



National

# Clothesline

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## Midwinter brainstorming with the stars



**Brainstorming with the Five Stars, the annual midwinter conference cosponsored by the National Cleaners Association and the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute, convened last month at Grand Velas Resort in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. Nora Nealis of NCA and Mary Scalco of DLI welcome the participants before beginning the business program which included Peter Kressaty (right) who advised cleaners "Don't make your customers think or work."**



## A day for drycleaners and its inventor

The American drycleaning industry will turn 199 on March 3.

That date, now known as National Drycleaning Day, marks when Thomas L. Jennings was first awarded a patent in 1821 for a cleaning process he developed and called "dry scouring."

Jennings has gained some notice in recent years as drycleaners around the U.S. have been trying to share his story with the public. Marketing agency BeCreative360 launched "National Drycleaning Day" in 2018 to celebrate the legacy he created as an inventor who engineered methods to prolong and improve the life of clothing.

BeCreative360 is hoping to take things up a notch this year. The company has created marketing items for both social and print media to celebrate National Drycleaning Day and inform the public of Jennings' accomplishments.

The company has an image that can be downloaded for free from its website at [www.becreative360.com](http://www.becreative360.com), for any drycleaner who wants to take part in marking the event.

Jennings was the first known African-American to be awarded a patent in the United States. He was only 30 years old at the time.

What his "dry scouring" process entailed can only be imagined because details of

the process were lost in an 1836 fire in the building where the patents were stored. It is now one of the so-called "X-patents," a group of 10,000 or so patents issued by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office between its creation in 1790 and 1836.

Before the fire, patents weren't numbered, just catalogued by their name and issue date. After the fire, the Patent Office (as it was called then) began numbering patents. Any copies of the burned patents that were obtained from the inventors were given a number as well, ending in 'X' to mark them as part of the destroyed batch. Jennings' patent is numbered x3306.

The patent would not have been possible if Jennings hadn't been born free in New York City in 1791. Any inventions by slaves were considered the property of the slave's master. Being one of the estimated 4,682 free African Americans in the New York, Jennings was able to benefit from the fruits of his patent.

When a rival tailor tried to use the invention, Jennings sued him in the city's Marine Court and won \$50 when he dramatically produced the Letters of Patent signed by John Quincy Adams.

Jennings used the wealth from patent royalties to help promote social change for equal rights. He was a key member of the first three National Conventions of the Peo-

ple of Colour and trustee of the Abyssinian Baptist Church. In 1827, he along with several other black business leaders was instrumental in establishing *Freedom's Journal*, the nation's first African-American newspaper.

Being free was only half the battle; learning the fine art of cleaning and renovating clothing was not an overnight endeavor. After he apprenticed with a famous New York tailor, Jennings branched out and became the owner of one of New York's larger clothing stores.

Because cleaning technology was often found lacking at the time, a lot of garments wore out quickly and frustrated consumers.

For Jennings, this surely boosted his clothing sales, but that didn't stop him from trying to develop ways to make the clothing he created look better and last longer. He experimented with a variety of different solutions and cleaning agents on a variety of fabrics and garments. Eventually, he methodically discovered the right combinations to clean and restore them.

Naturally, this made him enormously popular with his customers. He applied for the patent in 1820 and was officially granted it on March 3 of the following year.

This part of the story alone makes the history of the industry fascinating, but there is more to the tale.

Jennings was a lifelong advocate for African-American civil rights and regularly donated earnings from his business for the abolition cause. The dry scouring patent not only funded his activism, it also allowed Jennings to buy his family out of slavery.

He became wealthy and encouraged his children to earn an education and excel in their pursuits.

They clearly listened well. His son William became a prominent New York businessman, his son Thomas built a large dental practice in New Orleans and his daughter Elizabeth followed in his tailoring footsteps and became a notable dressmaker in New York.

Elizabeth made her own contributions to African-American rights.

After being thrown off of a streetcar in New York City, she sued the Third Avenue Railroad Company for discrimination. She won the case in 1855, a big step in the effort to desegregate passengers for public transportation in the city.

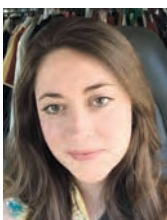
Four years later, Jennings died. His accomplishments were impressive. He was one of five New York delegates to the First Annual Convention of Free People of Color, held in Philadelphia. He was also one of the founders of the Legal Rights' Association in New York City and served as president until he passed.



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Publisher of

NATIONAL CLOTHESLINE

1001 Easton Rd., Suite 107

Willow Grove, PA 19090

Phone: (215) 830-8467

Fax: (215) 830-8490

info@natclo.com

Web: www.natclo.com

PUBLISHER

Carol Memberg

EDITOR

Hal Horning

CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Chris Pollay

MANAGING DIRECTOR

Leslie Schaeffer

ADVERTISING

Richard Cappo

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Mary Castro-Regan

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# The challenges of yesterday and today

Over the years, much has been said and reported of the impending demise of the drycleaning industry. Next month, however, it will officially be 199 years old in this country and, last we checked, it’s not quite yet at its deathbed.

Of course, the industry has certainly shrunk in recent years and store closures have become very common from coast to coast. Plant owners have been forced to evolve and adapt to keep their doors open. Yet, this is hardly a new story. The industry has been adapting throughout its history, through Great Depressions and Polyester Revolutions and Casual Fridays. Heck, that pretty much *is* the story of the industry — there will always be some new challenge to overcome.

When you think about it, that’s also the story of how the industry came to be (see front page story). Thomas L. Jennings faced an extraordinary uphill battle. At least, he did have two things going for him: 1) he was fortunate to be born free in an era when few people of color could make that claim; and 2) he was incredibly determined to help other African-Americans who weren’t free. He may have been the first American drycleaner, but he was an activist first and foremost, always donating earnings from his business to fund the abolition cause.

Then, he was faced with the problem of unhappy customers whose new and expensive garments failed to last for a significant time. Jennings didn’t like that so he tested chemical after chemical on every fabric he could find and “dry scouring” was born. His patent was considered highly controversial, not for the use of chemicals, though: No African American had ever been awarded one before.

In terms of challenges, Jennings didn’t just work hard to come up with the right formulas for the right fabrics, he had to overcome intense racial barriers and long-held social misconceptions. His work paid off. His patent went on to earn him a lot of money, but he didn’t invest it all back in his company. Instead, he paid for his family to be free and continued as an active and passionate abolitionist throughout his life. He was an indomitable spirit who tried to make both his business and the world better and he just so happens to be a hell of a role model for the industry.

So, no matter how difficult you think the future might be for the industry, consider what the first American drycleaner had to overcome in the past. Maybe the future doesn’t look so bad after all.

# Separate yourself from the competition

An interesting question was posed recently to members of the Fabricare Forum, the internet’s email list.

“What is your ‘point of difference’ from your competitors and how do you share this with your customer base?” asked Ron Herson, owner of Herson Supply in Gaithersburg, MD.

The “point of difference,” he elaborated, is the most productive method to capture competitor market share, which “is close to the only profitable way to increase sales today.

Herson’s “point of difference” has often been referred to as a “Unique Selling Proposition,” or USP, for short. It’s an advertising theory that dates back to the 1940s and is as useful today as it was then. It has been defined as the “unique benefit exhibited by a company, service, product or brand that enables it to stand out from competitors, a feature that highlights product benefits that are meaningful to consumers.”

Responses on the forum flowed. They ranged from extended hours, including open on Sunday, text messages when clothes are ready for pickup, complimentary bottles of water, lockers for 24-hour drop-off and pick-up, attractive, immaculate stores and easy parking with an option for drive-through service. Of course, top-notch cleaning, thorough stain removal and meticulous finishing, including hand-finishing, made the list. (Sadly, in some markets, good quality cleaning qualifies as “unique.”) And customer service. Never forget that one of the leading complaints about cleaners is indifferent, inconsistent or incompetent customer service.

So what is special or unique about your company, your “point of difference?” Surely you have one or two. Or maybe a half-dozen. It may even be something you don’t do. Remember Southwest Airlines boasting about not charging extra for bags? Is there something other cleaners do that irritates customers that you don’t do?

Determine what makes your organization stand out from the crowd, then make sure everyone knows about it. Tout it in all your marketing efforts. Feature it in your brochures, website, poly, ads and so on. Leave customers with no doubt about who you are and what you specialize in. Ask current customers for referrals; word of mouth is still the most effective advertising, especially in this age of social media.

Unless the world knows about it, you will be just another cleaner. Define your “point of difference” and then blow your own horn.

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*Director of Korean Operations*  
[Kang@NIEinsurance.com](mailto:Kang@NIEinsurance.com)



**Ann Hawkins**  
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# Finding direction

Clyde Guillott lacked direction in his life. He was a laid back individual who never seemed to find his niche.

After serving as a pilot instructor in Brazil during World War II, he returned to the Big Easy, went to college, got married, then discovered he wasn't content in his job as a high school science teacher. Perhaps it was because the students were as restless as he was when he was their age.

