



National

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Making it to the prom in high style



Since its inception, the Belle of the Ball program has helped thousands of high school students enjoy their prom in style thanks to the efforts of Anton's Cleaners which cleans all the dresses so they'll be ready for a boutique event at which young women get to choose a gown at no cost to them.

Anton's Cleaners, based in Tewksbury, MA, is once again helping to ensure that high school students who need a prom dress can get one through its Caring Partners Belle of the Ball drive.

Now in its 16th year, the drive began Feb. 10 and continues through March 29 with donors invited to drop off new or gently worn prom dresses at Anton's Cleaners or any of the partners in the drive. Anton's cleans the dresses at no charge so they'll be ready for the boutique event in which more than 1,000 girls will be invited to Hynes Convention Center in Boston to select a dress for their special occasion.

Participating students are pre-selected by guidance counselors, teachers and social agency personnel. Volunteers will be on hand to assist with personal shopping along with registration, event setup and breakdown and related tasks for the early April event.

"Our mission has remained consistent for the past sixteen years: every high school girl should have the experience of feeling beautiful, inside and out, at their prom," said Arthur Anton, COO of Anton's Cleaners and a founder of the program. "Thanks to a consistent presence and support by our generous corporate partners, dress donors and volunteers, we are proud to make this year bigger and better than ever."

To date, nearly 5,500 girls have been outfitted since Belle of the Ball began in 2005, with over \$2.7 million in drycleaning services donated by Anton's since the program's inception. Last year, over 3,500 gowns were cleaned by Anton's and 950 girls in need were invited to Boutique Day.

Anton's partners in the effort include Jordan's Furniture, Enterprise Bank, Boston 25 News, Kiss 108 FM, JAM'N 94.5, 101.7 The Bull, WBZ 1030, The New 97.7, WRKO and 100.7 WZLX.

Monetary and in-kind donations are also needed to pay for jewelry, makeup and other accessories and prom-related services: visit antons.com/belle for information or to make a financial donation.

75 years of expanding their knowledge

Sanitone licensees took a crash course in clinical psychology and human behavior at their annual meeting in Boston in January as they celebrated their 75th consecutive year of gathering to hear top speakers while networking with their peers.

The Four Seasons Boston was the scene. The crash course came from J. Stuart Ablon, Ph.D. of Massachusetts General Hospital who focused on how to collaboratively solve problems by understanding the causes of behavior that lead to conflict. His takeaway of "reasons aren't necessarily excuses" challenged the audience to be curious instead of stubborn when addressing problems.

The program kicked off with Fabritec President John Jordan reflecting on 75 years of meetings and sharing updates from the company, including product innovations and industry trends.

Norb Tamblyn, Sanitone area manager, provided news from the cleaning room around the New England area.

Jeff Jordan, Fabritec vice president, spoke on the topic of saying "Thanks" in the workplace, emphasizing the need for daily appreciation and ways that employers can implement low-cost and highly effective recognition programs.

Addressing how to market to fashion trends was Jackie Brown of INITIAL Social Media. With her degree in Fashion Design, she briefed the group on trends that are popular in the marketplace and believes that the "fast fashion" trend is slowing and will be replaced by a demand for higher quality garments and care.

Sharing his life journey from India to Southern California was Bobby Patel of Kona Cleaners/BeCreative 360. He took the audience through the purchase and growth of his business, shared stories of successes and failures, and divulged some life lessons he gained along the way. His customer "first attitude" shined brightly in his approach to marketing and promotion.

Closing out the afternoon was Michael Schapiro of Wedding Gown Preservation Co. who told how he uses temporary staffing agencies to build his staff in a business that has seasonal demand.

His by-the-numbers approach showed that staffing agencies can be a practical solution in a production environment.

The meeting was book-ended by social events at the hotel that allowed licensees from across the country to network and share ideas on how to improve their businesses.

The meeting takes place annually in January and is open to all Sanitone licensees.



For the 75th consecutive year, Sanitone cleaners gathered to learn from experts and each other.



Sneak Peek

6 Up from the ashes

Don Robitzer and family built a fine business over the years, then watched part of it burn a year ago. They're back and good as new.



14 Challenges met

As the 3rd generation to lead the family business, Robert Walker, who died recently, guided it through tough times.



28 Room to improve

Think of shortcomings in shirt quality as opportunities to improve your work and better your business, says Don Desrosiers



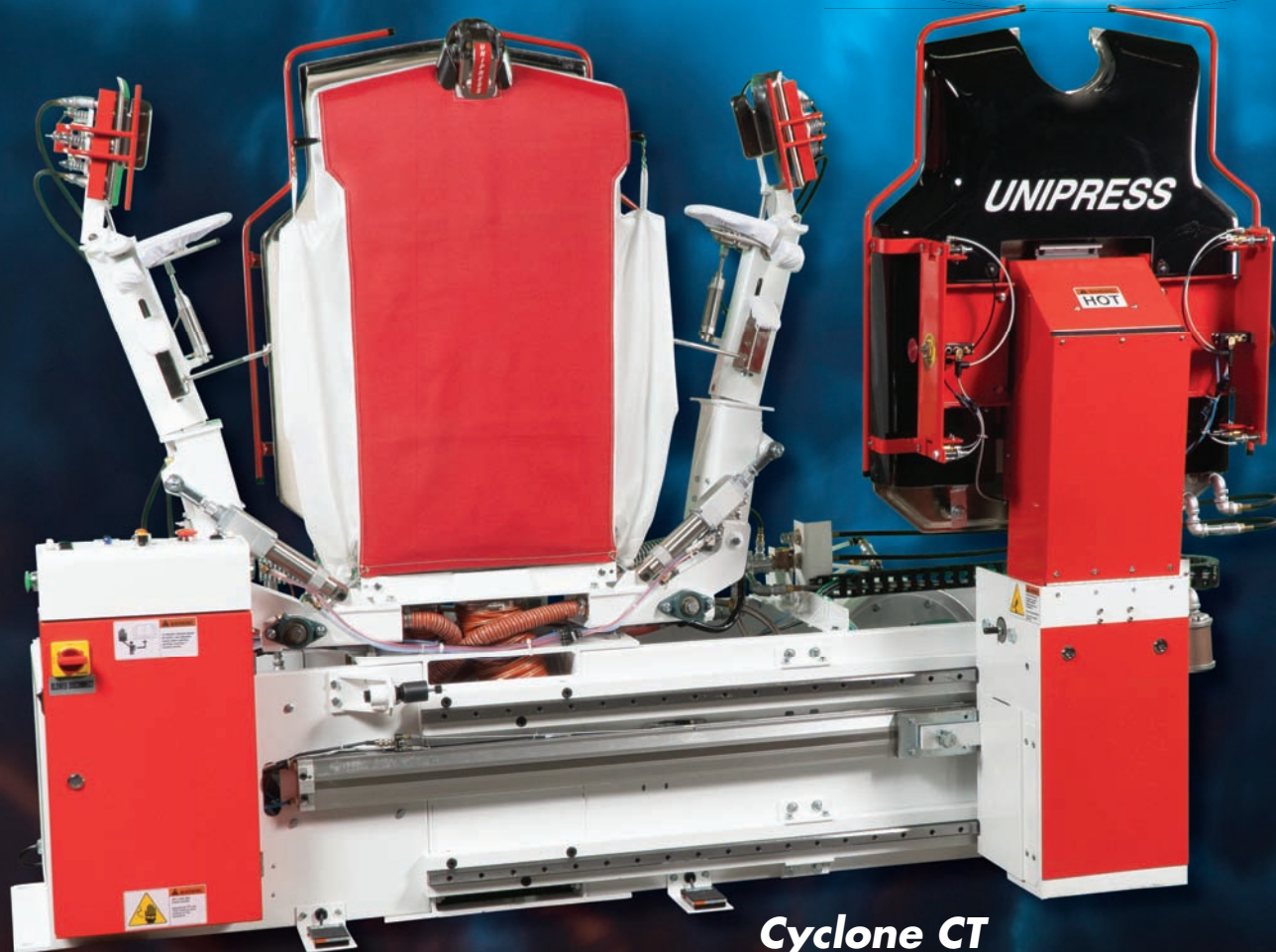
26 Price and perception

If you're stuck with '90s prices, maybe it's because you have a '90s look, James Peuster suggests.



