



National Clothesline

November 2020

Volume 62 Number 2

www.natclo.com

Fall Fest releases full schedule

For less than the cost of many airline tickets, the inaugural Fall Fest EXPO will present a busy week full of live virtual workshops, demonstrations and presentations designed to improve several aspects of your business and provide vital training for your entire staff.

The event is the brainchild of the North East Fabricare Association, the Pennsylvania and Delaware Cleaners Association and the South Eastern Fabricare Association. It will take place from 2 to 6 p.m. EST daily, Nov. 9 to 13.

The cost to register is \$359 per DLI member plant, which includes unlimited attendees from your plant. Non-members must pay \$599 each, but that includes a three-month Silver DLI membership.

Even when the event concludes, video recordings of the sessions and added content will be available for a minimum of three months to anyone who registered for the event.

The schedule for the 2020 Fall Fest EXPO will focus on a different theme each day. The first day of the event, Monday, Nov. 9, will begin with an introduction of the participating vendors.

Afterward, the first session will be called "Technology Tips to Drive Personal Productivity" by Beth Z, a.k.a.

Beth Z



Chris Kuehl



Trudy Adams





Peter Blake



Frank Kollman



Mark Albrecht



James Peuster



"Your Nerdy Best Friend," a renowned productivity expert. It will be followed by a "State of the Industry Fireside Chat" that will feature Larry Fish from Pier Cleaners, Wash Respress from Southside Cleaners and other key industry leaders.

It will examine sales trends, diversification and employee relations and be moderated by Peter Blake, executive director of NEFA, SEFA, MAC and CCA.

The day, and the four that follow, will all conclude with a daily recap and open

discussion from 5 to 6 p.m.

Tuesday will be devoted to business development with a program on "Harnessing the Power of Your POS" featuring SPOT POS, SMRT Systems and Fabricare Manager.

In addition to learning about ways to utilize your computer system to increase business, the discussion will be followed by breakout sessions from each company that will provide more detailed and targeted instruction.

"Marketing and Promotion: Lessons Learned During a Pandemic" will take place later that day. It will be a broad-based session on making marketing work with guidance coming from David Coyle of Maverick Marketing, Lou D'Autorio of Sage Drycleaning and Peter Blake.

Team building and behind the counter will be areas of emphasis on Wednesday, when Trudy Adams of Blue Egg Consulting presents "Achieving Legendary Customer Service in a New Era."

She will cover scripting, handling customers empowerment and diffusing difficult situations and will be followed by breakout sessions for role-playing exercises. Later that day, Route Pros James Peuster and Mark Albrecht will explore

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EPA residential perc ban begins next month

It was close to 15 years ago when the EPA established regulations to ban all perc drycleaning facilities that are co-located in residential buildings in the distant future.

That distant future arrives next month. As of Dec. 21, 2020, the ban begins and it stands to affect New York cleaners the most. According to the New York Department of Environmental Conservation, their records indicate there are 233 perc co-located residential cleaners in the state (meaning there is an apartment on the premises) and about 75% of those (175)

are located in one of the five boroughs of New York City.

Many drycleaners with locations subject to the ban have converted those to drop stores or have closed them down altogether. According to the NY DEC, most are choosing to do this; otherwise, they have the option to install an approved alternative solvent replacement.

For those doing so with machines that operate Class IIIA alternative solvents in New York City, they face additional complications; the New York City Fire Department requires an automatic sprinkler

system to be installed on the premises. These systems can be very expensive and are not necessarily a financially feasible option for those who are renting and not guaranteed a renewed lease.

"A full sprinkler system in New York City — depending on what your water line was — you're looking at anywhere from a \$70,000 to \$100,000 investment," noted Nora Nealis, executive director for the National Cleaners Association.

With new machine costs and permit fees factored in, that could put you in the ballpark of a \$200,000 investment. How-

ever, NCA made progress with the NYFD over time to see if a less costly solution could be found.

"For the past 15 years, NCA's been going round robin with the fire department in New York trying to get them to adjust their requirements for installations of Class III machine," Nealis noted. "As of August of this year, the fire department finally came around and prescribed the conditions under which they would issue a variance for existing cleaners."

The resulting reduced requirements

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The Cowboy Cleaner rides away

He was a remarkable man who positively influenced the drycleaning industry for many years, but now that Kenney Slatten has passed on he leaves behind a vacuum that will be hard to fill.

He was often described as a happy and kind individual and he was always instantly recognizable as the "Cowboy Cleaner," a clever marketing technique that drew on his childhood growing up on a ranch in Houston, TX. He always wore his signature cowboy hat and a disarming smile.

Slatten followed in the footsteps of the previous generations of his family when he married into a family drycleaning business in Houston in 1970. "It was a large outfit in Houston," he told this publication in November of 1996. "I went on to own a plant seven years in Houston. That was my beginning on my own."

Later in his career he made the transition to become one of the industry's leading consultants.

