begin at 10 a.m. on Saturday, Jan. 11 and will take place in the city of Atlanta. It will conclude about 4 p.m.

The site of the program will be the Residence Inn Atlanta Perimeter Center at 4695 Ashford Dunwoody Road.

Rashid’s workshop will walk attendees through the essentials of building a modern day brand, creating out-of-the-box content strategies and how to distribute the content.

As the CEO of Brian Rashid Global, Rashid helps clients tell their story like it’s never been told before.

He strongly believes that build-



Rashid

ing a brand is a must for all business owners. His workshop is designed to be a practical guide for walking through the essentials of building a

marketing plan to increase sales, customers and word-of-mouth.

“People buy from people they know, and that they remember and trust,” he told a large audience during last year’s Clean Show in New Orleans. “You have to think of yourself as a media company.”

The cost for the day-long seminar is \$129 for members and \$259 for non-members. Lunch is included.

Space is limited to the first 25 registrations. Call SEFA at (877) 707-7332 to reserve a spot.

To register online or to for more information, visit [www.sefa.org](http://www.sefa.org).

## NCALC sets two dates for meetings

Friends and members of the North Carolina Association of Launderers and Cleaners will have a pair of opportunities to participate in association meetings, although advanced registration is highly recommended.

The next NCALC meeting is right around the corner. The group’s 2020 Winter Meeting will be held from Jan. 24 to 26 in Greensboro, NC, at the Embassy Suites by Hilton Greensboro, 204 Centreport Drive, near the airport.

A few months later, there will be a Drycleaning Solvent Cleanup Act (DSCA) Stakeholders Meeting on April 30 in Raleigh.

It will be hosted at the Department of Environmental Quality Green Square Building located at 217 W. Jones St.

Recently, Gov. Roy Cooper signed a bill (HB 399) extending the length of the Dry-Cleaning Solvent Cleanup Act (DSCA) program for another ten years.

This extension keeps the DSCA program in force until January 1, 2032, and directs the continued transfer of a portion of sales and use taxes to the DSCA Fund until July 1, 2030.

The Department of Environmental Quality and NCALC are expected to continue advocating for other minor improvements to the cleanup program not covered in the recently passed bill in future legislative sessions.

For more information, visit online at [www.ncalc.org](http://www.ncalc.org).



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# KEEP IT LEGAL



BY FRANK KOLLMAN

## New Year's resolutions for 2020

I thought I would start the year by recommending actions a business should take to avoid legal problems. I like lists, so here goes:

**1. Make sure your corporate records are up to date.**

If you are a sole proprietor (unlikely), make sure you have good business records separate from your personal ones.

If you are a corporation or limited liability company (LLC), make sure you have the documents you need to show that you are operating as one of those legal entities.

As a corporation, you should have stock certificates, resolutions electing the board of directors, and resolutions electing officers. As an LLC, you should have an operating agreement for the members of the LLC.

Even if the business is closely held by family members, you should have documents providing for the continuation of the business if one or more stockholders or members die, quit, or are fired.

Typically, stockholders should have a buy-sell agree-

ment to cover those circumstances, unless you want to find one day that half your business is owned by the spouse or children of your former co-owner.

**2. Review and revise your employee handbook.**

Make sure the document is up to date and compliant with federal, state, and local laws. This will give you a chance to review current policies, and if you have not been enforcing them consistently, start a clean slate. Inconsistent enforcement can be used to prove discrimi-

nation if it continues.

**3. Make sure all the required posters** are in your shop: Worker's compensation, OSHA, EEOC, ADA, and so on. Such posters are available online.

**4. Have an employee meeting to discuss the business.**

Ask how the business could be better. Even if you hear something negative, it is better to find out now than later. Share details of your plans. Employee morale will benefit.

**5. Examine your independent contractor arrangements,**

**if any.**

If you are treating someone as an independent contractor, make sure that you are doing so properly.

Treating an employee like an independent contractor can end up costing you far more than merely paying them correctly from the start. Uber is facing \$650 million in unemployment taxes in New Jersey because the state claims that its drivers are employees, not independent contractors.

**6. Audit your wage and hour practices.**

Remember, employees cannot agree to take less than what is required to be paid under the Fair Labor Standards Act and similar wage and hour laws.