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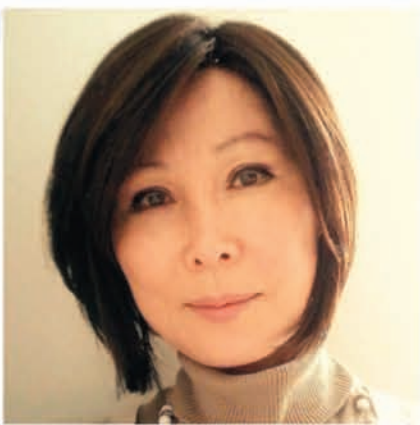


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#Hollywoodfamily

Once upon a time in Pennsylvania, an argonomist named Don Robitzer bought Hollywood Cleaners in 1974.

Prior to that, Don had used his acquired knowledge of soil management and crop production to help his father construct the Village Greens Golf Course in Sinking Spring, PA.

"Around 1974, my father and I had a meeting of the minds regarding the family business and I decided to set out on my own," he recalled. "I had hoped to purchase another local golf course that was for sale but my friend (and accountant) didn't like the numbers. I then looked at a local drycleaners although I had no prior experience nor specific interest. The numbers looked so good I purchased it and launched myself into the business head first."

The former owner stayed on for a while and helped Don learn the business from the ground up. In fact, some of the family members of the original owners remained with Hollywood Cleaners for many years (some as long as decades).

The ex-argonomist still worked with soil, only this time he eradicated its existence from dirty clothes. Fortunately, there seemed to be an endless supply in the early years.

"By the late 1980s we couldn't process another garment out of our location due to high volume and lack of space to expand," Don recalled. "In 1990, I purchased a 16,000 sq. ft. metal fabrication facility in the town of Reading and transformed it into a state-of-the-art plant. New equipment, more equipment and more employees allowed me to start opening drop stores in addition to our flagship store in Wyomissing."

By the early 2000s, Hollywood Cleaners included five drop stores and six delivery routes. Then, Don opted to buy another local cleaners, Supreme Cleaners.

The same man who designed a golf course that opened in 1969 had turned a single store drycleaning plant into a multi-million dollar operation with locations all throughout the area.

Appropriately enough, Hollywood Cleaners seemed to live a familiar Hollywood story of the rags-to-riches variety; then came an unfortunate plot twist. In January of 2019, a blaze erupted in the Supreme Cleaners location, originally started by a tenant who left a candle burning in an apartment in the building.

The tenant lived and much of the customers' clothing was salvaged. The building, however, was completely destroyed and had to be shut down.

Marian Robitzer first began working with her husband Don at Hollywood in 2000. A graduate with a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from Lehigh University, she worked as an engineer for about a decade, including a job as project engineer for a engineering consulting firm in Manhattan.

When she and Don married, she first started helping him computerize the company's books.

"After completing that, he then asked me to research and install a point

of sale system for his four stores and delivery routes," she noted. "At the conclusion of those projects, I stayed on to maintain the point of sales system as well as become more involved in the day-to-day accounting operations."

After two decades with the company, Marian believes she knows the secret to its success.

"I would say that the company's greatest strength is its people," she ex-

plained. "We are blessed with a staff, many of whom have been with us for 5, 10, 20+ years, who take pride in their work. I attribute this kind of loyalty to the fact that Don (and later continued by Lazaros) takes care of his employees and treats them like family. Management always sets the tone for an organization, and taking care of our staff and doing our best work begins at the top at Hollywood."

Hollywood treats its staff like extended family (or "framily" as Marian calls it... friends who are like family). You can also find several family members present at the company at any given time, including Marian's brother Lazaros (general manager) and her and Don's daughter, Missy (district manager). Don's nephew, Fred, is head of maintenance. There are also a few young adults comprising the third generation of the family that have chipped in over the years.

If that weren't enough, many family employees notify their families and families of job openings. This might explain why one of Hollywood's most frequently used social media hashtags is #hollywoodfamily.

Like his sister, Marian, Lazaros Scantzos also graduated from Lehigh University with a B.S. in mechanical engineering. Early in his career, he worked as both a process engineer and department manager with various plastics corporations. It was a demanding job that kept him from his family enough that he left engineering and joined Hollywood.

Though, to be fair, he never completely gave up his passion for engineering. "I have spent the last 19 years restoring two homes in the Wyomissing area," he said. "My job at Hollywood also helps fulfill this need to restore old items."

One of Lazaros's favorite projects over the years has been helping Gene London, a star of the children's TV

show *Cartoon Corners* in Philadelphia from 1959 to 1977, restore old Hollywood gowns and costumes from popular movies in order to put them on display.

"Often when he acquired the gowns and costumes, they would need cleaning and repairs," he said. "Mr. London trusted Hollywood Cleaners to restore these precious items. My favorite item was a sport coat worn by Frank Sinatra

in the movie, *Four for Texas*. Frank Sinatra has always been a favorite of mine and it was thrilling to see something he had actually worn."

In 1994, Missy, daughter of Don and Marian, was called back to Hollywood to help open their fourth location that January. Her passion was in Art History, a field in which she earned a degree at Pennsylvania State University. However, much of her experience was in the family business.

"I was only a few years old when my father purchased Hollywood," she recalled. "I grew up in the business spending the majority of my childhood on the premises and eventually working in the store in my teens. It was a fantastic experience. The employees were my extended family and treated me as such."

Missy passed along the tradition of growing up around the business to her own children. "When we opened our sixth location I had just given birth to my first of two daughters and she came to work with me every day for over two years," she recalled.

Even at a young age she realized that her father lead by example. He worked tirelessly to make the business better.

"I watched my father work 16-hour days for the majority of my youth. I marveled at his determination and drive," she said. "He taught me how to be tough and have a strong work ethic that I will pass on to my daughters. Working by his side all these decades has been the most rewarding experience and has created a deep bond of friendship for us that I think is unusual given the daily stress that this business creates, or any family business creates."

That is why the fire of last year was so painful to the family. All those years of hard work literally turned to ashes in hours. Don, in particular, was devastated and had always said that having a tenant live above the business was one of his greatest fears.

The fire provided a bitter end for the Supreme Cleaners building, but not the final ending. A family that worked so hard to build it up was willing to start over and build it again.

"There was not much we could do except be grateful that we had insurance and start the cleaning up process," Missy said. "All the garments were remarked in and transported to our plant so the daunting restoration process

Hollywood Cleaners

Pictured from left: Missy Steber, Donald & Marian Robitzer, Lazaros Scantzos



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THE SPOTTING BOARD



BY DAN EISEN

New techniques for hydrogen peroxide

Hydrogen peroxide 3% has always been the mainstay and last step in the wetside stain removal process.

This is the stain removal process I taught as a former director of the New York School of Drycleaning. I told the students to first pre-test for color safety and then apply peroxide followed with a few drops of ammonia. We then heated the agent, flushed the area, neutralized with acetic and then flushed again.