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Kenney Slatten



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Miscommunication and a host of work-related labor law problems have not taken the pandemic off.
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You can blame Covid for your current woes or take steps to grow your business before its too late.



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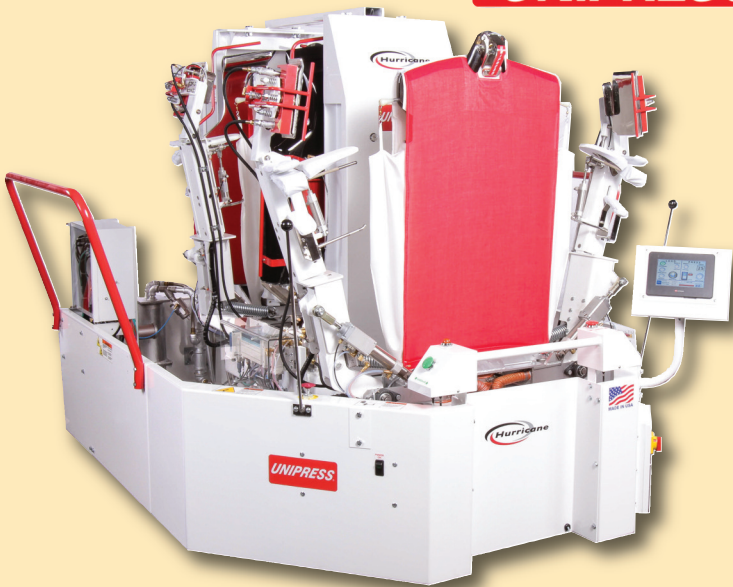


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Volume 62 Number 2

Catching up on the virtual learning curve

The year was 1996 and the Cowboy Cleaner was concerned. During a profile interview in this publication, Kenney Slatten believed the drycleaning industry was in danger of drifting apart too much. Cleaners were seeing lots of volume, Clean Show attendance kept growing and so much success was resulting in complacency, a dangerous place to find yourself as an entrepreneur.

“I think we’re not hungry,” he said. “People need to get a little hungrier, a little more serious about their business. We’ve kind of lost sight of the brotherhood. It’s going to take something to knock us to the knees” in order to wake the industry up.

He was not wrong. Fast forward through a recession in the late 2000s and a pandemic a little over a decade later, and the industry is hardly recognizable from the same one of late last century.

Almost a quarter of a century later, and the Cowboy Cleaner was still concerned. That was why he was so popular in this industry; he cared so much about it. Slatten was an optimist, to be sure, but also a realist. In one of his final columns for *Cleaner & Launderer* a few months ago, he emphasized a dire need for the industry to band together. “Despite some people in our industry thinking they don’t need our industry associations, we really do need the expert advice of these fine trainers, educators and experts at DLI. Be a member and utilize their services. Being a tight nit industry, we all need to band together for a unified front.”

In a time when social distancing precludes getting together in person for large meetings and conventions, that is not always so easy. However, like most people during these Covid times, drycleaners are adapting and the truth is, technology allows the industry to communicate quickly and easier than ever. And, boy has it.

For months now, industry associations have been hosting frequent meetings so cleaners can advise each other through tough times and have access to information about the best practices, services and strategies that are working right now. The Drycleaning and Laundry Institute have offered webinars, training programs and informative meetings so the industry does not miss a beat educationally.

While trade shows and meetings will likely return in full force someday in the future, getting through the present will lean heavily on Zoom, Microsoft Teams and cell phones.

Fortunately, much of the industry has adapted accordingly and have tried to engage the drycleaning public in positive ways. Recently, we have also seen two installments of America Best Cleaners’ Leadership Forum series, which have given

us a glimpse of what leaders from all aspects of the industry have faced in recent months, from equipment makers dealing with the logistical problems of cargo shipments coming from overseas to drycleaning plants trying creative ways to keep staff employed.

Without question, there was plenty of valuable information there to help your business, and many more are forthcoming (4 p.m. EST on the 2nd Wednesday of the month). Perhaps the most interesting byproduct of all of these efforts is that it allows us to see and hear from people we normally only can read about. In some ways, it has drawn the industry closer than ever even —ironic in a time when we all cannot meet face-to-face.

Perhaps we’ll be able to again next year at the Clean Show, but that seems like a lifetime away during the current hostile economic climate. The latest industry offering may very well help drycleaners stay in business that long... and more. Make no mistake, the Fall Fest EXPO offered by the South Eastern Fabricare Association, the Pennsylvania and Delaware Cleaners Association and the North East Fabricare Association has been prepared with the goal of keeping drycleaners open and helping them pivot to a better position for success.

The weeklong event will include about 20 hours of educational programming that will focus on several major themes: business development, team building, production and a forecast of the future. For essentially the price of an airline ticket, but without the added anxiety of being in a small enclosed space with a face mask on, registrants can let their entire plant take part in the training sessions. Too busy? No problem. Videos of the programs will be available for viewing for a minimum of three months afterwards.