"He was always a bad kid himself. He was a rascal youth of New Orleans in the 1930s and 1940s who liked to fight," laughed Sarah Guillott-McInnis, granddaughter to Clyde and current third-generation owner of AAA Drive In Cleaners in Lake Charles. "If he had issues with his students, he'd get the boxing gloves out and fight them."

It was probably best for his students, as well as himself, that he try something else. Clyde chose to launch a brand new drycleaners in 1953 and called it Varsity Cleaners. In the beginning, business wasn't exactly booming.

"I don't know if he was all that busy, to tell you the truth," Sarah noted. "I've heard stories we had a couch in the office and most of the time he'd be taking a nap and a customer would have to ring the bell to get his attention."

Enough bells were rung to keep the business going for many years, but then it was demolished in 1969. Clyde eventually started a location that remains open today.

"When we had an expansion in our city — they built a 210 loop off of I-10 and they took that land and demolished the building in order to build that," Sarah explained. "I think he may have changed the name at that point. I think that was a strategic thing because there were so many cleaners in the area at the time. He was going from V and last in the phone book to AAA and guaranteeing himself first."

Robert Guillott lacked direction in his life. He couldn't find a profession that fit just right.

"After high school, he did a few different things. He worked for FEMA in West Texas doing relief work after tornadoes," Sarah said.

When he returned to Louisiana, he secured a job at a chemical plant that processed and refined petroleum-based products. Ironically, he worked with perchloroethylene. Then in 1983, he continued to do the same, though now at the family business. He bought it from his father three years later.

Turns out, drycleaning was an excellent fit as Robert worked hard to grow the business and he was good at it.

"My dad was definitely more business oriented," Sarah said. "He expanded this building in 1993. We put up a huge metal building in the back and now all of the production is in its own separate area. Before, the customers would be able to see the production going on."

Ten years later, they opened a second location. Today they have about 30 employees. Sarah remembers well that period of AAA's growth.

"All through the 1990s and 2000s

when my parents were working their butts off here trying to make it better, I had to tag along. Probably one of my first jobs was when I was five or six was putting the shoulder guards on the hangers."

Sarah Guillott lacked direction in her life. She felt indifferent about the family business, so she attended the University of Louisiana where she studied art education. She enjoyed jewelry and metal work, but

curveballs," she explained. "I've had employees pass away on me so far, good employees leave me that I was upset about — I mean just last week I had a distracted driver run through my sign on Country Club. Some days you just wake up and wonder what new surprise is waiting for you.

Over the years, AAA has had more than its share of unpleasant surprises.

"We survived Hurricane Rita, which

Sometimes answers cannot be found, like when a competitor disappeared.

"When I was in high school, there was a cleaners where the owner just skipped out of town one day. He didn't warn his employees. He didn't warn his customers," she noted. "Maybe he was in trouble with the law or something, but we were given the keys to let the customers come in and get their clothes. It was very strange."

Through good times or bad — or just plain weird — the reputation of AAA



## Sarah Guillot-McInnis

didn't enjoy the teaching side of things as much and she was sure that being an artist would likely be a risky profession.

"After college, I moved back into town and started working for my dad as a wetcleaner/drycleaner kind of role," she recalled. "So, I was learning all of the ins and outs of sorting and fiber and stain theory and colors and how to clean. I was specializing in vintage heirlooms, experimenting with dyes."

She learned everything she could from her father and found the rest of her answers online in Facebook groups and through practice. If she ruined any garments, it wasn't as big of a deal.

"I buy and sell vintage clothing so I was able to experiment on my own clothes that I was purchasing," she said. "It gives me an advantage."

In fact, she also has an Etsy store, Geodesica Vintage Clothing, that she launched about six years ago.

She began full time with the company in 2011 and took over the reins of AAA last April along with her husband, Zack, who spent many years in a submarine for the Navy and has an extensive background in electrical tech. He also has a "side hustle" helping a friend run a wholesale crawfish distribution/catering company called Cajun Caviar Catering. The couple have one daughter now (or possibly two by press time since she was 32 weeks pregnant during the interview).

AAA cleaners certainly doesn't lack direction. Today, it's a well-oiled machine that has won "Best Dry Cleaner" for over 20 years in Lagniappe magazine. Both Robert and Sarah have been DLI-certified garment care specialists and many of the managers and staff have stayed with them for a long tenure. Despite all of that, it has been a bit of a rough start for Sarah behind the scenes.

"Sometimes you're thrown a lot of

got a little bit knocked out of the lime-light by Hurricane Katrina, but that was just as big of a hurricane and just as damaging," she said. "I really do think if Katrina hadn't happened before Rita — I know the people in my community — they wouldn't have taken the warning seriously. They would have stayed and we would have had deaths, too."

As a result of Hurricane Katrina's devastation, the area was mainly evacuated. However, Hurricane Rita left total destruction in its wake.

"The city below us, further south on the coast, there was nothing left. It was completely decimated," she recalled. "All that was left was the courthouse. Every other house, business, school — gone. It was like a post-apocalyptic world for months afterward. It was odd to see your city kind of destroyed. We lost a lot of competitors."

Fortunately, AAA didn't suffer much damage, but it was out of commission for a while, losing employees and customers who had their lives to pickup and rebuild.

That wasn't even the most unusual surprise in the business's history. There was also a bizarre arson incident that happened about 20 years ago.

"We had a break in at our Prien Lake store and they took all of the buggies full of all the clothes that came in Friday and Saturday. They wheeled them to the back, put gasoline all over them and lit them on fire," she said. "So, my employees came in the next day and found a big burn pile. Had they started the fire in the front of the business, they could have burned the whole building down, but they did it in the metal part with the high ceilings. It just burned itself out. We lost everyone's clothes from those two drop-off days."

Who started the fire remains a mystery. It could have been a random arsonist, a disgruntled ex-employee or a competitor for all the family knows.

has remained strong. That is not by luck or accident.

"You have to be more strategic now in the way that you are processing your clothes and in how you approach finding or getting customers," she said.

One way Sarah is seeking to accomplish that is by teaming with a delivery app in her area.

"We're thinking they will fill in the gaps for the people who don't want to commit to be on a weekly route with us but want that sporadic pickup or delivery," she added. "This operation will be able to do it for a flat fee on the customer's end and I don't have any fees on my end, which is nice. Plus, their radius is much larger than ours."

As for the future of the industry, she is confident that the business will continue to follow a successful path no matter how it eventually shapes up.

"Being able to find reliable employees, train them correctly, trying to mitigate any kinds of issues before they arrive as far as the cleaning and equipment — that's the right thing you need to do in order to keep going and keep ahead," she emphasized. "It doesn't take much to be better. You just have to put forward a little effort, try to make a few connections, start meeting other cleaners who are not in your area. Talk to them. Find out what they do because you live in your own little bubble in this work."

While Sarah hopes the future will be bright, she cannot help but think the business is only where it is today because of the past.

"None of this would be possible and the business wouldn't be where it is today without the hard work and dedication of my father," she explained. "He is the one who deserves most of the praise and my husband and I just want to continue advancing and progressing the business and making him proud."



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## Obituary

# Ted Fibison

## Long-time drycleaner retired at 98, died at 100

After selling his drycleaning business and formally retiring, Ted Fibison lived just a little more than two years. A sad story, perhaps, but then he was 98 when he retired and 100 when he died Dec. 28 of last year.

He was born into the garment care business in 1919. His father had learned tailoring in Lausanne, Switzerland, as an apprentice before immigrating to the United States and establishing P.T. Fibison, Inc. in Syracuse.

"My dad was a designer and a tailor. He learned his trade in Switzerland and he came to this country and he started out by measuring customers, making patterns and cutting the cloth," Fibison recalled in a NATIONAL CLOTHESLINE interview in 2017.

"He had about four tailors sewing for him and he made high-priced suits," he explained. "It got so that people would bring in repairs, too, but they were a little soiled. I was a kid trying to help. I would have to spot clean them."

By the time he was in high school, he decided that spot cleaning wasn't enough and he suggested to his family that it was time to start a drycleaning plant to clean the tailored garments. Thus, Fibison Cleaners of Syracuse was born and became one of Syracuse's largest independently-owned drycleaning services. It was a family affair that included



his father, Peter, his mother, Louise, and his aunt, Marie. He sold the Syracuse business in the 1990s.

"I thought I was so smart, but I didn't realize I had my dad, my mother, my aunt and, my goodness, they worked so hard and the plant grew," he recalled. "At one time, it was the largest in Syracuse. At one time we had as many as 100 employees."

After high school, he attended Cazenovia College and Syracuse University. After the United States entered World War II, he joined the Army where his love of flying led him to serve as a flight instructor for the Army Air Corps, helping students master aerial maneuvers such as loops, Immel-

mann turns and snap rolls. His personal favorite was a "falling leaf" in which the plane swoops in a U-shape toward the ground.

He continued flying after the war, working as a pilot for United Airlines on the Denver-Chicago route, probably without the Immelmann turns, snap rolls or flying leaf maneuvers.