This procedure however is outdated and has not proven as effective as the procedures that I now teach. The reason why is that as soon as the ammonia hits the peroxide, the bleaching action is accelerated to the point that it does not last though the heating process.

I now teach an entirely different method for using this bleach.

I also work with companies that have formulated hydrogen peroxide to use in pre-spotting, wetcleaning and for mildew removal.

Characteristics of hydrogen peroxide

Hydrogen peroxide is an

oxidizing agent that is oxygen to the stain and fabric. It is the only bleach that is considered neutral so it does not have to be neutralized after use.

Hydrogen peroxide is not stable and loses strength while on the spotting board. It is not as unstable as people think. It can be left on the spotting board for a few weeks with no problem.

There is a simple test which I teach that can be used to test the effectiveness of the hydrogen peroxide you are using.

Test for effectiveness

1. Put some titanium sulphate on a Q-tip.
2. Put hydrogen peroxide on another Q-tip.
3. Let the two Q-tips touch.
4. If the Q-tip with titanium turns yellow or orange, the peroxide is effective.

Uses for hydrogen peroxide

1. Last traces of tannin, protein and dye stains.
2. Scorch.
3. Whiten fabric.
4. Ink.
5. Mildew.
6. Neutralize chlorine bleach.
7. Neutralize potassium permanganate.

Strength

1. Hydrogen peroxide comes in a 3% 10 volume found in pharmacies. It can be purchased as a spray which is easy to use.

2. Hydrogen peroxide can be purchased in 6% 20 volume from a hair salon. I like to purchase it in a cream form which is easy to use.

3. Peroxide can be purchased 30% 100 volume in a concentrated form. This must be mixed wearing gloves; this is important to prevent chemical burn.

Proper use of hydrogen peroxide

Spray method

1. Purchase 3% hydrogen peroxide as a spray.
2. Apply to fabric.
3. Wait 15 minutes.
4. Re-apply and hang.

You do not have to flush since it breaks down into water.

6 percent/20 volume

1. Test color fastness before use.
2. Apply with a Q-tip.
3. Add protein formula.
4. Heat.
5. Flush.

Prepared protein formulas

are not highly alkaline and usually does not have to be neutralized.

Bath method

Manufacturers have formulated hydrogen peroxide to be used for soaking fabrics. This soaking method is safer than other bleaches that may be alkaline in nature.

1. Follow manufacturer's directions, but it is usually used at 2 ounces per gallon of warm, not hot, water.

2. Add a lubricant if necessary. Manufacturers usually have a lubricant present in their preparation.

3. Soak 15 minutes.

4. Rinse.

Prepared formulation for wetcleaning

1. Hydrogen peroxide can be added to the wash wheel to increase the cleaning action of the wetcleaning load.

2. Use the manufacturer's directions for product use. Addition of peroxide mixture is usually added based on weight of fabric.

Pre-spotting mixtures

Manufacturers have prepared hydrogen peroxide mixed with enzymes and non-ionic detergents. These products are designed to remove yellow stains on all fabrics that need pre-spotting before wetcleaning.

1. Spray fabric.

2. Hang 15 minutes before wetcleaning.

Sodium perborate and sodium precarbonate

These two bleaches come in powder form, are alkaline in nature and release hydrogen peroxide when in contact with water.

Although similar, perborate and precarbonate have differences. Sodium percarbonate dissolves easier in water and may be better as a bath bleach. Sodium perborate is better for board bleaching.

The board method of using sodium perborate

1. Apply perborate to a wet

area.

2. Apply glycerin or a lubricant.

3. Heat with steam gun.

4. Flush.

5. Neutralize with a tannin formula or acetic acid.

6. Flush.

Bath method for sodium percarbonate

1. Dissolve two ounces of percarbonate per gallon of water.

2. Add lubricant, one ounce per gallon of water.

3. Soak several hours or overnight.

4. Rinse.

5. Neutralize with an acid.

6. Rinse again.

Peracetic acid

Peracetic acid is produced in manufacture by treatment of hydrogen peroxide, acetic acid, acid catalyst and stabilizing agents. This product is a very good whitening agent for all fabrics, including silk. Many cleaners who use it claim it does a better job than hydrogen peroxide. It is a very effective agent for removing mildew on all fabrics, including silk.

Soaking

1. Add product in a bucket of cool water.

2. One ounce per gallon of water.

3. Soak 10 minutes.

4. Rinse

Machine use in wetcleaning.

1. Add to machine load, according to manufacturer's directions.

2. Follow with proper rinse and finishing agents.

Spotting board

1. Apply with Q-tip.

2. Tamp in product.

3. Heat.

4. Flush.

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

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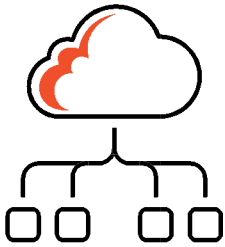
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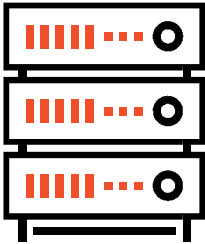


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10001040	Dry Clean	1	
10001053	Laundry	1	
10001038	Dry Clean	2	
10001039	Laundry	1	
10001040	Dry Clean	1	
10001053	Laundry	1	
10001059	Laundry	1	
10001060	Dry Clean	1	
10001061	Laundry	2	

CUSTOMER TOTAL 14

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Roswell GA 30076

11 Bowd, Roswell
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Smith, Carol
931 Main Street
Roswell GA 30076

Smith, Bill
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Obituaries

Robert Walker, Jr

The third of five generations in Omaha family business

Robert “Bob” S. Walker, Jr., the third generation of the Walker family to own and operate Max I. Walker in Omaha, NE, passed away Dec. 16 at the age of 82.

He was the grandson of the company’s founder, Max I. Walker, who established the company, which now includes both a retail drycleaning operation and a uniform rental service, in 1917.

He grew up in Omaha but graduated from the Kemper Military Academy in Boonville, MO. In 1957 he returned to Omaha where he married his wife of nearly 62 years, the former Linda Ruch. He also joined the drycleaning business founded by his grandfather.

He made adjustments to the Max I. Walker chain while keeping an emphasis on community service.



His son, Robert Walker III said his dad “came up through the ranks” of the business. When his turn came to lead, he instituted changes such as elevating women to managerial positions and landing contracts for uniform cleaning.

“He was really a visionary for his time in recognizing that

women were a valuable source of management material,” he said. “When Dad came up, none of my grandfather’s managers were women. Dad saw the value in the female work ethic.”

As more clothes were made that do not require drycleaning, the elder Walker saw the value in soliciting the business of cleaning company uniforms.

“Uniform cleaning is such a big part of our business now,” his son said.

Walker also was a founding member of Operation Bridge, a counseling program for suburban youths that evolved into an outpatient chemical dependency and mental health program. It later became part of the Creighton St. Joseph Regional Health Care System.

He also was active on the

board of Methodist Hospital. Other community initiatives dear to him included continuing the company’s legacy of donating to the Omaha Home for Boys and Max I. Walker’s Ultra Chic Prom Boutique, which provides ball gowns for teens.

In his leisure time, he was known as a scratch golfer with multiple championship wins at the Omaha Country Club. Stock-car racing was another passion.

“Dad loved stock car racing, and we spent many Sunday nights at Sunset Speedway with a beer and a hot dog,” Rob Walker said. “He was a car owner and a sponsor. He loved the racing and was a big supporter.”