Finally, we would be remiss if we did not mention our own free webinar coming on Dec. 9 (see page 10). As a product of the times, many cleaners have contacted us asking questions about buying/selling plants. Some want out; some want to grow. All want more information, so we responded. Hopefully, the industry will respond back. With so many “brought to their knees” recently, it’s hard to imagine cleaners will be complacent at this time. As the late, great, Kenney Slatten once noted: “I once thought it was unnecessary to mingle with other drycleaners back in the 60’s and 70’s. I eventually realized I was kidding myself. I was not so brilliant that I could not learn something from others. Think of it this way, ‘If learning is by experience only, then your rate of learning will be quite slow.’”

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Check out additional coverage at www.natclo.com including highlights from the second Leadership Forum and a touching tribute to Kenney Slatten by Lynnette Watterson.

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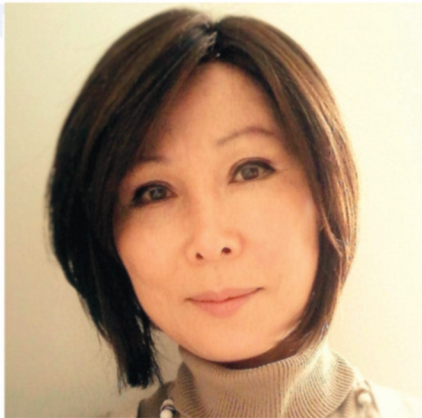


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Reclaiming a name

Looking at an old photograph of his family's drycleaning business, Kell Cleaners of Fort Worth, TX, Kevin Kell noted that it was taken very early in the long history that dates back to 1932 when the business first opened.

"The prices we have on the picture are suits were 35 cents, dresses were 35 cents and hats were 50 cents," he recalled. "Hats were a big thing. Everybody had to have a hat. If you look at some of the old sporting events, everybody wore a hat to the game — like a fedora. Even the ladies had their hats. Things have certainly changed since then."

When Tom and Oleta Kell first opened the business, the start-up costs were also fairly low.

"I always remember my grandmother told me she started the business with a five dollar gold piece right then," Kevin said. "I think we're the oldest and longest continuous running family drycleaners in Fort Worth."

The original store was located in Handley, TX, but the family expanded to Arlington in the 1950s and continued growing.

"I think one of the first big projects they had was they bought a parking lot from the bank," Kevin noted. "That gave them the ability to expand the operation when they got the room for the parking lot. Gradually, little by little, they started expanding the plant to include both drycleaning and laundry services."

Tom and Oleta's son, Jack, who graduated from Texas Christian University in 1960, worked in the business from the ground up.

"He came in, in the 1960s, and he kind of dove right in because my grandfather retired in the late 1960s. My grandmother was still active probably until about 1980," Kevin said. "So, she remained and my father and her ran four locations at that point."

That's when the story takes a Texas-sized twist.

When Jack was ready to retire, Kent and Kevin were not ready to take over. Both had recently graduated from Texas Christian University and the ultimate decision was to keep the laundry side of the business, which they would run.

Meanwhile, Kell Cleaners, which had built up a strong reputation and legacy for 55 years, was sold to someone else. This worked out well for Kevin and Kent in one way because they felt they were no longer on the best side of town for the business. In 1989, they bought a store on the west side of Fort Worth where they reasoned the business would flourish.

"We called it Twin Kell Cleaners, and the reason we called it that was because we had to differentiate ourselves between us and Kell Cleaners," Kevin noted.

By that time, the Kell Cleaners name had taken a bit of a hit. The couple who bought the business learned why adding new locations in the drycleaning business is a cautious and precise balancing act.

"They were good people. I think they just got in a little over their head because they went too fast," Kevin said.

"I think within a couple of years they had like 40 different drop stores and the problem they were having — they had some good stores and some bad stores — but they were trying to mass produce at one central plant and they started having a lot of quality and service issues."

When Kevin and Kent started Twin

wait five years to guide him; longtime Kell Cleaners cleaner Mary Pena quit once her no-compete contract came up with Kell Cleaner and promptly joined Twin Kell.

"I was just amazed at how she could remove stains safely," Kevin recalled. "The biggest thing I probably learned from her was the fact that she always

which gave us a couple of months of leeway, probably about three months of leeway to persevere through more difficult financial times," he continued, adding that his company was "blessed" to not have to lay anybody off. "We've had to cut some hours back, but most of them have been supplemented by the extra wages that they're getting



Kell, they made the same promise that both family generations before them learned: there is no substitute for quality and service.

Ironically, the business that the twin Kells bought had been owned by a pair of brothers. Unfortunately, they didn't quite see eye to eye.

"They were having their own problems with each other," he added. "One was more of a hands-on type of operator. The other one was more of the financial supporter in the background. They were having some conflicts about how the business should be run, so we walked into a really good situation."

The Kell twins have been careful to avoid the same pitfalls that have befallen other cleaners. At the right time, they opened a second location in the Colleyville area. Kent oversees that location while Kevin manages things in Fort Worth.