He would be back to drycleaning before long, however. Concerned for the health of his wife, Elizabeth, he left his position with United Airlines and returned to Syracuse where he could help care for her along with her family that lived there.

She recovered and the couple lived out 74 years of marriage before her death in 2017.

He started Parkview Cleaners in Watertown, NY, in 1950, a 2,500-sq.-ft. space across from Thompson Park where he had three employees and earned a couple hundred dollars a week. That was a bit different than Fibison Cleaners in Syracuse which at one time was the largest in the city and had more than 100 employees.

Undaunted by competition from about a dozen other drycleaners, he was able to increase the speed of his service at the Watertown plant and earn more revenue.

The Watertown business grew from its humble origins and re-

lated followed by several expansion projects.

Fibison purchased adjacent lots, built more space, paved a new parking lot, added a boiler room and more equipment. He also said he added shirt laundry to his services and offered delivery and drape rehabilitation.

"We always believed in giving good measure to our customers, good measure to our employees and paying all our bills," he said.

He survived economic recessions and depressions as well as wash-n-wear and casual wear, and he faced a lot of competition that led other cleaners to close their doors.

"I guess so many of my peers... they just gave up. It was a lot of hard work without the return they wanted," he noted. "I guess I was foolish enough to love the business and the industry, and I hung in there with it."

In addition to accruing a lifetime of good memories, he also gained many close relationships over the years.

"I always went to the conventions and I had many friends. Of course, a lot of my friends are gone now," he said at the time of his retirement.

"Listen, it's a good industry," he added. "You meet a lot of wonderful people and you have the opportunity to work with hard-working people. It's not an easy

industry, but it's a pleasure to deal with the customer. It's a pleasure to deal with the people who are with you. Then, there are so many wonderful people in the industry. I just really love the industry, that's all."

Among his memories was one that took place afterhours during a Clean Show in New Orleans. At a little jazz club on Bourbon Street, he had a chance to perform live on stage. He had played piano in college but because he couldn't read music he never considered himself a real musician.

"I never thought I was, but I was that night," he said. "I was a hack, but this other guy, also a drycleaner, was a real musician and he played treble and I played bass. I'm telling you, we closed the joint."

He is survived by three daughters: Deanne Canty Scanlon of Chaumont, NY; Dr. Wendy J. Fibison of Alexandria, VA, and Chaumont, NY; and Ellen Fibison of Mallorytown, Ontario, along with four grandchildren and a great-grandchild.

A family graveside burial is planned for this spring. Memorial contributions in his name may be made to Hospice of Jefferson County and United Way of NNY with a memo for the Association For the Blind.

Online condolences may be offered at [www.reedbenoit.com](http://www.reedbenoit.com).



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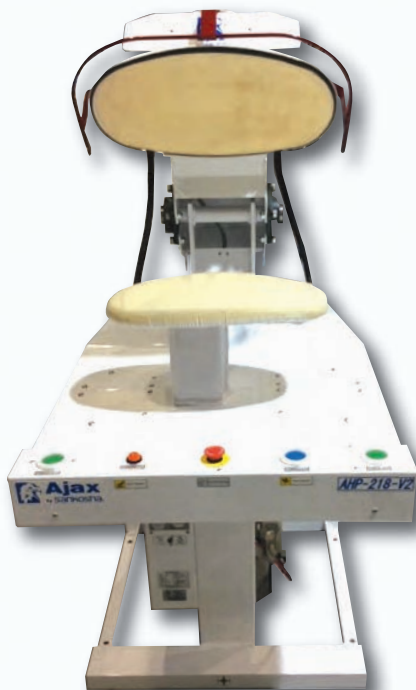
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# SOUTH WEST



VALET CLEANERS AND COIN LAUNDRY in Temple, TX, purchased a Union HL-860-K cleaning machine for using K4 solvent through Gulf States Laundry Equipment Co. From left are Matt A. Lipman of Union, Allan Cripe, owner of Valet Cleaners, and Daniel Cripe of Kreussler, Inc.

## Millennial expert Jeff Butler to keynote SDA’s Showcase

This year, a TEDx speaker with expert knowledge on Millennials will be the keynote speaker for the Southwest Drycleaners Association’s Cleaners Showcase 2020 that will be take place in Fort Worth, TX, April 16-18.

Headlining the event will be Jeff Butler, a speaker who has addressed more than 100 organizations internationally such as Google, Amazon, LinkedIn and Wells Fargo.

By the age of 27, he had

founded three profitable companies and published two books, as well, including *The Authentic Workplace: How Authenticity is Creating the Workplace of Tomorrow*.

His program at SDA’s show will be emphasize “Authentic Customer Service: Marketing the right products and services to multiple generations.”

While Butler may be a big draw, SDA took no chances with this year’s educational schedule.

“The show committee has scheduled more education sessions than ever before. We will be offering more business and management focused speakers in addition to our live demonstrations,” noted Jess Culpepper, the showcase chairman.



Jeff Butler

Other speakers will include many recognizable industry leaders. Kermit Engh of Methods for Management will discuss management while Coin Laundry Association CEO Brian Wallace will focus on the coin laundry market.

Also scheduled to speak will be two regular NATIONAL CLOTHESLINE columnists: Frank Kollman, who will examine legal issues, and James Peuster, who will speak on diversifying service offerings.

SDA also has plans to feature other experts to address the following topics: wetcleaning, labor laws, marketing, environmental clean-ups and spotting demonstrations.

All in all, it seems like a lot of bang for the buck, except there won’t be any cost for admission for SDA or CLA members.

Otherwise, non-members can pay \$35 pre-registered or \$50 at the door.

Housing is already open for the show. This year’s host hotel will be the Omni Fort Worth Hotel, located across the street from the convention center.

Special hotel rates are available for convention attendees and exhibitors through March 20 either by signing up via the SDA website or by calling (817) 535-6664.

Also during the three days of the show, there will be multiple meetings and social events.

SDA will host its Member Breakfast and General Membership Meeting on Thursday morning, followed by a presentation of the USA Best Practices Laundry Awards from 2 to 5 p.m. that afternoon.

The exhibit hall will officially open at 11 a.m. on Friday morning and will close at 5 p.m. that day. It will also be open again on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

So far, close to 100 exhibit booths have already been sold. To see the full current exhibit list and floor plan, visit SDA’s site at [www.cleanersshowcase.com](http://www.cleanersshowcase.com).

For more details, call the association, (512) 873-8195.

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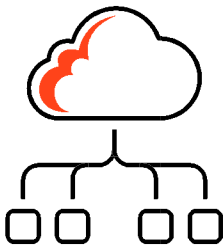
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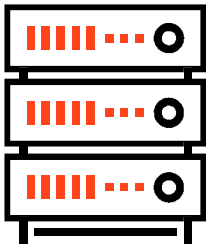


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# THE ROUTE PRO



BY JAMES PEUSTER

## Five years later, it's still good advice

**B**ack in mid-2015, I wrote about a simple, but informative *Forbes* magazine article on "Seven Reasons Your Business Is Failing & What To Do About It."

The interesting thing is that I found the old NATIONAL CLOTHESLINE issue with the article and thought I would revisit the reasons in 2020. Times have sure changed in

the past five years as many more stores continue to close while others are merging or selling. I see more and more articles about exit strategies or how much is your business re-

ally worth. I don't know what the actual numbers are, but from what I have witnessed about eight drop stores close for each new one opened. Tide and

Zips are spreading into other markets. Wash-dry-fold is here to stay. So let's look at the top seven reasons again; they shouldn't shock you.

1. You don't know how to market your business.
2. Your prices are too low.
3. You don't really know your customers.
4. You think SEO and social media don't apply to you.
5. You've got the answer to everything.
6. You can't handle growth.
7. You don't have savvy business culture or mindset.

I still have to agree with much of the article as it is timeless as ever. Today, some of you may look at a couple of reasons as warning signs and you should. Competition levels are on the rise in the drycleaning route world as trends and spends go down.