This is true even if the employee suggests the arrangement, like work a few extra overtime hours each week at straight time to build up a paid time off bank.

Are you calculating hours of work correctly? Are the employees not receiving overtime actually exempt from overtime?

**7. Review your insurance policies** to make sure they are sufficient and that you are not overpaying for coverage. Get rid of insurance you do not need, and get insurance that you should have.

**8. Hire an accountant if you do not have one; hire a lawyer if you do not have one.**

Interview several in each category. Just have a competent labor and employment lawyer you can call to discuss a tricky termination decision. A phone call could save you thousands of dollars.

**9. Attend a seminar** on good business practices, labor and employment law, or similar topics. You are never too old to learn.

**10. Train your supervisors.**

Make sure they know what they can and cannot do, both from a legal perspective and an employee morale perspective.

I will stop at ten. That said, if you are interested in any particular legal topic, please contact the editor of NATIONAL CLOTHESLINE and let him know what topics you would like to see covered in future columns.

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

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# NewsMAKERS

**Zengeler Cleaners** reports that its 2019 “Coats for Vets” drive was a success with 2,378 coats and jackets, along with hundreds of other articles of clothing, donated this year.

The items were delivered to the North Chicago VA Hospital in conjunction with Veterans’ Day.

“Veterans returning from ac-

tive duty face a myriad of serious challenges as they readjust to civilian life, perhaps none more daunting than trying to return to the workforce,” said **Tom Zengeler**, president of Zengeler Cleaners.

The response to the annual collection drive resulted in thousands of coats, jackets, gloves, scarves

and other winter apparel with an estimated retail value exceeding \$325,000

Zengeler Cleaners’ two Liber-

tyville stores again served as drop-off locations for the donations. After the items were collected, the Zengeler staff inspected, repaired

as needed, and cleaned every donated item. They also delivered the clothing in time for Veterans Day on November 11.

**Gulf Coast Equipment Sales** has relocated to Lakeland, FL. The company, previously known as Gulf Coast Drycleaning Equipment, bought out Equipment Sales when owner Gary Nash was ready to retire.

The company sells and services a variety of brands including Union, Unipress, B&C Technologies, Rema, Forenta, Edro, Kleen-Rite, Fagor and Fulton, among others.

Their contact information is 4304 Wallace Rd, Lakeland, FL 33812; phone (813) 253-3191. The website is [www.gcequipmentsales.com](http://www.gcequipmentsales.com).

**ZIPS Dry Cleaners** has appointed **Tina Bagapor-O’Harrow** as vice president of market-

ing.

Bagapor-O’Harrow brings more than 25 years of traditional

and digital marketing experience to ZIPS, the majority of which was spent as the executive director

of The Ad Store’s Washington, DC, office. Leading the Washington office, she oversaw the creation of integrated campaigns for a long list of clients, including Disney and JetBlue, as well as such franchise organizations as Firehouse Subs, Choice Hotels, Barilla and InfoUSA.

In her role with ZIPS, she will lead the various marketing activities that support the company’s strategic and creative direction.

“I look forward to bringing my experience in driving foot traffic to ZIPS. As the branding and marketing leader for a client roster that spanned more than two

decades, I understand expiring capacity and how to get people through the door,” said Bagapor-O’Harrow. “During this time of exceptional growth, the opportunity to impact the future of the ZIPS brand is exciting.”

Bagapor-O’Harrow’s appointment comes as ZIPS continues to expand its national footprint. ZIPS has more than 60 locations open and operating throughout eight states and Washington, D.C. The company also has a total active franchise pipeline that stands at more than 250 stores, all of which are slated to open over the next several years.



Jeff LaPittus



Jim Massey

**Jim Massey** has joined **Pariser Industries** as the company’s central Pennsylvania territory manager. Massey will be responsible for distribution growth, account management, and driving revenue.

“We are excited to have Jim become a part of the Pariser team,” said **Chad Dare**, US regional sales manager. “He brings more than 25 years of sales experience in the janitorial supply and on-premise equipment sales service markets.”

Pariser is a diversified innovator and manufacturer of cleaning chemical specialties for the laundry, drycleaning, wetcleaning, food service/ware washing, housekeeping/janitorial, and water treatment industries.