"I think the fact that me and my brother worked really well together... I think that's probably the largest component I could attribute. We each had kind of different specialties," Kevin noted. "When we started the business, we only had like six or seven employees. So, we were working back then about a 60-hour week. He was more up front with the customers and in the office. He was more into the figures and analytics. I was in the back and I kind of always had an interest of actually working with clothes."

While the fledgling business began to find its footing and build a new reputation from scratch, the original Kell Cleaners continued to struggle. It eventually closed down a handful of years back. The Kells were determined to avoid the same fate.

In an effort to try to attain the best quality possible, Kevin pursued a cleaning education and he credits industry legends Stan Caplan and Norm Oehlke as being chief influences that helped him become a better spotter and cleaner. His best tutor, though, had to

went from step one to step number two. She never jumped from one to seven, or one to eight. So, I learned that patience is what it takes. Even though it may take you more time and customers may be pushing you to try to get the garment back, you have to learn there are no shortcuts in stain removal."

For the third generation Kell family in the drycleaning industry, patience has often been their biggest strength. They didn't rush to buy a business before they were ready, and they won't rush to return clothes unless they are ready to wear.

Today, more patience may be required with volume numbers still lingering somewhere near 60% for the business from its usual numbers in previous years.

"We peaked out in about 2008, probably like a lot of other drycleaners around the time," Kevin said. "We were running almost to maximum capacity where we wouldn't compromise the work. We did not want to compromise the quality."

But, once the housing bubble burst, the overall production numbers began to reverse.

"After a few years of moderate decreases, then we began to pick up again to where we were almost up to the 2008 level last year," he added. "Then, of course, Covid hit and put us in a different situation."

So far, the Kell twins have let customers dictate how they will adapt during the pandemic.

"With Covid, everybody got a little bit sensitive when it comes to their bedding and their kitchen and dining room tablecloths and things like that," Kevin explained. "They want to make sure that stuff is clean. We've had to adapt a little bit, market a little more toward that to kind of fill the void we have."

"Fortunately, we did get help from the PPP [Paycheck Protection Program]

from the Texas Workforce Commission."

These days, sporting events still feature fans wearing hats (at least of the baseball variety), but nobody dresses up anymore. In fact, in the wake of Covid, there are hardly any fans in attendance.

Recently, Kevin watched his son, Griffin, play a road game for the Texas Christian University football team at the University of Texas stadium, home of the #9 Longhorns at the time. It was a unique experience.

"It was pretty interesting. Of course, they had reduced capacity. I think they are at about 25%," he recalled. "You can get in and out of the stadium a lot easier with 25,000 than you can with 100,000."

In a time with few perks, it was nice to be able to move with a cluster of TCU fans to a much better section.

"We sat right smack dab on the 40-yard line, about 50 rows up — tremendous seats that we would never have had the luxury of getting in a normal situation," he said.

But then, nothing was normal at that game. As it turned out, the visiting TCU underdogs upset the top ten team with a hard fought 33 to 31 win.

Griffin Kell scored 15 of those points, completing three extra points and four field goals (27 yards, 28 yards, 32 yards and 49 yards).

"That was probably the best game in his career," Kevin added. "We were fortunate to be able to go down there and witness that. It just so happened he put it all together that one game. We're very proud of him."

Such good days seem to be outnumbered by the tough ones this year, but the Kell Twins have learned that patience usually pays off. If not, they can always fall back on other strengths.

"When we start compromising quality and service then it's time for us to get out of this business," he noted. "It's all about quality and service."

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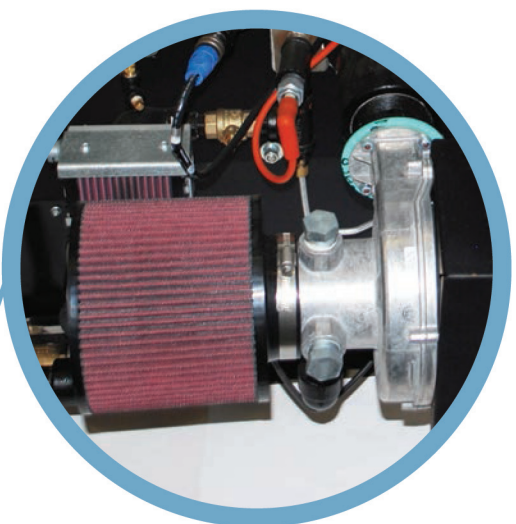
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BY DAN EISEN

Breaking down chemical reactions

If you understand true chemical action the procedures you undertake for stain removal will be easier and more proficient. Chemical action is the changing of the properties of the stain to make it either invisible or water soluble. Before we start understanding chemical action, why don't we take a little quiz to test our knowledge of chemicals.

If I put sugar in water, is that a chemical action?

Answer: No. You are only changing the physical state of the sugar, but chemically it still remains the same sugar. This is an example of wetside solvent action.

Is the strongest acid battery acid or the acid found in the human digestive system?