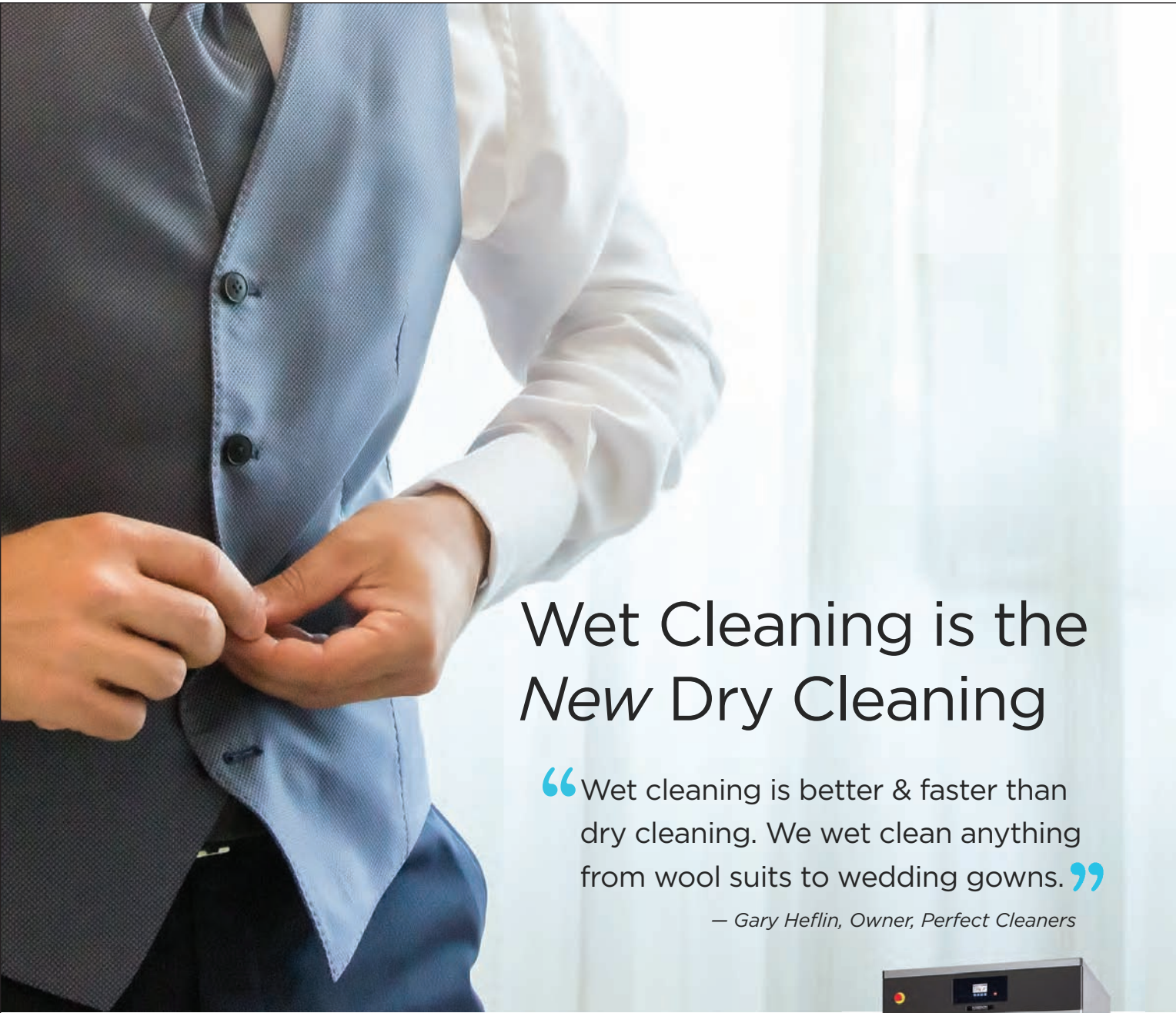
I believe the '20s will truly separate those who thrive and those who are just trying to survive. What's sad is some of the successful cleaners of the past are unaware of the fact that they may not be in business in 2030.

Let's look at each one at a time and I will give you the cliff notes version of what I recommend you do now!

1. Marketing: If it didn't work before it probably won't work again. Don't go off hope and don't forget that it's sales AND marketing—not sales OR marketing.
  2. Don't be afraid to raise prices. No one has ever won the price war by being the lowest priced cleaner.
  3. When is the last time you surveyed your customers?
  4. Don't over invest in social media, but don't neglect it, either.
  5. Learn more to earn more. Those who have all the answers never ask the right questions.
  6. If you can't handle what you have now, you can't grow. Whoever said "sales cures all evils" never worked at a drycleaner.
  7. Since trends and spends are down, you have to increase your market share.
- I look forward to recapping this article in 2030. Hopefully you will still be around!

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.therouteapro.com](http://www.therouteapro.com).

**I believe the '20s will truly separate those who thrive and those who are just trying to survive. What's sad is some of the successful cleaners of the past are unaware of the fact that they may not be in business in 2030.**



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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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# SHIRT TALES



BY DON DESROSIERS

## The use and misuse of collar cones

**T**his month, let's talk about collar cones — what they're for, what they are not for, how they can help your quality and how they can hurt your quality.

So, first things first: What are they for?

The intent is to improve your quality by neatly rounding the collar and smoothing the inside of it — the part of the collar band that touches one's neck. The resulting shirt has a collar that is perfectly round, doesn't droop in the front and stays that way.

- What they are not for?
- A coffee cup holder.
  - A place to throw wet shirts on.
  - A place to throw a pressed shirt on for a while until you can get to button it.
  - A thing to make tying a button easier.
  - A thing to hold a shirt for a few seconds while you tie the

button.

- And (sorry about this one) it is not a thing to hold hangers

My guess is that you knew about the first three no-no's here, but are not inclined to agree so quickly with the last three.

"A thing to make tying a button easier"

True or false?

Both.

You can get rather fast tying button if you learn to pull against the cone while doing it, but you are clearly missing the point if you tie a button while pulling against the cone and then promptly hang the shirt on a hanger and send it on its way.

It is true that you get better at tying a button that way than tying a button on your own shirt, due to sheer repetition, but this is far from the intent of the collar cone.

It's all relative. It's all what you are used to. Consider that there are collar cones on the market that cost over \$1,000. I wouldn't care how much easier button tying got, I wouldn't

collar cone and then push the shirt down on the cone firmly. It should stay there for 30 to 60 seconds. The cone should be heated in order to be supremely effective. The

You will lower your quality if your presser pulls the shirt down on the shirt in such a way that front of the shirt, where the collar button is, rolls down and folds over on itself.

**You may be using a tool that is intended to improve your product in a way that actually lowers your quality.**

be able to justify \$1,000 unless the shirt buttoned itself!

"A thing to hold a shirt for a few seconds while you tie the button."

True or false?

Both.

Is only true if you also add several dozen more seconds to let it sit there for a while after you button it.

"It is a thing to hold hangers."

True or false?

False. You get no latitude on this one.

In spite of the fact that some brilliant inventor decided to cut a slot in a collar cone so that it could hold hangers is inconsequential to me. I will not waiver. It is not a place to hold hangers because the very fact that there are hangers in there prevents the shirt from hanging low enough on the cone to do its job.

It is okay to buy one that has a slot in it as long as you don't use it. The presser needs to tie the button around the

wooden ones are passé.

If you can't leave a shirt on there for 30 seconds due to production, get a three-headed one. It is the ideal solution for all but the lowest volume plants

It virtually assures that 1) hangers will not be used with them because there are no hanger slots and 2) the shirt will stay on the cone for 60 seconds or more.

So how can a collar cone lower your quality?

This is the scariest thing about collar cones: using them incorrectly.

If you do any of the things listed above — not using a collar cone at all, using it to hold the shirt while you tie it or leaving it to droop on a hanger while the cone never even touches the shirt, you aren't really deteriorating your shirts, you just aren't using all of the tools at your disposal.

You have a collar cone, but you are not using it for its intended purpose.

This is very undesirable.

In fact, I think that this is the reason that most folks buy a collar cone in the first place. They are trying to fix the problem that we generally call "drooping."

I would universally endorse collar cones if they invariably fixed droopy collars. They do not, however, for one or more of the following reasons:

- The collar cones are not heated.
- The shirts don't stay on the cone for any length of time.
- There are hangers in the way that prevent the shirt collar from ever being pulled taut around the cone.

- The collars of the shirts are carelessly pulled down on the cone. This, instead of curing the collar in the upright position, cures the collar in the "drooping down" position.

If you are curing the collars in the "drooping down" position, you are using a tool that is intended to improve your product in a way that actually lowers your quality. It's like buying a hammer to pound a nail, but pounding your thumb instead. Ouch!

Get a nice heated, three-headed collar cone to improve your quality. Each shirt will stay on a cone for two to three press cycles. You will be pleased with results provided that you train your people how to use it, show them what to avoid, and then supervise!

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).



**BLACK TIE FRENCH CLEANERS** in Jackson Heights, NY, purchased a Pony Eagle 2.0 blowing pressing shirt finisher through New York Machinery. Pictured from right are Mr. Chung, owner of Black Tie, David Kim of New York Machinery, the store manager, Michele Plebani of Pony Spa, and Richard Greco of Pony.



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Conversely, no matter how little you think you know about drycleaning, you can rectify that in a very short amount of time.

Throughout the year, the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute will give cleaners four opportunities to learn the basics, three to learn advanced skills and one offering that will focus only on stain removal.

Classes begin as early as this month and go into November.

DLI will host its one-week comprehensive Introduction to Drycleaning course later this month from the 24th to the 28th.

The class is an excellent option for those who think they know nothing about drycleaning, or, at the very least, have less than one year experience.

The class will cover sorting loads for cleaning, operating a drycleaning machine and how to clean silk, satin and other fabrics. Then, the stakes are raised a bit as students gain spotting skills to remove coffee, ink, grease and other stains.