Pariser sells and services its products through a direct sales and distributor network that encompasses more than 40 US states, Canada, and the Caribbean. The office headquarters are in Paterson, NJ. The company’s website is [www.pariser.net](http://www.pariser.net).



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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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# MIDWEST



**GREEN STREET CLEANERS** in Brownsburg, IN, installed a Columbia 550VGS running Sensene solvent. Pictured from left are Paul Hanson, distributor, Greg Naberhaus, the owner, and Chris Hogard, Columbia representative.

## WFI plans webinar, golf tournament and Expo

The Wisconsin Fabricare Institute has released a schedule of upcoming 2020 events, including its annual Expo, the Fitzgerald Scholarship Classic and a webinar in February.

The webinar is slated to take place from 3 to 4 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 19 and it will cover “Updates and Reminders on Air and Waste Regulations for Drycleaners in Wisconsin.”

The free program will update statewide cleaners on how the state rules on managing waste sol-

vents are changing.

Recent inspections by the Department of Natural Resources staff have found many shops did not have proper labeling on waste containers. Other problems included a lack of record-keeping on amounts of solvent and solvent containers kept open even when not in use.

The webinar is designed to help Wisconsin cleaners stay on top of the state’s key requirements as they change.

The DNR small business assis-

tance program will discuss the Dry Cleaner Compliance Calendar and the federal EPA air toxic rule, including what records are needed and the ban on co-located shops that is effective in December of this year.

To sign up for the event, contact Mike Foti at (414) 488-1754 or at [mike@wamllc.net](mailto:mike@wamllc.net). An email will be sent out the day prior with login information for the webinar to those who are signed up.

On June 16, WFI will host its 17th Annual Fitzgerald Scholarship Classic at the River Club of Mequon. Registration begins at 11 a.m. After lunch on the sundeck at 11:30 a.m., a shotgun start begins an hour later.

Tickets are \$135 for golfers, \$150 for hole sponsors and \$50 for those who just attend the 6 p.m. dinner.

Later in the year, WFI will also host its 2020 Dry Clean Expo from 2 to 10 p.m. on Oct. 9 at the WFI home office in Milwaukee. Look for more details closer to the event.

For details on WFI events, see [www.wiscleaners.com](http://www.wiscleaners.com).

## MWDLI Night with Pacers set for March 20

The Midwest Drycleaning and Laundry Institute’s annual Night with the Pacers is fast approaching, as is time to sign up and reserve a spot.

This year’s game will feature the hometown Indiana Pacers hosting the Miami Heat, a team that’s off to a hot start in the NBA season.

The tipoff for the March 20 game is at 7 p.m.; the doors will open at 6 p.m.

This year, those who buy tickets will enjoy the benefits of Planet Fitness Lounge where they can enjoy all-inclusive buffet food offerings from several chef’s tables, plus additional specialty items like nacho bars and gourmet hot dogs and brats.

Also included with the ticket will be complimentary beverages including draft beer, wine, soda, and water.

The cost is \$125 per person. To ensure a spot, attendees must sign up prior to February 19. Tickets are limited so early registration is recommended.

For a registration package, visit MWDLI online at [www.mwdli.org](http://www.mwdli.org) and click on “Events” at the top of the homepage. Then click on the button that says “Register now.”

For more questions about the registration process, contact Jon Meijer at (765) 969-5745 or send email correspondence to [midwest-dli@gmail.com](mailto:midwest-dli@gmail.com).

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# WRENCH WORKS



By BRUCE GROSSMAN

## Stopping those expensive leaks

In a bygone era of cheap solvent, transfer machinery and Per Combo filters and cooker stills, a drip was generally no big deal.

However, the increasing costs of solvent and energy coupled with environmental regulations markedly sharpened our maintenance and housekeeping practices.

In the following few articles I'm going to highlight some easily accomplished checks and procedures to identify and rectify common problems.

Stills have them, drycleaning machines have them, dryers have them, pumps have them — everywhere you look in a drycleaning plant you find them. They're everywhere.

GASKETS, that's what I'm talking about!

With this in mind, I'm dedicating the next few articles to the selection of/and techniques involved, with maintaining and replacing that ubiquitous device often taken for granted, the "lowly gasket."