Answer: The digestive system contains a stronger acid, which is hydrochloric acid while battery acid, which is sulfuric, is slightly weaker.

Which is stronger – acids used in tannin formulas for removal of citrus stains or acids found in citrus stains?

Answer: About the same.

Which is more likely to cause color loss on a rayon and acetate fabric, either acetic acid (33%) or hydroflu-

oric (rust remover)?

Answer: Acetic acid.

Let's start. In order to be a chemical it must be soluble in water and acid or an alkali. This means that drycleaning solvents, amyl acetate and volatile dry solvents which are not soluble in water and therefore cannot be termed chemicals. You may argue this but we need this definition to explain how chemicals work in spotting.

Acid Facts

Acids are defined as chemicals that release hydrogen ions in the presence of water. The pH, or potential of hydrogen, measures the strengths of the acids. Any number under seven means that the substance is acid in nature.

Acids are used for tannin stains, inks, dyes and medicines. Acids neutralize alkali. Alkali are capable of causing color change on fabrics. Acids neutralize the alkali which in most cases can restore the color.

Heat accelerates all chemicals which means a relatively safe acid can become much stronger and dangerous when heated.

Acid Used for Spotting

Tannin formulas are prepared formulas consisting of a mild acid mixed with a wetside lubricant. Tannin formulas are usually safe to fabrics and are not as strong as most acids used in its pure chemical state.

Acetic Acid has a strong relationship to vinegar. Vinegar is produced through the action of bacteria on yeast fermented brews. Vinegar can be made of any plant that can be fermented to form alcohol, which is subsequently converted to acetic acid. Acetic acid is more effective than tannin formulas on some tannin stains such as wine and liquor. Some people do not like using acetic acid because of its odor. Add a little neutral lubricant to the acetic acid and the odor problem is solved. When using acetic acid remember to order it at 28%. It is also advisable to dilute this down with a little water to bring the concentration to about 20%. Acetic acid may be safe and used as a general spotting agent but when it is heated it may affect acetate fabrics. Besides using tannin formulas learn to add acetic acid as an additional

spotting agent.

Oxalic Acid is a useful acid in removing many types of tannin stains, especially berry, cherry and wine. It is also effective on rust and metallic stains. It is also a mild reducing agent which makes it effective on dye stains. It is considered a more aggressive chemical and should be tested for the safety of dyes on fabrics. You can order oxalic acid from your jobber in crystal form and mix with 20 parts water. Laidlaw Chemical Co. sells oxalic acid as a rust remover. The product is called Rustaid and is already mixed so it makes it easier to use.

General Formula is a mixture of a lubricant, alcohol, and a mild acid. It is very effective on ink stains and dye but not generally very effective on other tannin stains. Be careful using it because the alcohol content may be dangerous to the dye on some fabrics. General formula should not be used if the stain is protein or albuminous in nature. The alcohol will set these type of stains.

Acid Used for Spotting

Rust Remover is hydrofluoric acid. This is effective not only on rust stains but on many types of tannin stains. Rinsing is difficult and I have found that the best way to flush and neutralize rust remover is to use a neutral lubricant or a protein formula. This will not only aid in removing it from the fabric but it will neutralize any trace of the rust remover. Keep rust remover away from metallic fabrics, metallic ornaments and glass. It is also advisable to test the safety of this acid before using on the fabric.

Alkali Facts

Alkalis release hydroxyl in the presence of water. Alkalis are effective on protein and albuminous stains. It is also effective as an aid in removing ground-in soil. It will neutralize color change caused by an acid. The pH of alkalis are measured in numbers higher than seven.

Alkalis Used for Spotting

Ready-made protein formulas are mixed with a mild alkali and a lubricant. It is relatively safe and effective, but should be tested on wools and silks.

Ammonia (26) is used for spotting protein and albuminous stains. It is stronger and more aggressive than ready-made protein formulas.

The dyes on silks and wools must be carefully tested.

Spotting Tannin Stains

Tannin stains are vegetable or are obtained from plant sources. Examples of tannin stains are coffee, tea, liquor, wine and soft drinks. Tannin stains respond best to acids. Never use alkalis or protein formula on tannin stains because the stain will become set and often impossible to remove.

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Flush.
Acid.
Flush.
Feather.

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Mechanical Action.
Flush.
Protein Formula.
Mechanical Action.
Flush.
Ammonia Plus Neutral Lubricant.
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Flush.
Digest – If stain is stiff.
Flush.
Peroxide (3%) + Ammonia
Test Fabric.
Heat.
Flush.
Acid.
Flush.
Feather.