Pressing pants, coats and skirts

will also be covered, as well as how to use tensioning equipment to improve finishing quality.

Premier Members can enjoy a free admission for the course but non-members must pay \$2,195.

The class will also meet on the following dates later this year: July 13 to 17, Aug. 17 to 21 and Oct. 19 to 23.

Graduates of the course, or those with a few years production experience, will be ready for the next step: the two-week advanced drycleaning course that takes things to another level.

Students of that class will cover a lot of new ground: identi-

fying fabrics, using bleaches, pressing, wetcleaning, getting clean, white laundry, pressing laundered shirts, designing a drycleaning plant for maximum work flow, maintaining and changing filters, troubleshooting problems with the drycleaning machine, current regulations facing the industry, customer service techniques, cleaning and preserving wedding gowns and understanding the difference between solvents (perc, GreenEarth, hydrocarbon and SOLVONK4).

Class dates for the advanced class this year include March 2-13, July 20-31 and Oct. 26 to Nov. 6.

Like the introductory course, instruction time takes place from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Tuition for the ten-day class is \$2,195 for non-members; Premier Members can take the class for free.

For those who want to learn everything in a hurry, both the introductory and advanced class can be taken together on three occasions in 2020; non-members who sign up for both together can enjoy a reduced tuition of \$2,895 for both classes.

In addition to its signature drycleaning courses, DLI also hosts a two-day stain removal course at its School of Drycleaning Technology from Sept. 23 to 25.

Students will learn practical application of stain removal techniques including removing coffee, ink, grease and other stains from clothing, identifying cotton, silk, polyester and other fabrics, using bleaches without damaging the fabric color, using specialty products such as digesters, amyl acetate and acetone in stain removal, removing spotting rings and water marks and identifying fibers and fabric construction.

Premier Members may register for free for the course. For non-members the tuition is \$649 each. Scholarships are available from several sources for DLI courses.

DLI's School of Drycleaning Technology is located in Laurel, MD, making it accessible to three nearby airports: Baltimore Washington International in Maryland, Reagan National and Dulles International in Virginia.

For more information on any of DLI's upcoming educational programs, or to register, call (800) 638-2627 or visit the website at [www.dlionline.org](http://www.dlionline.org).

### MAC leadership meeting in May

The Midatlantic Association of Cleaners is in the planning stages for its fourth annual MAC leadership conference.

After hosting its final program of 2019, a well attended maintenance workshop, the board turned its attention to building a strong 2020 program.

The leadership conference will be held May 1-3. Locations under consideration include Virginia Beach, VA, Washington, DC, and Charlottesville, VA. The site committee should make its selection soon while the board also evaluates speakers and topics for the program.

In addition to the leadership conference, MAC plans to host more workshops and seminars in different areas of the region and will be developing a series of Meet and Greet dinners to help spearhead more peer-to-peer networking among the membership.

For updates on MAC's plans, visit [www.macassociation.org](http://www.macassociation.org).



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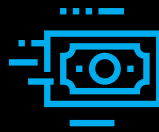
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# NewsMAKERS

**Owen Cleaners** of Paducah, KY, celebrated its 100th anniversary during an informal reception for employees, customers and friends on January 10 at the company's main plant on Kentucky Avenue.

Woodrow Wilson was president when **Horace** and **Tully Owen** first opened the doors to Owen Brothers Quality Cleaners in January 1920. The brothers had started in Fulton, KY, before moving to Paducah.

**Carolyn Perry**, a granddaughter

ter of Horace Owen and current owner along with her husband, **David Perry**, asked a local archivist, Leigh Ann Paxton, to find information on the grand opening. She located the original advertisement for the grand opening in the January 11, 1920 edition of the *Paducah News Democrat*.

The two brothers ran the business together for the first few years until Horace Owen eventually bought out his brother to become sole proprietor.

In the early years the company

specialized not only in drycleaning and laundry services, but also fur cleaning and alterations and fabric dyeing. Many other diversifications occurred over the decades including coin-operated laundry, drapery and rug cleaning and even photo finishing.

In 1950, Horace Owen was joined by his son-in-law, **Gene Katterjohn, Jr.** in a partnership that expanded the business and lasted until Mr. Owen's death in 1977.

Katterjohn and his wife **Carolyn** ran the business until the early 1990s. In January, 1992 Carolyn Perry, the daughter of Gene and Carolyn Katterjohn, and David Perry, their son-in-law, purchased the business to become the third generation to own and operate the family business.

David and Carolyn Perry both

left corporate careers in Dallas, TX, to move to Paducah and continue the family tradition in drycleaning.

Now 28 years later, both David and Carolyn, agreed that the decision to move back to Paducah was a good one.

"Leaving the corporate world for a small business could be perceived by some as a risk," said David Perry. "But it had always been my dream to own and run my own business. I soon found that running a small business and sustaining it over many years can be just as challenging as any corporate career."

On the challenges for a business to sustain itself for a century, David commented, "The only way to survive is to constantly adapt and evolve. While some may think that drycleaning is a static

business, it actually must constantly adapt to changes in fabrics, fashions, demographics, lifestyles and even technology."

Owen Cleaners has often been recognized as an industry leader and innovator. In the 1930s, Mr. Owen first signed up with the **Sanitone** drycleaning process which originated in Cincinnati. Today Owen Cleaners ranks as the oldest, continuous licensee of Sanitone in the world.

Owen Cleaners plans to recognize and thank its many customers with special promotions and programs throughout the year. Carolyn said, "We plan to make 2020 a very special year as we thank all of our customers for their long-standing support." David added, "As the year progresses, we will begin to turn our focus from the past to the future."

**Barbara Moore**, international sales coordinator for **Forenta**, has retired after 28 years with the company. She played a critical role in assisting Forenta's international dealers and customers with quotes, orders and shipments.

"Barbara's achievements will not be forgotten," said **Craig Forsey**, vice president of sales. "Her work ethic, command of complexity, devotion and client focus have exemplified Forenta's commitment to our customers. Her influence has made an indelible impact on the entire staff at the company."

**Pamela Blankenbeckler** will now serve as international sales coordinator. She came to Forenta from another local equipment manufacturer and has many years of sales and customer service experience.

Forenta designs and manufactures a wide range of garment care products including finishing equipment, conveyors and chillers.



**Pamela Blankenbeckler** (left) is Forenta's new international sales coordinator, taking over for **Barbara Moore** (right) who has retired.



**NuYale Cleaners** in Jeffersonville, IN, received the **Route Pro Treatment** with **James Peuster** (right) and **Michael Willams** (left) of **The Route Pro** who worked with **Michelle Eddie** and **Daryl Bohannon** on route development.



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# MIDWEST



**FABRIC CARE CENTER** in Indianapolis, IN, installed a Columbia drycleaning machine using Sensene solvent. Pictured from left are Tom Prionas, owner of Fabric Care Center, Chris Hogard with Columbia and Paul Hanson of PLW Enterprises.

## WFI plans webinar, golf and baseball game outing in 2020

This month, the Wisconsin Fabricare Institute will host a webinar offering updates and reminders on air and waste regulations for drycleaners in the state of Wisconsin.

The program will be held from 3 to 4 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 19. The cost of registration is free.

Inspectors from the state's Department of Natural Resources have found improper labeling on waste containers, insufficient record-keeping and solvent containers left open when not in use. Some drycleaners are not keep-

ing up with recent rule changes and key requirements, so WFI has enlisted a representative from DNR's small business assistance program to talk about 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.

Those who register for the event will receive an email one day prior with login information for the webinar. Any questions can be directed to Mike Foti at

mike@wamllc.net or call (414) 488-1754.

Later this year, WFI will host a fun social outing as it tees off its 17th Annual Fitzgerald Scholarship Golf Classic on June 16 at the River Club of Mequon located at 12400 N. Ville Du Parc Dr. in Mequon, WI.

The cost is \$135 per golfer, which includes lunch on the sun-deck, a round of golf with carts and entrance to the Putting Contest. Dinner will be served after at 6 p.m.

Also in June, WFI will host its Milwaukee Brewers Game this year at Miller Park on the Johnsonville Party Deck.

The game will begin at 6:10 p.m. Tickets are \$75 each, which included two complimentary beers per adult and a buffet that begins 60 minutes after the first pitch and concludes about two hours later.

For more information on WFI's events, visit them online at [www.wiscleaners.com](http://www.wiscleaners.com) or call the office, (414) 488-1692.

## MWDLI ready for Night with the Pacers

The NBA playoffs are still several months away, but both the Miami Heat and Indiana Pacers will be vying for better playoff position next month and the Midwest Drycleaning and Laundry Institute will be there for a fun social event.

Space is limited, though, so signing up as soon as possible is highly recommended.

The association will host its annual Night with the Pacers on Friday, March 20 at the Planet Fitness Lounge at Bankers Life Fieldhouse in downtown Indianapolis. The tipoff for the game will take place at 7 p.m.; the doors are set to open at 6 p.m.