Beginning with the drycleaning machine, we find what are probably the four most recognizable gaskets you deal with on a daily basis — the loading door, button trap door, lint trap door (on many drycleaning machines the lint and button trap are enclosed in the same housing) and still door.

These doors are opened and

closed on a regular basis causing wear and failure of the gaskets designed to seal them shut. Even the most unaware operator cannot long ignore a solvent leak at the loading door.

However, you would be surprised at how few operators take the time to go behind the machine with a good flashlight and observe the still door during heavy distillation.

In many cases, a grungy still waste container that sits under the still door and the surrounding area is often caked with old still residue. Because of this, even large leaks can go undetected if the timing and lighting are not opportune. The price of solvent being what it is, these liquid type leaks cost you big time.

Also, because of the heat and chemistry the sight glasses in stills have a high rate of failure and when faulty can leak prodigious quantities of solvent.

Lint and button trap leaks are usually of the vapor variety and harder to locate.

Now that you are aware of the problem areas, let's explore them one by one and see how you can isolate the leaking area and stop the fluid loss.

When you notice a solvent leak at a door it will almost always appear that the bottom area of the door gasket is at fault. That's because gravity being what it is, the liquid sol-

vent leaking past the gasket rolls down the surface of the door and drips off of the bottom center.

When you see a leak like this you need to take action at the end of the load that's currently being processed or the case of a still, the next time the still is cold.

Not to worry, chances are good a simple fix will get you back on track.

When the door can be safely opened, look at the surface of the gasket. Generally, there will be a slight groove in the gasket caused by the pressure against the raised rim portion on the drycleaning machine that the door seals against (See Figure 1).

Often lint accumulates in this groove and prevents the proper mating of the gasket against the machine front. It is a vital to routinely clean this groove, keeping it free from lint.

Also, the surface of the raised rim (See Figure 2) that the gasket seats on must be kept lint free.

On newer machines the rubber of this gasket is a solid robust type and can be cleaned easily with a small wire brush (if the gasket is a type of foam, use something more delicate like a spotting bone).

The photographs accompanying this article show the cleaning of the still door gasket. The same procedure holds

### PROPER GASKET MAINTENANCE

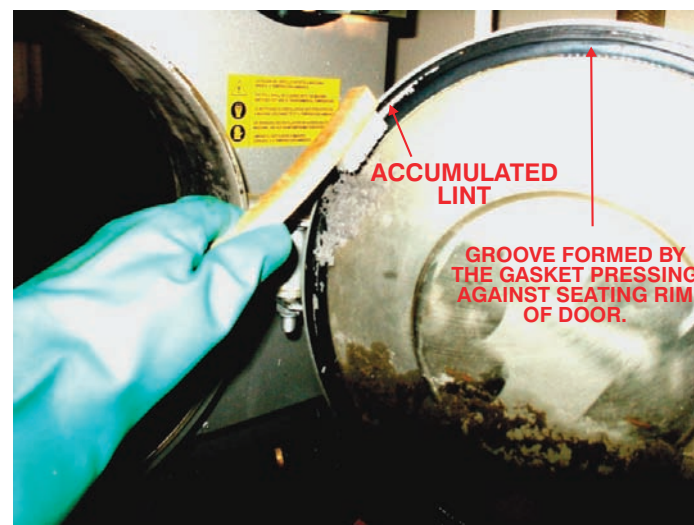


FIGURE 1



FIGURE 2

true for all the doors on the machine.

A spotting brush is shown being used to clean the gasket.

In many cases the bristles may be too soft to remove caked-on lint. Brushes with brass or stainless bristles can be used on solid rubber gaskets.

Operate the machine and see if the leak has stopped.

If, after cleaning the gasket, the door still leaks you have a choice to make. Do you want to order a new gasket for replacement or spend the time and effort to attempt an adjustment to the door and/or gasket in order to effect a repair?

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, this 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 water mister/evaporators provide a thrifty, legal method to get rid of the separator water generated by your drycleaning machine. For more information on EZtimers products, visit [www.eztimers.com](http://www.eztimers.com). Address any questions or comments for Bruce to [bruce@eztimers.com](mailto:bruce@eztimers.com) or call (702) 376-6693.

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# SOUTHWEST

## Student's costume collection gets assist from Austin cleaner

While many people were looking ahead to Thanksgiving in early November, one young person was still concerned with Halloween, more specifically, what to do with old costumes.