Robert Walker III now serves as president of the company and his daughter, Lisa Sekundiak, is vice president, representing the

fourth generation of the Walker family. His grandsons Chris, Jordan and Thomas “Casey” all work in the family business as well, and represent the fifth generation.

He is also survived by his wife, Linda, who resides in Omaha, along with grandchildren Lauren Tinley of Chicago, John Tinley, Omaha; and Sasha Sekundiak of North Dakota, and two great-grandchildren.

Jack Smith

61 years in the industry

John “Jack” F. Smith, Jr., 79, of Hanover, PA, died January 2 at his home with his loving family by his side.

He was a salesman for FM Supply and had a career in drycleaning supplies and product sales that spanned 61 years. He belonged to various laundry and drycleaning associations.

Born August 13, 1940 in Baltimore, MD, he was the son of the late John F. Sr. and Mary Jeanette (Bradyhouse) Smith. He attended Calvert Hall College High School Baltimore, MD and graduated from Catonsville High School, Catonsville, MD.

“Jack knew the drycleaning industry, inside and out,” said Paula Kostick, owner of Classic Drycleaners in Mechanicsburg, PA, and a long-time customer and friend. “He was the perfect example of old-school sales which revolves around good ol’ fashioned reliable customer service.”

“He did things like take inventory for customers to help them place their order, store supplies in his garage at home in case there was a weekend request from a customer, and make follow up calls to his customers to remind them their order was due.”

“I learned a lot from Jack about sales,” she added. “I learned how important it is to pick up the phone regularly to talk to your top customers, take the time to schedule to sit down with them face-to-face and ask ‘How is my company doing for you?’, and bend over backwards to solve any problems or emergencies they might have.”

He loved antique cars and attended many car shows with family and friends. He was an avid sports fan and spent many afternoons in the stands for Orioles and (the original) Baltimore Colts games.

He and his wife, Joyce M. (Roberts) Smith shared 55 years of marriage. In addition to his wife, he is survived by his children, Jacqueline and husband Kurt, Suzanne and husband Orvaley, John, and Joseph and wife Kasey; nine grandchildren; and two siblings, Stephen Smith, Sr. and wife Patricia and Janice Bloodsworth and husband Bob.

Memorial contributions in his memory may be made to Carroll Regional Cancer Center, 291 Stoner Avenue, Westminster, MD 21157 or The Johns Hopkins Kimmel Cancer Center, P.O. Box 17029, Baltimore, MD 21297-1029. Memories and condolences may be shared at www.kenworthyfh.com.



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SOUTH WEST



COMET CLEANERS in Spring, TX, purchased two Union 8015 cleaning machines with solvent heating through Gulf States Laundry Machinery. Pictured are Matt A. Lipman (left) of Union and Alfredo Sandoval, owner of Comet Cleaners.

SDA sets education, social event plans for Cleaners Showcase

The first regional drycleaning show of the year is close to a month away, which means it's probably a good time to start making plans if you haven't already.

Fortunately, the Southwest Drycleaners Association has released the weekend's itinerary for the event and it looks to be a busy one from April 15 to 17 at the Fort Worth Convention Center in Texas.

The association will be busy on Thursday, April 16, offering a SDA Member Breakfast at 8:30

a.m. followed by a Board and General Membership Meeting from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

At 2 p.m. that day, SDA will break from traditional format and host the USA Best Practices Laundry Award in the afternoon, organized by CINET (International Committee of Textile Care), MFM (Methods for Management and SDA).

The evening will conclude with a Sneak Peek Exhibit Extravaganza where guests can enjoy food, drinks and entertainment on

the exhibit floor a little early from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

The educational sessions will begin on Friday morning, including programs that will run concurrently from 9 to 11 a.m., at which time, the exhibit hall will be officially open.

Speakers and topics on the docket will include: Kermit Engh, president of Fashion Cleaners in Omaha, NE, who will discuss management, CLA CEO Brian Wallace who will share information on the coin laundry industry trends, attorney Frank Kollman who will examine law issues and James Peuster of the Route Pros who will focus on diversifying services.

On Friday afternoon, there will be several live demonstrations and educational seminars on the show floor. It will remain open from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. It will also be open on Saturday from 10 a.m. until 3:30 p.m.

Prior to that, however, SDA will present its keynote speaker from 8:30 to 9:45 that morning. Jeff Butler, a TEDx speaker on workplace dynamics, is also a Millennial expert who has addressed more than 100 organizations internationally such as Google, Amazon, LinkedIn and Wells Fargo.

This year's location for Cleaners Showcase 2020 will be the Omni Fort Worth Hotel, which is situated adjacent to the convention center downtown.

SDA has secured hotel rates of \$189 per night that will last through March 20.

For added convenience, the convention center is positioned between two major airports in Texas: DFW (Dallas-Forth Worth) and Dallas Love Field Airport.

SDA has a link on its website that directly leads to an Omni Fort Worth Hotel reservation page for convention-goers.

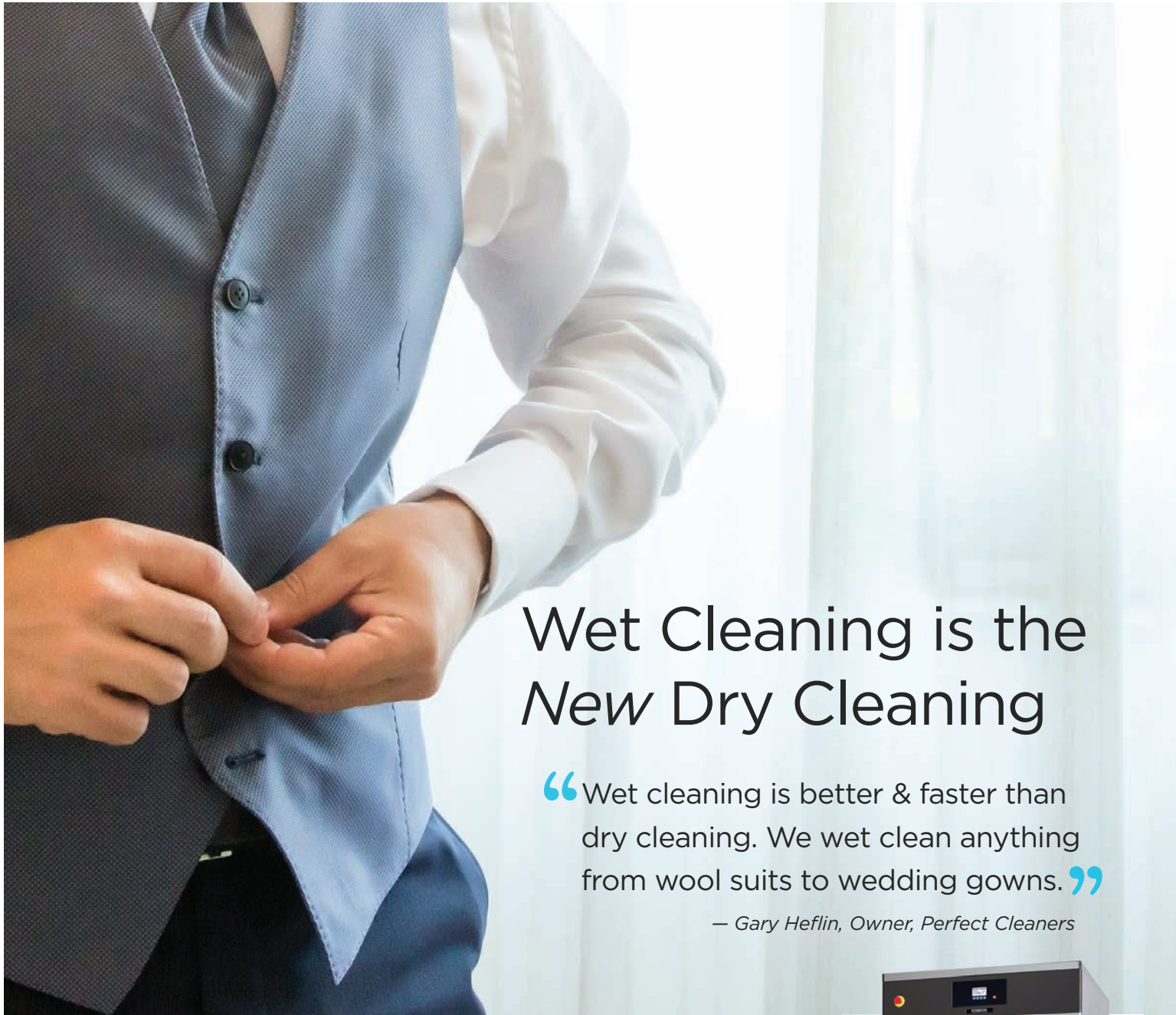
To register for Cleaners Showcase, you can also visit www.sda-dryclean.com and complete the process online.