In the Planet Fitness Lounge, attendees will be able to enjoy an all-inclusive buffet that will include several chef's tables and additional specialty items including nacho bars and gourmet hot dogs and brats.

Many complimentary beverages are also included with each ticket, including draft beer, wine, soda and water.

The cost per ticket is \$125 per person. There is a deadline of Feb. 19, so signing up as soon as possible is encouraged.

Registrations packages are available at MWDLI's website online, [www.mwdli.org](http://www.mwdli.org), by clicking on "Events" at the top of the page and then on the "Register" button.

For more questions or to register, contact Jon Meijer at (765) 969-5745 or email him at [midwestdli@gmail.com](mailto:midwestdli@gmail.com).





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# SOUTH



First Class Cleaners in Orlando, FL, installed a Union HL-880 with solvent heating for GreenEarth. Pictured are Matt A. Lipman (left) of Union and Tom Hudgeons of First Class Cleaners' new product development.

## Devastating fire completely destroys Brunson, SC cleaner

The population of Brunson, SC, includes about 550 residents about ten percent of whom lost their jobs and the town lost a long-time business when a fire destroyed Brunson Laundry and Cleaners of South Carolina in early January.

Fortunately, though, nobody lost their lives or was injured. The fire devastated the building, even though the fire department responded quickly because the assistant fire chief happened to be at the gas station next door and

called it in immediately.

Fire officials place the start of the fire in the early morning. The cause was believed to be a lint trap.

Firefighters from several counties worked together to battle the blaze, but it wasn't enough to save the longtime business that was the biggest source of employment for the town.

Debbie Bullard, the current owner whose family has run the cleaners for four generations since the 1940s, told WTOC11 that it

had been nearly an impossible day.

"We got the call about six o'clock this morning that it was on fire and we found out it was the lint collector from one of the big dryers we have in back," she said. "It's gut wrenching."

Even as the building was burning and the roof was collapsing, Bullard was considering new locations to rebuild, including one in Allendale.

Bullard received assistance from the County Administrator and other officials in moving forward because the cleaners is so important to Brunson.

As Rep. Shedron Williams, SC District 122, explained to WJCL22 ABC, "Fifty-five jobs gone, and if you look around the town is very small. That is the biggest supplier of workforce here in the small town of Brunson, South Carolina."

The local community came out to show support for the business and Bullard remains determined to overcome the loss.

"How long it will take I don't know, but we will rebuild. We'll come back," she said.

## SEFA will host SLDS show in Kissimmee, FL

The South Eastern Fabricare Association will relocate its annual convention this year, heading to the Gaylord Palms Hotel in Kissimmee, FL, from June 12 to 14.

According to SEFA Executive Director Peter Blake, the move has been a long time in the making. "We have been trying to secure a spot in Central Florida for years, and we have finally found a space that is both feasible and relatively affordable," he noted. "I feel extremely confident that location will translate into some of our biggest attendance numbers in years."

The Gaylord Hotel is located only a few minutes away from Orlando International Airport. It is also near several major highways for convenience.

Currently, the SEFA board is in the planning stages for the event, but are planning on having more laundry, wetcleaning and coin-op exhibitors this year, in addition to a wide variety of educational topics that will be delivered by guest speakers.

For more information on the event, visit the association's web site located at [www.sefa.org](http://www.sefa.org), or contact the office directly by calling (877) 707-7332.

SEFA has secured a rate of \$187 per night single/double occupancy. Call (877) 350-3236 and mentioning the show.



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# NORTHEAST



**SWEETWATERS FRENCH STYLE DRY CLEANERS** in Wain-scott, NY, purchased a Realstar cleaning machine through Metro Equipment. Pictured with the owner, Charles Garland (center), are Frank Gebbia (left) and Vincent Gebbia (right), owners of Metro Equipment.

## Colvin Cleaners tops 20,000 in 2019 Coats 4 Kids drive

This season marked the 24th annual Colvin Cleaners Coats 4 Kids program and, for the first time ever, the company collected and distributed over 20,000 winter coats in one drive.

Overall, the tally came in at 20,700 winter coats, along with thousands of hats, gloves and scarves to give to local children in need.

According to Paul Billoni, president and CEO of Colvin Cleaners, that figure represented

a new record for the company, surpassing last year's total of 18,500, a record at that time.

In the two year previous to that (2016, 2017), the company collected 5,350 and 13,350, respectively.

For this year's drive, Colvin Cleaners received collection help from Bethesda Full Gospel Tabernacle, Every Person Influences Children, Fathers Armed Together to Help, Educate, Restore and Save, Friends of Night People,

Kenmore Mercy Hospital's Catherine's Closet, the Ken-Ton Closet, St. Luke's Mission of Mercy, Haven House; Healthy Moms and Jewish Family Services.

This year's drive was sponsored by the Allstate Foundation with support from WIVB-TV and WYRK.

Since the program's inception, Colvin Cleaners has distributed approximately 130,000 coats and gently used winter hats, scarves and gloves for everyone in need, from infants to adults.

Colvin Cleaners accepts donations of coats, as well as gowns for its Gowns For Prom program, year-round.

For more information, visit them at [www.colvin-cleaners.com](http://www.colvin-cleaners.com).

## NCA continues 2020 class slate with finishing

It's still early in the year, but already the National Cleaners Association has co-hosted the Brainstorming and Five Star Conference at the Grand Velas Riviera Nayarit, an offering of its eight-hour Advanced Stain Removal and Bleaching, a one-week Radical Drycleaning/Stain Removal course and an installment of its DEC Certification course for New York State.

Turns out, that's just the beginning of a schedule planned for 2020; many more courses will be offered throughout the year.

The next class on the schedule is a two-day Pressing and Finishing class that will be held on Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 8 and 9.

In all, students will meet for a course of 16 hours on both days, from 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. in the Bronx.

The class is free for Platinum Members, but regular members must pay \$455 each and non-members must pay \$595 each.

NCA will also offer several installments of its New York Department of Environmental Conservation certification class throughout the year, all in New York City. The next one on the schedule is set for May 17 and 24.

Overall, the class takes place from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on consecutive Sundays.

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

There will be two additional offerings of the DEC Certification course later in the year; the first will be on Aug. 2 and 9 and the other will take place on Nov. 15 and 22.

For more information on any of NCA's upcoming classes, or to register, visit them online at [www.nca-i.com](http://www.nca-i.com) or call the office at (212) 967-3002.

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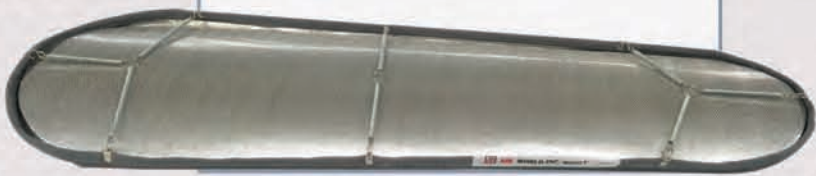
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# WRENCH WORKS



By BRUCE GROSSMAN

## Stopping those expensive leaks

Last month was devoted to stopping solvent and vapor leaks by maintaining the gaskets which provide a seal on the various doors of the drycleaning machine.

These gaskets are normally pre-formed (molded) to the precise size and shape required to fit in the door. This month we're going to cover how to seal areas that do not have pre-formed gaskets or where installing a pre-formed gasket would be difficult and time consuming.

The two greatest gifts for stopping leaks of all sorts are the materials of Teflon and Silicone. We will be using these versatile sealants frequently, in one form or other, in the repairs covered in this and following articles.

Let's begin with the KING of gasket material, Teflon. Teflon has four wonderful qualities that are especially suited to our industry.

First its temperature range is from -50° F to around 400° F, thus allowing its use on the steam piping in a normal drycleaning/laundry operation.

Second, it is chemically resistant to just about anything you can slop on or over it including any of the solvents you may be using, in either a liquid or vapor form.

Third, it has self lubricating qualities and last but not least it comes in several forms, each well suited to a particular leak stopping application. I'll give

a quick list of the types of Teflon, then their uses.

**Teflon tape.** You are all by now familiar with Teflon in the form of a tape. Teflon tape comes in various flavors for different purposes.

I use three different types: a cheap thin half-inch wide white colored for wrapping screws and bolts in order to keep them from locking up from dirt or corrosion; a dense half-inch wide white colored tape for wrapping pipe threads up to and including a half inch; a yellow three-quarter inch wide tape for wrapping threads on pipe over one-half inch.

These tapes not only act as sealant. In addition, Teflon's self lubricating qualities allow the pipe to screw into the fitting without "galling;" meaning friction grinding metal chips off the pipe and fittings and freezing up the assembly before a good seal is accomplished. (Also galling makes it impossible to disassemble the pipe and fittings without damage.)

**Teflon pipe dope.** This paste-like material comes in a can with a brush built into the lid. It is used to coat the threads on pipe and in fitting before assembling these parts.

**Teflon string or round packing.** Resembling spaghetti, this round form of Teflon is used to pack valves to and from seals and gaskets between flanges or other flat surfaces.