Alexis Berson, 11, a student at the Austin Jewish Academy, was surprised at how much new costumes cost and also noticed she still had old ones in her closet that were either too small or were not likely to ever be worn again.

As she explained to KXAN News, "Sometimes costumes are really expensive and not everybody has the ability to even sometimes buy dinner."

So, she started Kostumes for Kids, a non-profit group that collects gently used Halloween costumes and distributes them to community members who might not have the ability to afford a new one every year.

Orange collection boxes were set up at the Austin Jewish Academy, Hill Elementary School and St. Andrews Episcopal School's Lower School, as well as many Snap Kitchen and Epoch Coffee locations. It didn't take long to collect a few dozen costumes, but her goal was more ambitious: to collect between 1,500 and 2,000 altogether.

Then, in late November, the 5th grade founder and CEO made a big announcement on the charity's Facebook page: "We are proud to announce that we have found our drycleaning and storage partner, Westbank Dry Cleaning," Berson said.

The drive was originally scheduled to end at Thanksgiving, but the new partnership meant that all eight of Westbank Dry Clean-

ing locations in Austin would continue collecting until Dec. 14.

She might just be on to something. After all, the National Retail Federation noted that Halloween spending for 2019 reached \$8.8 billion, which means that the average shopper spent \$86.27 for the holiday.

It was the third highest total for Halloween ever, behind \$9 billion from last year and \$9.1 billion from 2017.

The bulk of that spending, about \$3.2 billion, goes to buying costumes. Other expenses include candy (\$2.6 billion), decoration

(\$2.7 billion) and greeting cards (\$390 million).

Berson doesn't just want to recycle costumes, either; she wants her charity to be sustainable so she uses recycled boxes for collecting. She hopes to create a system that can be duplicated next year and on and on.

Her enthusiasm is impressive. As she explained to KXAN: "To see an opportunity, and to be able to act on it and potentially make a difference for a bunch of kids who aren't necessarily expecting it, but who could benefit from it, is pretty awesome."



**CLASSIC CLEANERS IN CORINTH, TX, purchased a Union HL860-K cleaning machine using Solvon K4 solvent. From left are Daniel Crip of Kreussler, Inc., Brian Robertson owner of Classic Cleaners, and Matt A. Lipman of Union USA.**

## Registration for SDA show opens Jan. 6

Attendee registration for the Southwest Drycleaners Association Cleaners Showcase trade show will open January 6.

The show will take place from April 16 to 18 at the Fort Worth Convention Center.

Attendees can expect a full array of speakers. Jeff J. Butler, a millennial expert and Ted Talk speaker will be the keynote speaker. He will focus on creating authentic customer service and cultivating products and services that sell to this generation.

SDA is offering sponsorships to allied trades firms for various aspects of the show. Butler's keynote will be sponsored by Sankosha while M&B Hangers has signed on as an education session sponsor and Rosenberg Supply will be the attendee lounge sponsor. Contact SDA for information on other sponsorship opportunities. Call (512) 873-8195 or visit [www.sda-dryclean.com](http://www.sda-dryclean.com).



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# THE SPOTTING BOARD



BY DAN EISEN

## Chemicals for protein stain removal

**P**rotein stains relate to that category of stains originating from the living body. Common protein stains are milk, eggs, blood, perspiration, animal glues and so on. Protein stains are also referred to as albuminous stains.

### Identification

Protein stains are usually stiff and are only partially absorbed in a fabric. If you scratch a protein stain it may turn white and not readily visible. When you dampen it with water it becomes visible. Many spotters, when inspecting a garment, may steam the garment to reveal these stains.

### Set stains

Protein stains are set by age, heat and alcohol. The chemical composition of many body stains often discolor fabrics. In laboratory tests, alcohol was put on a blood stain and subjected to heat. The result was a stain that could not be removed even with the most aggressive chemicals. Many spotting chemicals

may contain alcohol. This includes some oily-type paint removers, general formulas and

formulated these products to have a low alkalinity that is safe on wool and silk and most

to make it work. It is a valuable product to use on a fragile and color-sensitive fabric since it

products may be alkaline in nature so when spotting silk and wool caution must be

**Enzymes change protein stains to a soluble sugar so it can be flushed. This is similar to the saliva in your mouth that breaks down food using enzymes.**

some quick drying wetside lubricant.