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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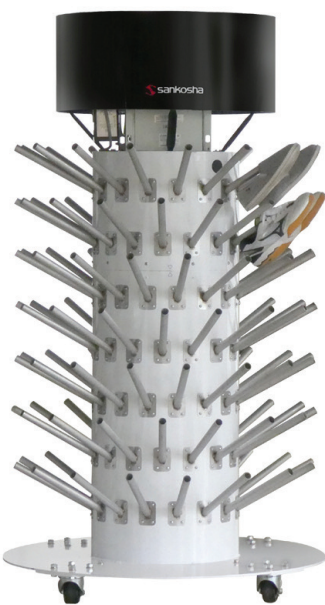
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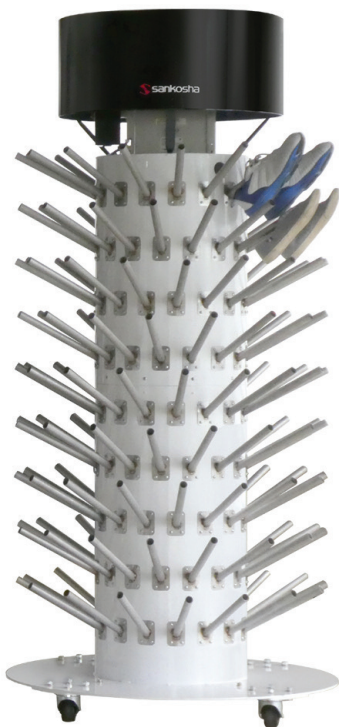
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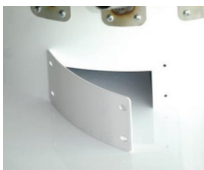
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Full schedule for Fall Fest EXPO

Continued from page 1
“Creating a Sales Culture to Enhance Route Development in 2020 and Beyond.”
There will also be time for route drivers to discuss their 2020 success stories and best practices, and Peuster and Albrecht will discuss how you can be getting more from your staff and increasing trends and spends.
Thursday will spotlight production, including “Tips on Finishing and Maintenance Best Practices” to begin the day.

There will be demonstrations by Sankosha USA, Forenta, LP and other key manufacturers followed by videos and a live Q&A session.
Next up will be “Enhancing Cleaning Performance and Spotting Demonstrations” from various leading chemical and detergent allied trades.
On the final day of the Fall Fest EXPO, there will be time dedicated to gaze at the future.
Chris Kuehl, an economist with Armada Business Intelligence, will begin with the ques-

tion “The Election is Over — Where Do We Go From Here?” Kuehl is a highly-sought speaker for his insightful economic forecasts and this has been dubbed as a can’t-miss event.
Afterward, a panel of experts will take part in a fireside chat on “Where Does the Industry Go From Here?” featuring DLI CEO Mary Scalco, Riaz Chathuani of Polo Cleaners, Frank Kollman, attorney of Kollman & Saucier PA, and more. It will be moderated by Peter Blake and PDCA Co-Executive Director Leslie

Schaeffer.
Later, there will be a Fall Fest EXPO Recap and Closing Session with Kathy Benzinger of Benzinger’s Cleaners, Mark Pollock of Signature Cleaners, Don Holoczek of Crown Cleaners, Rhonda Eysel of MasterKleen and Larry Fish of Pier Cleaners.
From 5 to 6 p.m., there will be time set aside for a socially-distant virtual cocktail reception and social hour.
For more information or to register, contact Peter Blake at (617) 791-0128 or Leslie Scha-

ffer at Leslie@pdclean.org, (215) 830-8495.
Updates on the event can be found on sponsors’ websites: nefabricare.com, pdclean.org and sefa.org.

Residential perc ban approaches

Continued from page 1
still called for fire-rated construction and other “i dotting and t crossing” measure, emphasized Nealis, including the placement of two sprinkler heads over the machine.

“Now, this is a big change because the two heads might cost them \$5,000, and it makes the changeover to a Class III machine within the realm of possibilities,” Nealis added.
Even so, any extra costs hurt New York cleaners who are still struggling with falling volume in the wake of COVID-19. Nealis advises those who wish to change machines to apply for a variance as soon as possible.
Bureaucracy moves even slower during a pandemic and the application process could take a while.

Still, those who have applied prior to the deadline will demonstrate a show of good faith to achieve compliance. Hopefully, inspectors will feel this way.

“If I were a cleaner, I would reach out to an architect or an engineer,” Nealis explained. “I would prepare a variance application. I would put it in and get the ball rolling.”
She also added that cleaners should make sure the new machine has an ETL label stating that it meets the city’s fire code.
As for the application for variances, a big reason they are even possible right now is because of the actions of Dennis Ahn of National Waste Clean of South Plainfield, NJ. He helped create the first variance for Sam’s Cleaners of Brooklyn.

“It was over a year ago I submitted the variance for Sam’s Cleaners,” he said, noting it didn’t get approved until Aug. 24 of this year. “We were the foundation of variance approvals. That’s why it took so long.”
“The industry needs to stay in business,” Ahn added. “If I can help keep a few more in business by doing this, then my hard work has paid off.”

For more information about the variance process for sprinkler systems with the NYFD, a helpful resource is located at <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/fdny/codes/reference/reference.page> with links to the New York City Fire Code and a pdf on “Modification of Fire Sprinkler Requirement for Dry Cleaning Establishments Replacing Perchloroethylene Equipment” that contains FAQs for those seeking more information about the variance process.