**Solid Teflon sheeting.** This material comes in both a solid and a closed cell foam version. It is expensive but at times is the only answer for sealing some very difficult leaks at irregularly shaped flanges or uneven, warped or pitted mating surfaces.

Starting with the use of Teflon tape:

**1. For sealing pipe threads.** Wind at least three turns of tape around the circumference of the pipe. It is important to wind the tape in the correct direction which is clockwise when facing the end of the pipe. This distributes the tape evenly and pulls it into the threads when a fitting is screwed onto the pipe. (Wound in the wrong direction, the tape will be pushed out of the threads and bunch up on the outside of the fitting.)

Use a dense half-inch wide white colored tape for wrapping pipe threads up to and including a half inch or a yellow three-quarter inch wide tape for wrapping threads on pipe over a half inch.

For extra sealing reliability use Teflon pipe dope over the tape on the male end of the fitting and in the treads on the female fitting.

**2. For preventing nuts, screws and bolts from freezing together or locking up.** Wind two turns around the threads in a clockwise direction, same as with pipe threads, and pull the tape tight.

**3. Creating thin string packing.** You will often find small valves leaking at the stems. The shut off valves at the top and bottom of boiler sight glass fixtures are a perfect example of this kind of leak.

After completing the packing procedure and tightening down the packing nut, remember this type of valve seats with the valve completely open.

*Do not do any maintenance on a pressurized or hot boiler!*

Compression fittings leaking steam past the compression nut is another common leak of this type. An unusually effective method to stop these leaks is to install extra Teflon packing behind the packing nut on valves, or the compression nut on fittings.

You can whip up this packing in a heartbeat by taking a 12-inch length of Teflon tape and holding one end while "spinning" the other end between the thumb and forefinger of the other hand until it

### SELECTING TEFLON PRODUCTS

WHEN PURCHASING TEFLON TAPE BE SURE IT IS MARKED AS HIGH DENSITY. SOMETIMES IT'S DIFFICULT TO FIND IN BIG BOX STORES BUT PLUMBING SUPPLY AND INDUSTRIAL HARDWARE STORES WILL USUALLY CARRY IT



WHEN PURCHASING TAPE OR PIPE DOPE (THREAD SEALANT) BE SURE IT CONTAINS TEFLON OR THE ABBREVIATION PTFE

NOTE: THE ITEMS PICTURED ARE NOT MEANT AS AN ENDORSEMENT OF THE PRODUCT OR MANUFACTURER.

### WRAPPING TEFLON TAPE



ALWAYS WRAP TEFLON TAPE CLOCKWISE FACING THE NIPPLE

forms a soft round string. Then unscrew the leaking nut and slide it up the valve stem or down the copper tubing in the case of a compression fitting nut, hold one end of the string and wind several turns around the valve stem or copper tubing pulling it taut.

Now while holding tension on the string, push the packing nut or compression nut onto the valve or fitting body and screw it down. The beauty of using Teflon like this is that the nut will cut through the soft Teflon so you needn't try to cut the ends of the string, losing the tension on the packing in the process.

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



MASTER KLEEN CLEANERS in High Point, NC, purchased a Unisec Model MS402N through Yoo Enterprise. Pictured from left are Mr. Park from Yoo Enterprise, Mrs. Houser, owner of Master Kleen, and Robert Lee of New York Machinery.

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# INFORMATION CENTRAL

## Products and Services for Drycleaners

### Boiler compound dose injection system

LAS VEGAS, NV — EZtimers Manufacturing announces the addition of the EZ-Dose return tank precision boiler compound injection system and level management controller to its expanding line of products designed especially for the drycleaning and laundry industries.

This device monitors the volume of city (make-up water) added to the boiler return tank, precisely injecting the exact amount of boiler compound required to control scale and bind free oxygen in the boiler feed water.

The EZ-Dose contains its own compound injection pump and is integrated with EZtimers' return tank level control to replace the troublesome, leaky ball float

valve.

This combination of electronic compound injection system and level control will save boiler compound, wasted fuel, unnecessary water and sewage fees and greatly reduce the high costs incurred by maintenance and lost production. Most importantly, it will extend the working life of the boiler.

The EZ-Dose is entirely self-contained, shipped with all necessary parts for installation and is very easy to install and set up. It can be used with any liquid boiler compound.

To learn more, visit [www.eztimers.com](http://www.eztimers.com).



### Collar card promotion

LOS ANGELES, CA — CollarCard makes a patented credit card-sized plastic card containing four pop-out collar stays that can be stored in a man's wallet.

CollarCards are a unique promotional product whose low price point and 100 percent usage rate has made it a popular giveaway for drycleaners.

"We invented CollarCards to address and fix the common problem of men forgetting their collar stays when they leave the house, when they are traveling, or for any occasion when they are wearing a dress shirt," said Randall Kaplan, chief executive officer and owner of CollarCard.

CollarCards are made in the United States from environmentally-friendly recycled plastic and are fully customizable; customers can add any graphics, logos, colors, or tagline to their design.

To learn more, email [sales@collarcard.com](mailto:sales@collarcard.com).



### Heat seal, labels in new catalog

CONKLIN, NY — The new year brought a new catalog from Cleaner's Supply that includes more than 200 new and innovative products for the drycleaning industry.

Among the new products is an exclusive Hotseal machine for applying barcode heat seal labels. It has fully programmable temperature and timer controls and uses standard 110V while complying with OSHA standards. Its small footprint saves space while packing performance and durability into an easy-to-use labeling system. Made in the USA, it includes a full two-year warranty.

Cleaner's Supply also added a stripe label option to its custom printed heat seal labels in response to customers who to mark routes and stores. The multiple colors adds versatility to the labeling system. Stripe colors include black, blue, green, red or yellow.

To learn more, visit [www.cleansupply.com](http://www.cleansupply.com).



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# THE SPOTTING BOARD



BY DAN EISEN

## Learning problem-solving methods

I spent nearly an entire week in Naples, FL, teaching the use of specialized products for solving various stain and fabric problems.

The focus was on more advanced usage of chemicals. We also concentrated on different manufacturers having some chemicals that others did not have. No one manufacturer

had all the products necessary for problem correction. Although the basic of spotting was covered, we concentrated on the best products available.

### Problems

**Using a fast and efficient way of spotting.** We concentrated on using the best products that produced the fastest

and safest way of stain removal.

The order of spotting started with wetside going in to the dryside method. Specific use of the steam gun was discussed so as not to set the stain.

- A. Neutral lubricant.
- B. Tannin.
- C. Protein Formula-non ammoniated.

D. Citrus based formula.

E. Environmentally friendly oily-type paint remover and alkaline in nature.

F. Acid based environmentally friendly oily-type ink remover acid in nature.

G. Sodium perborate. All the oily type agents can be flushed wetside

**Yellowing on a dyed silk.** We used a neutral based oxidizing agent that is safe to colors. We were able to correct several stains such as perspiration, body stain and others.

**Dye bleeding from wet-cleaning.** Chris Bamberg of Platinum Cleaners showed the use of a lubricant that easily removed the stain without bleaching.

**Heavy ink stain on a print shirt.** No one attending the session thought the ink could be removed. We showed how the ink must be reduced to its last traces before bleaching can be used.

We used citrus based lubricant, oily-type paint remover and acid paint remover.

We also combined ink remover with a tannin formula. The ink was finally removed totally with sodium perborate bleach.

**Potassium permanganate usage.** Many drycleaners were having problems neutralizing this agent. We showed how hydrogen peroxide is the easiest and best neutralizer.

**Odor problems.** We received a load of household fabrics stained with animal urine. We used a cationic detergent in a wetcleaning formula. The odor and staining were removed.

**Restoring color and luster to silk and other fabrics.** We used a mineral oil bath in the cleaning machine. In a low level of solvent (20 gallons) we added 12 ounces of mineral oil. We batched the load and then sent the solvent to the still. After a short extraction the load

was dried. The garments came out with color and luster restored.

### Specialized bleaching for silk and similar fabrics.

A. Hydrogen peroxide for bath bleaching. This bleach avoids color loss on off white silk and other fabrics. Sodium perborate is often too aggressive and may change the color to a whiter white.

B. Paracetic acid. This bleach is formulated by mixing hydrogen peroxide with acetic acid. It has been found to be very effective for whitening silk and removing mildew.

Hydrogen peroxide and paracetic acid are formulated to use as a bath bleach or in a wetcleaning formulation. There are chemical companies that have formulated these bleaches mixed and ready to use.

### Special thanks

**Jeff Rhea**, owner of Fashion Fresh Drycleaners, for the use of his plant that has the most updated state-of-the-art drycleaning, wetcleaning and finishing equipment. We trained his entire staff for three days.

**Chris and Craig Bamberg** from Platinum Drycleaners, which is like a fashion designer show room with updated modern equipment. We trained his entire staff and several other drycleaners from other plants

**Peter Blake** of the South Eastern Fabricare Association for offering a scholarship program that reimburses drycleaners who have consultants like myself who come to their plant.