From the main page, click on the "Events" menu at the top of the page and then follow the "Attendee Information" link to a page with registration links, hotel reservation links and more information on the agenda and educational sessions.

Registration is free for SDA/DLI/CLA members; non-members must pay \$35 each.



Jeff Butler



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— Gary Heflin, Owner, Perfect Cleaners

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WRENCH WORKS



By BRUCE GROSSMAN

Water to steam: How it happens

In this series of articles, I'll be explaining the working of your favorite piece of equipment — your boiler — and the related parts of the system that generate steam for your plant.

In our industry, steam systems are designed to provide heat to finishing equipment, coils used to heat air and moisture and heat for conditioning garments to facilitate wrinkle and spot removal.

The basic parts of this system are as follows:

- Boiler.
- Regulators.
- Steam piping.
- Equipment that uses steam.
- Steam traps.
- Return piping.
- Return tank

Let's begin with the essence of the steam system which is *water*. Water is everywhere! We drink it, fish swim in it, we're mostly made of it, 75 percent of the planet is covered by it and yes, presumably we occasionally bathe in it.

I know it's H₂O, a molecule built of two atoms of hydrogen bonded to an atom of oxygen. Big deal!

Well, how it behaves is a very big deal indeed. As we're all aware, water exists normally in three forms called states. The solid state is ice, the liquid state water and the gaseous state steam.

For now, we are going to concentrate only on the liquid

and gaseous states of water and, for our purposes, the most interesting and important qualities of water take place during the *change of state* from liquid (water) to gas (steam) and then back again to water (condensate).

In order to better understand these changes, we need to take a short course in energy measurement. Let's talk about the BTU.

The BTU (British Thermal Unit) is a quantity of heat energy. It is the amount of heat energy that will raise one pound of water one degree Fahrenheit. Water boils and turns to steam at 212°F (at sea level).

Let's do a little arithmetic. Say you have a pot with a pound of water in it (a little over 15 oz.). It came out of the tap at 65°F and you want to boil it. You would subtract 65 from 212 and come up with 147 degrees difference.

This would mean that by adding 147 BTUs of heat energy to the water, you would turn that pound of water into steam. Right?

You would be correct except for a unique property of water called *latent heat*, and it's that latent heat that makes steam systems so effective.

The heat energy added to raise the temperature of the pound of water from 65°F to 147°F is called *sensible heat* and up to 212°F it works just fine.

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INVERTED BUCKET STEAM TRAP

THERMODYNAMIC STEAM TRAP

TURBINE TYPE CONDENSATE RETURN PUMP

That indeed took 147 BTUs worth of heat energy. You've now reached 212°F, the temperature at which the water changes state to steam.

In order to push that pound of water over that threshold and change it into steam will require an addition of 976.57 more BTUs of heat energy. This 976.57 more BTUs is *latent heat*.

How about that!

Over 6.4 times the amount of energy required to change that pound of water at 212°F

to steam which is also 212°F, than it took to heat that same pound of water from 65° to 212°F.

Therein lies the "magic" of steam. For you see, when that steam changes back to water, a process known as condensation (what boiler people call condensate), what we call return water, it releases that 976.57 BTUs of heat to its surroundings.

For example heating the head of that legger you're

pressing pants on, heating the fins of the coil used to heat air during the drying cycle of your cleaning machine or, if you're really unlucky, providing you with an instant burn when you rest your elbow against a steam pipe.

This latent heat effect allows heat energy to be stored in the form of steam, delivered to areas where it is needed using steam piping, releasing heat energy to perform work by condensing back into water, and then returning to the boiler return tank in the return piping in the form of condensate.

In the following months, we'll be building a boiler step by step and by the time we're finished you'll all be experts.

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Bruce Grossman is the Chief of R&D for EZtimers Manufacturing, maker of the new EZ Level return tank water level control. To prevent boiler scaling and other damage, the EZ Level return tank water level control replaces that troublesome ball float valve in the condensate return tank. 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. Address any questions or comments to bruce@eztimers.com or call (702) 376-6693.

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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

Wetcleaning and basketball for MWDLI

The Midwest Drycleaning and Laundry Institute will host two events back to back this month; one will be a social outing and the other will be an educational seminar on wetcleaning.

First up will be the association's annual "Night with the Indiana Pacers," set to take place on Friday, March 20 at Bankers -Life Fieldhouse in downtown Indianapolis.

The tickets, which cost \$125 per person, are for the Planet Fitness Lounge in a game between the hometown Pacers and the Miami Heat.

Doors open to the arena at 6

p.m.; tipoff starts at 7 p.m.

The Planet Fitness Lounge will offer an all-inclusive buffet featuring several chef's tables, plus items like nacho bars, gourmet hot dogs and brats and complimentary beverages including draft beer, wine, soda and water.

On the following morning, also in Indianapolis, MWDLI will host a wetcleaning seminar featuring industry experts Jeff Quail of Poseidon, Chris Patton of A.L. Wilson and Jeff Dunn of Machinex and experts from Sankosha.

The event will take place at Classic Cleaners located on 8071 Knue Rd. Classic Cleaners is a

leader in utilizing the latest in drycleaning technology to produce excellent results.

The company is the "Official Cleaner of the Indianapolis Colts" and was recently voted as the Best Drycleaner in Indianapolis for the second consecutive year. The award was the result of a reader's poll that collected nearly 100,000 votes.

The wetcleaning seminar will begin at 10 a.m. and run until about 3 p.m. Lunch will be included.

The program will explore how to use wetcleaning more for shirts, as well as covering the wetclean-

ing process from start to finishing and everything in-between.

The format of the seminar will include breaking the audience down into small groups to maximize the training experience.

The cost to attend is \$99 for members and \$129 for non-members. Lunch is included in the cost.

For more information on either

of the upcoming events offered by the MWDLI, contact the office at (765) 969-5745 or visit the association's website at www.mwdli.org.

From the homepage, click on the "Events" option from the menu across the top of the screen to be led to registration links for either upcoming event.

WFI plans, golf benefit, baseball outing this June

The Wisconsin Fabricare Institute will be looking for swingers this summer — of the wood driver

and bat variety — for its 17th Annual Fitzgerald Scholarship Classic and annual Milwaukee Brewers' game outing. Both will take place in June.

WFI's golf outing will be held at the River Club of Mequon on Tuesday, June 16.

Registration and qualifying for the putting contest begins at 11 a.m. followed by lunch on the sun deck at 11:30 a.m.