### Chemicals for stain removal

**Ammonia.** This alkali is highly volatile and very effective for protein stain removal. It does have many downsides to it because it is highly alkaline, it is very dangerous to use on wool, silk and garments with bright and vivid colors.

It is also very unpleasant to work with due to it is highly volatile odor. It is not considered to be environmentally friendly to the water system.

**Prepared protein formulas.** These products have replaced ammonia as a protein stain remover. Manufacturers have

fabrics. It must be noted, however, that some manufacturers still use ammonia in their formulation.

### Digesters

There are several products on the market that use enzymes for breaking down protein stains. Enzymes change protein stains to a soluble sugar so it can be flushed. This is similar to the saliva in your mouth that breaks down food using enzymes.

### Low temperature enzymes

This is an old time product but it is by far the safest product for protein stain removal. It requires a very strict process

does not require mechanical action or high heat.

**Temperature** should be 100-120°F. If the enzymes reach temperatures above 120F they are destroyed.

**Without chemicals.** Chemicals destroy enzymes. This means that acids and alkali can not be used with this product.

**Time.** You must wait at least 15 minutes to one-half hour.

**Must be kept wet.**

### Procedure for spotting board using enzymes

Use half a teaspoon of enzyme powder in a spotting bottle of warm water. Add glycerin or neutral lubricant to inhibit evaporation of the water.

Apply to stain.  
Wait.  
Flush.

### Bath method for low-temperature enzymes

Add one teaspoon of enzymes to every gallon of warm water. Make sure the pail is absolutely clean and has not contacted other chemicals.

### High temperature enzymes

These products are fast and highly effective. They are not affected by heat unless above 160°F.

Many of these products come in liquid form and can be used as an effective spotting agent. Some high temperature

used.

It must be noted that many wetcleaning detergents contain enzymes. This means that these detergents can be used when soaking items with protein stains.

### Combination and unidentified stains

A wetside unidentified stain can be tannin or protein or a combination of both. Some combinations stains can be some hard drink, coffee and milk, chocolate, etc.

### Spotting process

Flush.  
Neutral lubricant.  
Mechanical action.  
Flush.

**Tannin formula.** This is used first because alkaline-based protein formulas can set tannin.

Mechanical action.  
Flush.  
Protein formula.  
Mechanical action.  
Flush.

**Hydrogen peroxide.** This is the safest bleach and most effective for last traces of blood.

**Stronger bleaches.** Test before using.

**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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**THE FOUR SEASONS HOTEL** in Houston, TX, purchased a Union HL860 with solvent heating through Gulf States Laundry Machinery. Pictured from left are Matt A. Lipman of Union, Bill Dembski, director of engineering, and Mike Chalen, assistant director of engineering.



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DECEMBER 2020						
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**January 12** New York Department of Environmental Conservation classes, sponsored by the National Cleaners Association on consecutive Sundays, New York, NY. Call (800) 888-1622.

**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.

**February 3-7** Radical Drycleaning/Stain Removal course sponsored by the National Cleaners Association, Bronx, NY. Call (800) 888-1622.

**February 8-9** Pressing and Finishing course sponsored by the National Cleaners Association, Bronx, NY. Call (800) 888-1622.

**February 19** Wisconsin Fabricare Institute webinar on updates and reminders on air and waste regulations for Wisconsin drycleaners, 3 to 4 p.m. Call (414) 488-1692.

**February 24-28** Introduction to Drycleaning course, DLI School of Drycleaning

Technology, Laurel, MD. Call (800) 638-2627.

**March 2-13** Advanced Drycleaning course, DLI School of Drycleaning Technology, Laurel, MD. Call (800) 638-2627.

**March 20** Midwest Drycleaners and Launderers Institute's Night at the Pacers, Indianapolis, IN. Call (765) 969-5745.

**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.

**May 17** New York Department of Environmental Conservation classes, sponsored by the National Cleaners Association on consecutive Sundays, New York, NY. Call (800) 888-1622.

**June 12-14** Southern Drycleaners and Launderers Show, sponsored by the South Eastern Fabricare Association. Gaylord Palms, Kissimmee, FL. Call (215) 830-8467.