The Cowboy Cleaner rides away

Continued from page 1
He was also one of the first instructors for the California Air Resources Board’s state certification for drycleaners.
He also regularly assisted the industry by writing hundreds of columns as a regular contributor to *Cleaner & Launderer* and served as the executive director of the Western States Drycleaners and Laundry Association for almost 15 years.
He impacted many drycleaners over the years and they re-

sponded in kind with kindness as news of his health deteriorating became known.
Slatten suffered from a brain tumor that was causing blindness and headaches, as well as from multiple myeloma. He was being treated at M.D. Anderson in Phoenix, AZ.
In his final column that he dictated to Jeff Schwarz of A.L. Wilson — just six days before he passed away on Oct. 15 — he said he was very touched by the response.

“I have gotten so many cards, letters and e-mails from people all over this country,” he wrote. “Some people who I might only see once a year at a show or convention, have take the time to write! Some days the mailbox is so full I have Janet (Kenney’s wife) read ‘em to me.”
Schwarz marveled at the way Slatten dealt with his illness. “Kenney always took his profession seriously, although he seldom took himself seriously. Never one to ask for sympathy

or pity for hands he had been dealt,” he wrote.
Slatten remained upbeat even when delivering his final message to the public: “*My wagon is packed and the horses are chomping at the bit... these boots will take one last slow walk to the wagon and as the ‘Cowboy Cleaner’ rides into the sunset for the last time, with a tip of the Stetson and a tear in my eye, this cowboy says... Goodbye. God willing we will meet up yonder in the sky Lord, in the sky.*”

Cleaning up in the real estate market

Some cleaners are selling their plants, trying to get out of the industry during hostile economic times, while others are looking to buy in order to expand in hopes of a stronger future.
Those who fall in either group have a lot of questions at this time, so *National Clothesline* has teamed up with Enviroforensics to help drycleaners make sound decisions during difficult times.
As property activity has

heated up recently, that means numerous Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessments (ESA) will need to be conducted.
Those who wish to learn more about the process will have an opportunity during a session scheduled for 3 p.m. EST on Wednesday, December 9.
The webinar, which is free to the public, will feature a panel of six experts, including Dru Shields, director of drycleaner accounts from Enviroforensics

and company partner David Hoffman.
They will be joined by Kristen Brown, director of operations for Policy Find, John M. Scagnelli, partner at Scarinci Hollenback LLP, Ted A. Warpin-ski, shareholder at Davis Kuelthau, and M. Andrew Skwierawski, senior attorney at Davis Kuelthau LLP.
Some of the topics the group will focus on will range from how to maximize real estate value to how insurance archeol-

ogy can locate historical insurance policies that can be used as funds to pay for environmental investigations as well as remediations.
At the conclusion of the program, virtual attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions during a Q&A session. Additionally, they may sign up for a free consultation.
In order to register for the webinar, go online to <http://go.enviroforensics.com/National-Clothesline>.



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KEEP IT LEGAL



BY FRANK KOLLMAN

A potpourri of thoughts

I stopped posting on Facebook in March, but I still belong to several groups that post on Facebook. For example, I love fountain pens, so I belong to a couple of groups that use and collect them. As a result, I still need to log on every few days. Plus, my family still posts their activities.

Last night, I saw a horrible political post by the husband of a Facebook friend. In fact, he posted it on his wife's account. I could ignore it, but my wife had responded, and the creep doubled down on the hate. I proceeded to take him apart in such

a way that I suspect he and his wife will never talk to me again. Despite the catharsis I got from writing it, I do not feel good about it.

It also got me to thinking how lawyers can be like Internet trolls when they get involved in matters that could best be settled without lawyers. As regular readers of this column know, I do a lot of work representing management in labor and employment matters. Sometimes, employees hire lawyers and insist that their employer deal directly with their lawyers. In case you were wondering, if an em-

ployee refuses to talk to his employer without legal representation, that is normally grounds to terminate the employee. After all, employers need to be able to communicate directly with their employees.

That does not mean, however, that getting a letter from a lawyer accusing you of discrimination or improper conduct toward one of your employees is grounds for termination. It is not, and you should consult your own attorney if that happens. The point I was making is that an employee can hire a lawyer, but if the employee will

not deal with you directly or without a lawyer present, that goes beyond the assertion of protected civil rights. That is insubordination. And when lawyers get involved, the situation frequently deteriorates quickly. I know plenty of lawyers whose only skill is their ability to cause more problems.

Another thought I had recently concerns the words used in terminating or discharging employees. In the past, I have advocated never using words like "sorry" or stating that you "feel bad" about having to fire an employee. Anything less

than statements of confidence that you are making the right decision can be twisted in a later lawsuit for wrongful termination or discrimination. I still believe that it is the best approach to state the reasons for termination without editorializing or expressing any emotions, except perhaps controlled anger.