The golf begins at 12:30 p.m. with a shotgun start. After a day of golf, everyone will gather at 5 p.m. for cocktails and the putting contest with cash prizes. Afterward, there will be dinner and cocktails.

The cost to participate is \$135 for golfers. Those who wish to just attend the dinner may do so for \$50 per person.

Ten days later, WFI will host a night out of watching the Milwaukee Brewers who are coming off a season in which they lost a Wild Card playoff game to the eventual World Series champions, the Washington Nationals. Currently they are tied for first place in the National League Central with a 0-0 record).

The game will feature the Brewers hosting the Pittsburgh Pirates on Friday, June 26. The first pitch is set for 7:10 p.m.

The cost per ticket is \$75, which will include a full buffet featuring bratwursts, hot dogs, sirloin burgers, chicken tenders, pasta salad, Wisconsin mac and cheese, mixed green salad, kettle chips, cookies and unlimited soft drinks.

However, each ticket comes with two complimentary beers per adult.

The buffet will begin 60 minutes prior to the first pitch and conclude two hours after the first pitch.

For more information on either event, contact the association at (414) 488-1692 or visit the association's website online at www.wiscleaners.com.

Later in the year, WFI will host its 2020 Dry Clean Expo at the WFI home office at 11801 W. Silver Spring Drive Suite 200 in Milwaukee.

It is scheduled to take place on Friday, Oct. 9, from 2 p.m. until 10 p.m. The association will change the format this year, opting to allow allied trades time to speak to members in lieu of having tabletop exhibition booths.



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SOUTH



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.

TCATA to mark 100 years at Hilton Head conference

Even as the Textile Care Allied Trades Association celebrates its 100th anniversary, it will continue “Creating a Path to the Future” for members during its annual convention.

This year, it will be held from April 29 to May 2 at the Westin Hilton Head Island Resort in South Carolina.

Leading the way in the educational sessions will be keynote speaker John DiJulius of the Di-Julius Group in Cleveland, OH, a business management consulta-

tion firm that utilizes a X-Commandment (Ten Commandment) methodology to providing a first class customer service.

In addition to being the author of four best-selling books, he has worked directly with companies such as the Ritz-Carlton, Starbucks, Nordstrom, Nestle, Marriott Hotel, Progressive Insurance, Harley Davidson, State Farm and Chik-fil-A.

Also on the schedule is Ralph Nappi, who will present a session on “Tools and Techniques for Cre-

ating Your Organization’s Strategic Plan.”

Nappi has 35 years of experience as an association executive with two Washington, DC-based trade associations. Currently, he is a corporate director, leading strategic planning sessions, providing coaching to senior executives and facilitating CEO peer groups.

Last year, TCATA developed its own strategic plan and will share it with attendees and Nappi will provide tips, techniques and templates to develop a successful strategy for your own business.

The sessions will each take place from 8 a.m. until noon on Friday and Saturday mornings.

When attendees are not learning how to prepare for the future, they are welcome to help TCATA celebrate its past. The association will host its 100th Gala Reception and Dinner at the Grand Ocean Terrace from 6 to 10 p.m. on Saturday evening.

It will hardly be the only social event, however; on Thursday TCATA will host a golf tournament and lunch at the Port Royal Golf Course from 8 a.m. until 2 p.m.

There will also be an opening reception in the Koi Pond Garden from 6 to 7 p.m. on Wednesday evening. Earlier in the day, TCATA will host its board meeting in the Camellia Boardroom from 1:30 to 4 p.m.

Thursday will also feature a guest program and lunch from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Mitchelville Room and Oceans and a Young Executives Reception from 5:30 to 6 p.m. at the Koi Pond Garden. That night, there will be a dinner event from 6 to 10 p.m. on the Ocean Front Deck.

The cost to attend the 2020 TCATA conference is \$775 for manufacturer members and \$700 for distributor members provided registration is completed prior to April 15. Guests only cost \$350 each before the deadline as well.

After April 15, the price for manufacturers goes up to \$825 and the price for distributor members is \$750 each. Guests may attend for \$400.

Attendees can register online at TCATA’s website, www.tcata.org, by clicking on the “Annual Conference” tab at the top of the page, then selecting “Registration and Hotel Information.”

That will lead to a page that has a link to the convention registration form, as well as a link to make reservations at the Westin Hilton Head Island Resort and Spa.

Also on TCATA’s site is a link to a video greeting from John Di-Julius that offers background details for his educational program during the conference.

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THE ROUTE PRO



BY JAMES PEUSTER

Changing the public's perception

After 18 years in the industry, I continue to realize that one of the daily struggles of our industry is that we haven't been able to raise our prices to the level they should be.

Interestingly enough, it's probably our own fault of why the public perceives drycleaning as it does.

Simply put, we are a blue collar industry in a white collar world.

From our store image, to

our vans, to the way we present ourselves as counter workers to even the owners, drycleaning is a working man's world servicing many who view us as out-of-date or antiquated.

Many drycleaners still have the old-fashioned signage that once was neon-lit while others still have "1 hour" in their name or storefront. The lobby of most stores is still the same as the '80s or '90s.

We also fail to represent the

very product we provide and I feel like some cleaners have simply forgotten where we used to be in the eyes of the consumer. Many cleaners have figured it out and have done their due diligence to modernize their image and make it presentable to the customer's eye.

We have gone through a lot in the past 30 years. The green movement has changed the way drycleaning is looked at and many have switched sol-

vents for that very reason.

Recycling has been introduced to our industry and environmental bags have replaced the way we present our product.

Social media marketing has replaced just having a simple website.

Smart phones have simplified the way consumers shop.

Now lockers have presented a self-service option that many feel isn't needed in our industry.

Wash-dry-fold is now the next great thing.

I say this because 20 years ago, many routes were done by a few cleaners as franchises who didn't clean their own clothes were hitting the road.

When I first made my presence as the Route Pro, many felt that I had no chance to go very far, but the need for routes grew as we did. I just got lucky.

The point is that drycleaning isn't always the most forward thinking industry as a whole and it caught up with many cleaners in the past 15 years.

Getting back to the image we portray to the consumers, I am still blown away by how many people are embarrassed to work at a drycleaner when asked by friends or peers.

People are shocked at a networking meeting when you introduce yourself as someone in the drycleaning industry.

It's a shame; we've been around for over 150 years and consumers feel that we have not progressed much. The time is now to change that perception.

It matters, believe me. Whenever I am on a van in slacks and a dress shirt, a consumer comes up to me as if I am the manager. Those who have worked hard to present their entire operation will tell you that it does pay off.

From store image to CSR dress codes, those little changes can make a big difference.

Probably the most important upgrade needed is the overall image of the van. The rolling billboard can either impress consumers or further exemplify why they look at us as outdated.

By not being willing to upgrade your image, you give the public the perception of not investing in your company or not caring. Any marketing company will tell you this, and in today's world it is about marketshare.

Don't be like other cleaners and look like you are stuck in the '60s or even the '90s. Do something about it. Your future may depend on it.

James Peuster is a consultant who specializes in route development, management and maintenance. He offers onsite consulting as well as ongoing coaching across the country. He also has cost groups to monitor route efficiency. For information, call (816) 739-2066 or visit www.theroutepro.com.



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SHIRT TALES



BY DON DESROSIERS

Evaluating the quality of your shirts

Just by reading the title of this month's article, you may have already formulated a firm opinion as to where you fit in.

I have clients that have done this well before I ever meet them. They usually have a number. That is, they have rated the shirts that come out of their plants on a scale of one to ten. Many of them are actually quite conservative with their evaluations. That is a whole lot better than those that claim to produce a perfect shirt.