**June 16** Wisconsin Fabricare Institute 17th Annual Fitzgerald Scholarship Classic,

River Club of Mequon, Mequon, WI. Call (414) 488-1692.

**June 20-24** Texcare International, Frankfurt, Germany. Visit [www.messefrankfurt.com](http://www.messefrankfurt.com).

**June 26** Wisconsin Fabricare Institute, Night at the Brewers game, Miller Park, Milwaukee, WI. Call (414) 488-1692.

**July 10-11** Southwest Drycleaners Association board and membership meeting. The Woodlands, Austin, TX. Call (512) 873-8195.

**July 13-17** Introduction to Drycleaning course, DLI School of Drycleaning Technology, Laurel, MD. Call (800) 638-2627.

**July 24-26** Michigan Institute of Laundering and Drycleaning 2020 summer convention, Crystal Mountain Lodge and Resort, Thompsonville, MI. Call (877) 390-6453.

**July 20-31** Advanced Drycleaning course, DLI School of Drycleaning Technology, Laurel, MD. Call (800) 638-2627.

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**August 2** New York Department of Environmental Conservation classes, sponsored by the National Cleaners Association on consecutive Sundays, New York, NY. Call (800) 888-1622.

**August 7-8** Midwest Drycleaners and Launderers Institute annual convention, Hollywood Casino Hotel, Lawrenceburg, IN. Call (765) 969-5745.

**August 14-16** Fabricare 2020, trade show sponsored by the California Cleaners Association, Long Beach, CA. Call (916) 239-4070.

**September 23-25** Stain Removal course, DLI School of Drycleaning Technology, Laurel, MD. Call (800) 638-2627.

**October 9** Dry Clean Expo, sponsored by the Wisconsin Fabricare Institute at the WFI home office, Milwaukee, WI. Call (414) 488-1692.

**October 19-23** Introduction to Drycleaning course, DLI School of Drycleaning Technology, Laurel, MD. Call (800) 638-2627.

**October 20-22** Textile Rental Services Association annual conference and exchange, Alexandria, VA. Call (703) 519-0029.

**October 26-November 6** Advanced Drycleaning course, DLI School of Drycleaning Technology, Laurel, MD. Call (800) 638-2627.

**November 6-8** Drycleaning and Laundry Expo, sponsored by the Pennsylvania and Delaware Cleaners Association. Gaylord National Harbor, Maryland. Call (800) 822-7352.



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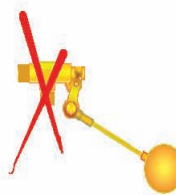
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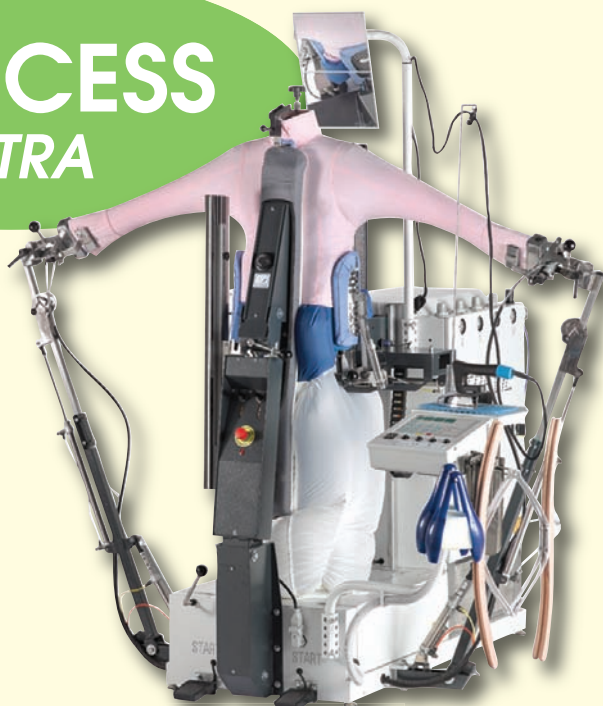


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  - Men's Or Ladies
- No Experienced Operator Needed
- Requires Less Floor Space Than Conventional Equipment
- Rotating Cuff Clamps For Creased/Uncreased/Flat Front Finish

# TREVIL

AMERICA

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