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



Dan Eisen (third from left) with the people he trained at Fashion Fresh Drycleaners in Naples, FL — Meyton, Carlos, Leny, Reyes and Joel.

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ARROYO CLEANERS in Pasadena, CA, purchased a Uniseq 402NE no-distillation cleaning machine through Ted Kim at Blue Ocean Machinery. Pictured from left are Ted Kim of Blue Ocean, Dong Y. Kim, owner of Arroyo Cleaners, and Robert Lee of New York Machinery.



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# KEEP IT LEGAL



BY FRANK KOLLMAN

## In matters of discipline: be specific

**W**hen a former employee alleges that he or she was the victim of discrimination, the employee must show that (1) he is in a protected classification, (2) he was disciplined (or discharged), and (3) that employees not in his protected classification were treated less harshly than he.

The concept is known in legal circles as “disparate treatment.” The employer then must articulate a legitimate reason for the disparate treatment, such as poorer performance, a worst disciplinary record, or some other reason unrelated to race, sex, age, etc.

Once the employer articulates the legitimate business reason, the former employee then is allowed to prove that the stated reason is false, or in legal terms, a “pretext” for discrimination. One of the factors that a court or jury can con-

A federal court in Wisconsin is allowing a discrimination case to go to trial because, among other things, the reasons given for performance problems were too “vague.” As such, a jury could find the “vague” stated reasons to be

soften the blow or reduce the stress of the experience is a huge mistake. Lying, of course, is the worst possible strategy. Never call a disciplinary action a “job elimination” or “layoff,” unless you want to see a discrimination charge that is ex-

can be too thorough in describing an employee’s bad performance or behavior. If the employee has engaged in egregious misconduct, there is no need to detail the employee’s attendance and lateness record. It could detract from

**If you must discipline an employee, be as specific and direct as you can be. Trying to soften the blow or reduce the stress of the experience is a huge mistake.**

sider is what the employee was told in the first place about the reason for his termination.

pretextual, namely, a false reason to cover up illegal discrimination. *EEOC v. Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System*, 18-cv-602-jdp (W.D. Wis. 2019).

The Court, after noting that an employer who lies about the reason for discipline raises the inference that it has acted illegally, also said that the reasons given — even if truthful — must be specific to avoid having a judge or jury decide whether discrimination occurred.

In this case, the employer stated that the plaintiff had not been “responsive, or timely, to central marketing.” The court found that the absence of examples or an explanation of what “responsive” or “timely” meant made the offered reasons too vague to allow them to go unchallenged by the plaintiff.

If you must discipline an employee, be as specific and direct as you can be. Trying to

tremely difficult to defend.

In writing human resources documents, from evaluations to disciplinary notices to policies and procedures, do not write like a lawyer. Write like a businessperson. Be direct, and whenever possible, favor objective over subjective.

Instead of “Bill engaged in inappropriate behavior when he was confronted about his chronic lateness,” say “Bill was being counseled about his seventh late arrival in the past 30 days, and Bill responded by calling his supervisor a s#8thead and throwing the written warning for lateness in his face.”

Avoid words like unsatisfactory, attitude, inappropriate, timely, troublemaker, responsive, production, and the like without examples that give these conclusory words context. One person’s “bad attitude” is another person’s exercise of protected rights.

Sometimes, an employer

the main reason, rather than support it.

Once you have made your point in a written document that discipline or a poor performance evaluation are warranted, it might be a good time to stop. Never stop, however, before you have made your point convincingly, objectively, and specifically.

A few years ago, a client intercepted a vulgar, inappropriate (good taste prevents me from being specific) email an employee had sent to another employee.

The employee was fired, and the state unemployment agency asked for the reason.

The client looked at its rules governing misconduct, and it could not find a rule that clearly defined what the employee had done. My solution was to tell the agency that the employee was fired for sending the email that was attached to the response. We decided to let the agency put a label on the email and the employee’s misconduct.

Even though it can be uncomfortable to tell an employee that she is doing a bad job or that she crossed the line on discipline, it is absolutely essential that employees be told the truthful reasons for your actions in descriptive, objective language.

You may have heard that your company is in an “at will” state and that means that employees can be fired for any reason or no reason at all. Never rely on the “at will” doctrine, however, to avoid giving an employee the stark truth, or you could find yourself in a federal trial for employment discrimination.

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.



**LEGEND CLEANERS** in Phoenix, AZ, installed a new Columbia Ipura cleaning machine purchased through New Wave Equipment. Pictured with Chris Hogard of Columbia (center) are Kim and Matt Bizzack, owners of Legend Cleaners.

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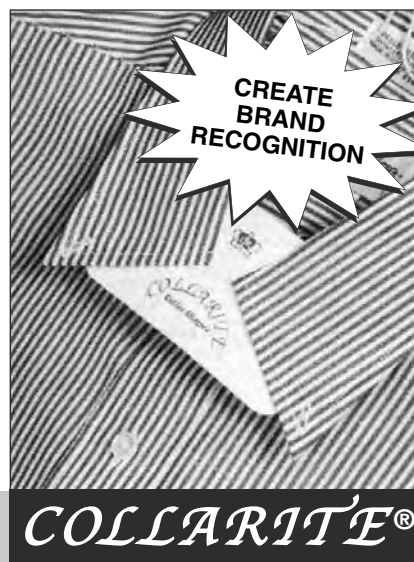


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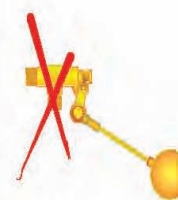
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Back to the Big Easy for Clean '14



It looks like a full house of exhibitors will be ready to let the good times roll at New Orleans' Ernest N. Morial Convention Center when the Clean Show opens June 25. With less than a month to go before the show opens, A&I exhibitors had signed up to put their wares on display to the thousands of industry professionals who will peruse their offerings during the show's four-day run. Many an unclaimed booth space could be found on the show's floor of – even the nooks and crannies in the far corners of the hall had been claimed. That means those going to the show will need to plan their time carefully to be sure to take in everything they want to see and leave time to discover the unexpected. And wear comfortable walking shoes. This will be the sixth time in the show's 42-year history that New Orleans has served as the venue, which will have it tied with Las Vegas as the most requested Clean Show city. Much has changed since that first Clean Show in Chicago in 1977 when six industry associates joined forces to create a biennial trade show which was officially called the World Education Congress of Laundry and Drycleaning but known universally by the more succinct Clean Show. (Nat)

Complete text of the current issue.

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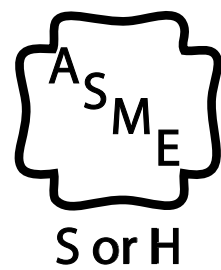
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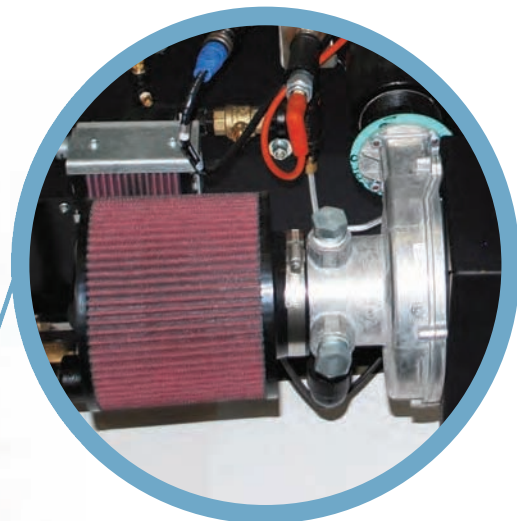
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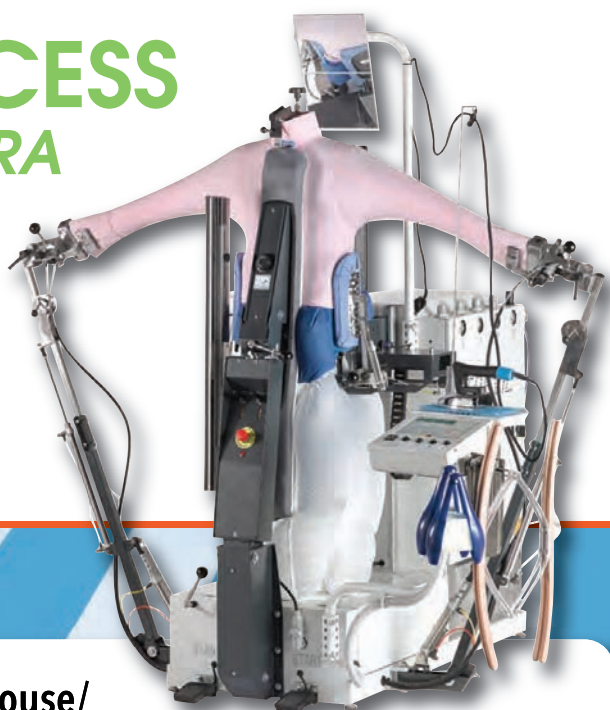
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