It isn't likely that anyone can maintain perfection in this business. If you, at times produce a "perfect" shirt, do not use that as your "poster child." Doing so is the equivalent of wearing blinders.

A manager's job is to look for trouble, find it before a customer does and fix it before it becomes a customer service issue. The better your operation, the harder it will be to find problems.

Look for quality issues and call them "opportunities" rather than problems. They are truly opportunities. Opportunities to exercise your management skills. Opportunities to improve your business.

Someone much smarter than me once said; "Many of us shy away from opportunities because they are often dressed in overalls and look too much like work." Get over it.

I'll bet every one of you evaluates

The typical ways to evaluate quality are OK, but not foolproof. Many of you evaluate the quality of the shirts that you process by simply checking out the shirts that are your own personal shirts. If, time and again, you put on a shirt in

gross is that?

It is true that if you find a missing button on one of your own shirts, you can assume that others, too, have been missed. But you won't assume that every other shirt has a missing button.

Look for quality issues and call them opportunities... opportunities to exercise your management skills. Opportunities to improve your business.

your quality. And you probably do it a few times a week. Maybe every day.

As a result you probably have, in your mind as you read this, a number from 1 to 10. You may be saying, "My shirts are a 7." Most people say 7.

My mission this month is to get you to lower that number (sorry), with the hopes that you will work at the issues that you find and fix them. Ideally, you will lower your rating to a 6 within a couple of days and then raise it to an 8 within a week or two. In order to do that, I will need to show you a few new ways to check out your quality.

the morning and it is acceptable, or perhaps even perfect, you settle for that as your rating. Not a fair evaluation, I'm afraid.

If you are a typical size, like 15 or 16 and wear poly-cotton blend oxfords, you are not fairly evaluating your shirts. No offense, but anybody can do a great job on those.

Second, it is remarkably difficult to inspect a shirt while you nonchalantly take it off the hanger and put it on. My business is shirts and I have found myself wearing a shirt with a gross horizontal crease across the back. How

If you are about to wear a shirt that has a gross horizontal crease across the back, you will not assume that every other shirt has one.

So, given that, if your shirt is perfect do not make the mistake of assuming that every other shirt is perfect. Agree? Just for fun, though, when you send your own personal clothes through the plant, use an alias on the invoice. This will help prevent someone doing an extra-special job because they know that it's the boss' clothes.

The least effective way to analyze
Continued on page 30



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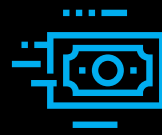
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Don Desrosiers

Evaluating the quality of your shirts

Continued from page 28
quality is to watch a presser press. If they are bound to do something inappropriate, it is least likely to happen when you're watching.

Find a spot in your plant where you can see a particular machine. Let's say the sleeve press. Ideally, from there you can see your presser, but your presser can't see you. If you suspect that this presser is, for example, hitting the stop button on the machine and thereby, not allowing the shirts to fully dry, he or she probably won't do it while you're watching, but you may catch it if they don't know that you are.

That is about all that you can accomplish as an eye witness.

So, then, what is a better way?

The grossest thing that can happen to a pressed shirt is that it wasn't allowed to fully dry. In order to produce a top quality shirt it must be completely dry. That doesn't mean 99 percent dry or 97 percent dry or "pretty close to dry." It means fully dry.

If you attempt to evaluate this at the plant, you will not succeed. When a shirt comes off the press, it will not feel

damp because it is hot. Furthermore, if there are damp areas, they may not be evident until later.

Here's why: Let's say that for whatever reason, your body press isn't fully drying the shirts. It could be that your pads are spent or that your equipment is defective or that your presser is shortening the cycle.

The part of the shirt that is most likely to be damp is the button-hole band. But at first

glance, it will appear perfectly dry, always. This is because the front surface of this thick band was, seconds ago, squeezed up against a very hot piece of steel. The surface dried by conduction.

It's going to be dry, at least for now, but if there is significant moisture on the back side of the button-hole band, the front side will act like a wick. It will soften and even wrinkle with time as the remaining moisture is absorbed into the

shirt. This shirt can easily get by your inspector because it will still look fine then.

Sometime later, however, it just may be an embarrassment to you. The best way to catch this is to look at a friend's shirt. Invite him to dinner. Look at his shirt during that time. You will see your product in a completely different perspective. You will see the cuffs, the collar, the sleeves, the front and the back of the shirt.

How do you stack up now?

Another way to do this and to get a bigger sampling is to go to your plant on a day that you're closed, maybe a Sunday. There won't be any distractions. Look at shirts that are already bagged and ready to be picked up. Look at all sizes of shirts. Promise not to be disappointed. Remember that this is an opportunity to improve your business. Also promise not to come in to work in a bad mood on Monday.

The biggest cause of occasional inferior work is doing too good of a job most of the time.

Huh? I bet you read that sentence twice. I did a workflow engineering job recently where the pressers did a remarkable job of pressing shirts. The shirts came off the presses quickly and as close to perfect as I have seen. There were very few touch-ups required.

After I had spent a few days there, the owner asked me to rate his shirts on a scale of 1 to 10. I said a 7.

Seven? The shirts were generally perfect. The reason that I scored him that low (and I don't think that 7 is bad at all), is because the inspectors were so used to seeing shirts that didn't need touch-up that their job had become too, ah... mechanical.

Shirt after shirt after shirt was excellent. When a really bad one came along, it was missed. The inspectors had begun to assume perfection.

Assume. Don't you just hate that word? Surely the remedy is not to do a poorer shirt right off the presses. The remedy is supervise, supervise, supervise. Don't expect what you don't inspect.

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

The remedy is to supervise, supervise, supervise. Don't expect what you don't inspect



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NORTHEAST

NEFA leads battle to repeal state sales tax on drycleaning

In Connecticut, drycleaning and laundry services are no longer exempt from paying sales tax. The North Eastern Fabricare Association is seeking to change that.

Approved in late August of last year, the policy issued by the Connecticut Department of Revenue Services went into effect on Jan. 1, bringing about several changes to the sales tax law, which, among other things, will include some services that previously did not have to pay any sale tax, including drycleaning and laundry.

The sales tax rate on those services is now 6.35 percent.

NEFA has been fighting against the sales tax expansion since it was initially proposed. The association lost the battle, but has not given up.

Now, NEFA is working alongside members of the Connecticut Retail Merchants Association (CRMA) and the Greater Hartford Laundry and Drycleaners Association (HCDLA) to try and repeal it.

In a joint letter from NEFA and CRMA addressed to state legislators, both groups cited that they believe the sales tax expansion may do more harm than good.

Among other things, the groups believe it will have an adverse effect on consumers, considering it is a double tax since they have already paid sales tax when purchasing the clothes. Thus, the new tax "equates to paying an additional tax on a piece of clothing EVERY TIME a consumer has it cleaned."

NEFA and CRMA also cited that there are currently more than 6,000 people employed in Connecticut contributing to the state's economy who stand to be affected, as well as work professionals from all over the state.

In the letter, the associations note that "Industry estimates show that 85 percent of drycleaner garments are worn to work and 90 percent of laundry is for shirts and home use items that are a matter of hygienic necessity. In fact, many garments purchased by consumers today have to be professionally cleaned, there is no substitute."

In an interview in December, Nick Dimaio who owns and operates Mercury Cleaners of Hartford, told News8 that he believes the sales tax will turn a necessary service into a luxury.

In the same story, Jake Battison, owner of The Wash Tub in Hartford, said the tax is especially burdensome on wash service customers. "It's not a sales tax because we're really not selling anything," he emphasized.

The sales tax expansion also could potentially impact public safety since it also applies to the uniform rental and service industry, which provides uniforms and

safety garments for the public.

Now, NEFA, CRMA and HCDLA are seeking electronic signatures to the letter and are asking drycleaners and launderers to sign the letter and reach out to their customers to have them sign it as well since they will essentially have to pay it.

To that end, NEFA members can contact the association or visit their website at www.nefa.org for more information on how to help. The site includes printable signature forms for those who wish to

assist the repeal effort.

Those who want to become involved in the fight can also contact CRMA by phone (860) 527-1044 or through email correspondence at cathy@crmaonline.com.

Gov. Ned Lamont and other lawmakers adopted a new two-year budget that is based on the new tax expansions bringing in \$25 million during their first full year, a figure highly contested by opponents who believe it to be a very high estimate.



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KEEP IT LEGAL



BY FRANK KOLLMAN

Dealing with new salary history laws

A common question to ask during a job interview is, “How much are you currently making?” Employment applications frequently ask for a list of former employers with wage information.

If applicants have a history of making more money than you are willing to pay, that is helpful information in deciding whether the interview should take place at all.

If applicants have a history of making less, this helps you decide how much you need to offer to get the person to accept the job.

Many experts believe that asking for salary history information perpetuates discriminatory pay practices, especially those based on gender. If new employees are paid based on prior salary history, and they were underpaid by their former employers because they were women, their pay will continue to be based on unlawful sex discrimination.

That’s the argument, and it has some validity.

In several states, it is now illegal to (1) ask applicants for salary history and (2) rely on salary history in determining

what to pay the employee. Several local governments, like the City of Philadelphia, have adopted similar laws. A federal appeals court recently

Oregon. Vermont. The following states have salary history laws apply to state agencies, but that could

much they were paid in prior jobs. Then again, it would not hurt to come up with a fair compensation package in the

Regardless of these laws, there is still the Equal Pay Act (EPA) to consider. Women doing the same job as men cannot be paid less, unless the lower

Ask about salary expectations, rather than salary history. You may just decide to determine what a job salary is and merely tell applicants: “This is what the job pays.”

dissolved an injunction prohibiting Philadelphia from enforcing its “salary history” law, leaving open the question whether such laws violate other constitutional rights, such as free speech.

As of now, there is no federal salary history ban in place, but it is certainly high on the agenda in anti-business political circles.

Currently, the following states have salary history bans that affect all employers:

- California.
- Colorado (starting 2021).
- Connecticut.
- Delaware.
- Hawaii.
- Illinois.
- Massachusetts.
- New Jersey.

mean that it is only a matter of time before the practice is prohibited in the private sector.

- Michigan.
- New York.
- North Carolina.
- Pennsylvania.

Some cities — like Philadelphia — also have salary history laws that prevent all employers from asking salary history questions. Atlanta, Louisville, and New York City are examples.

Keeping in mind that salary history laws are here to stay, and possibly coming to your state or the entire country if Congress gets into the act, how can you prepare?

Perhaps you should start now asking applicants how much they want, not how

first place and avoid the questions altogether.

Whether you decide to ask salary expectation questions or not, you should do some research to come up with a fair compensation package.

Find out what your competitors pay, usually by looking at salary surveys conducted by trade associations.

Check the “help wanted” ads to see if your stated salary is competitive. Consider how education, skill, experience, and other factors affect the value of the employee and adjust accordingly.

What you pay current employees is a big factor as well. You do not want to hire new employees making more than current employees, even if you naively think that no one will ever find out.

Remember, there are no secrets in the workplace, except perhaps from the owner. The National Labor Relations Act makes it illegal to prohibit employees from discussing wages, or discipline them if they do. In fact, telling an employee not to discuss her pay with other employees is illegal under the act.

In researching wages, consider using government resources. The Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics is a good resource, as are social media sites. There is a wealth of information on the Internet.

pay is based on a factor other than sex. Some of those factors can include seniority, work performance, skills, and other objective measures.

In some states, however, their EPA equivalents make it even harder to show that the difference in pay was based on a “factor other than sex.”

Making wage decisions based on salary history, if the same for men and women, is a “factor other than sex” under federal law, but it is a dangerous factor if it ends up with equally-skilled women being paid less than men (or worse, greater-skilled women being paid less than men).

My recommendation is to start asking about salary expectations, rather than salary history. You may just decide to determine what a job salary is and merely tell applicants: “This is what the job pays.”

In the end, avoid paying women less than men for the same job, unless you could convince a federal judge (male and female) that the wage difference is, in fact, based on a factor other than sex.

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

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Islip Drive-In Drycleaning purchased a second 40-lb. Realstar cleaning machine through Metro Drycleaning Equipment in Long Island, NY. Pictured from left are Danny Tran, the owner, Vincent Gebbia of Metro, Tom, the general manager, and Frank Gebbia of Metro.

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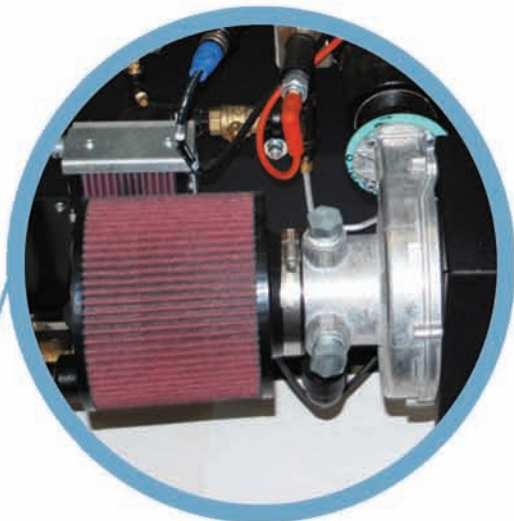
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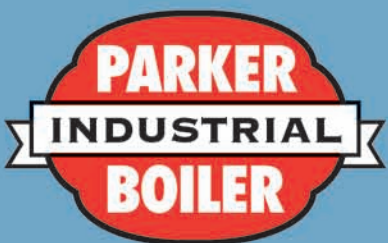
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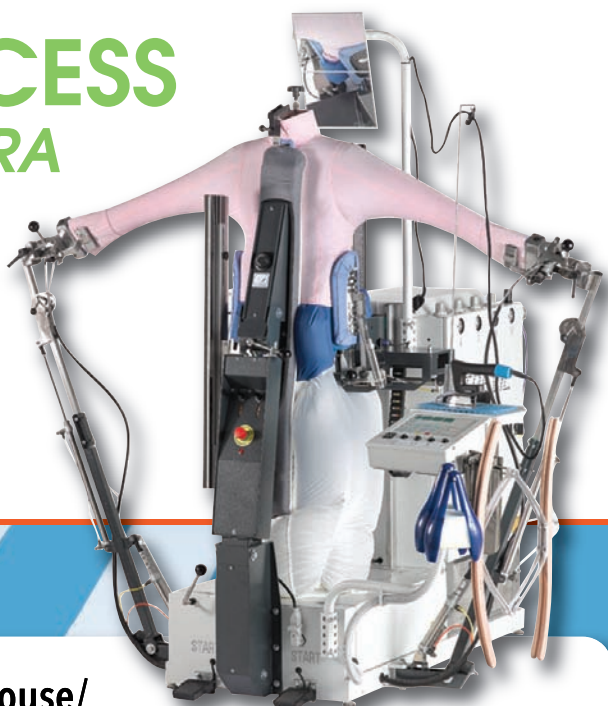
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