Recently, however, I had a client ask about firing a good employee who was suffering from some medical issues that were causing her to miss time and make mistakes. The company wanted her to take leave until she could get the medical issues under control, and the employee was unwilling to do so. I said as long as you have discussed her medical issues (which were likely a disability covered by the ADA), tried to find a reasonable accommodation, and her performance and attendance continued to suffer, the company's choice was to fire her or put up with the problems. They wanted to tell the employee that they were "sorry" it had come to this, which they were, but I said that feelings of actual sorrow do not have to be expressed. It's too bad that statements of regret can be turned against employers by plaintiff's lawyers.

Finally, Covid continues to be a main story for employers. Dealing with masks, positive test results, frightened employees, and insensitive people can be extremely difficult. Communication is so important to a healthy workplace environment, and remote working, closed office doors, masks that hide facial expressions, and other distancing measures make communication even more difficult. You just cannot get the message across better than in a face-to-face meeting, and while a phone call is better than email or texting, not seeing another person's face causes misinterpretations.

I advocate complying with all workplace requirements relating to Covid, but I encourage people to continue to talk with one another — through masks if necessary — to reduce the loss of personal connection that is happening with the pandemic. Workplace miscommunication can have disastrous results, especially given everyone's heightened fears of contracting the virus, and worse, giving it to someone else. Find a way to communicate.

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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WRENCH WORKS



By BRUCE GROSSMAN

Troubleshooting boilers gone bad II

You may recall that last month our discussion was about pressure proposing (steam pressure regularly falls between normal operating pressure and a lower pressure like 30-40 PSIG). Space limitations did not allow the “cures” for this family of boiler malfunctions.

This month we will be looking at how to determine what’s causing this problem. First let’s take the easier cause to fix which is vapor lock. To review, vapor lock or “pump cavitation” (the more scientific name) is when bubbles of vapor form between the impeller (rotating part of pump) and raceway (stationary part of pump) preventing the pump from pushing water under pressure into the boiler. The root cause of rapidly developing valve and piping failure is usually leaking make-up water valves (ball float valves).

This type of valve uses a ball-shaped float to control the addition of new water into the return tank maintaining the proper water level in the tank. When these valves leak, as they often do, untreated oxygen-rich water containing high levels of scale forming compounds continuously bleed into the return tank. Oxygen in the newly added water combines with carbon dioxide to form carbonic acid which corrodes metal components and piping. High levels of scale forming salts and other un-

wanted solids clog pipes, valves and boiler tubes. A properly operating make up water valve (ball float valve), soft water and boiler compound are all essential in controlling these twin bogeys. What follow are the most common causes of return pump cavitation.

1. The most frequent cause of vapor lock pump cavitation is probably faulty check valves. Check valves allow fluids (water in this case) to flow in only one direction only. The direction in this case would be from the return pump into the boiler. Scale and debris in the piping and return tank often break off and prevent these valves from shutting completely. When this occurs pressurized water in the boiler (remember this water is above the normal boiling point because it is under pressure) is forced back through the boiler’s water inlet piping into the pump.

Outside the boiler the superheated water, under less pressure than it was in the boiler flashes (boils off) into steam while inside the pump, hence vapor lock. Vapor lock prevents the pump from pushing more water into the boiler which will eventually shut down on a low water level error. You can often identify this problem by a violent knocking sound coming from the return tank as well as obvious vibration of the tank and

SYMPTOMS OF IMPROPER BOILER WATER TREATMENT

TYPICAL ACID INDUCED CORROSION CAUSED BY IMPROPER CONCENTRATION OF BOILER COMPOUND IN THE FEEDWATER

LOOSE COMPOUND FEED TUBE SPILLING COMPOUND OVER THE TOP OF RETURN TANK CORRODING METAL

LOAD OF SCALE AT THE OPEN HAND HOLE ON A TUBELESS BOILER

TOTALLY BLOCKED BOILER TUBE THAT ACTUALLY RUPTURED DUE TO OVERHEATING

DANGEROUS AMOUNT OF SCALING DUE TO INSUFFICIENT COMPOUND CONCENTRATION CAUSED BY LEAKY BALL FLOAT VALVE

piping. Piping between the return tank and boiler will be very hot (spit will evaporate in a second on these pipes when the check valves fail and remember the finger tip rule from last month).

You must shut off the boiler and blow down until there is no boiler pressure! Do not do any repairs on a boiler under pressure under any circumstance!

When the boiler has no pressure left you can disassemble the check valves (you might as well do them all) clean out any debris from the valve and any scale from the valve parts

using a wire brush and/or emery cloth or flush with descaling compound (my recommendation is to replace the valves annually instead of trying to repair them). Be prepared to discover a lot of damaged piping when you start repairs in this area so make sure when you tackle the job any pipe nipples or other parts are available if you require them.

2. Another cause of vapor lock pump cavitation is excessive temperature in the return tank. This is generally the result of steam traps sticking open (blowing through) and

allowing a continuous flow of steam back into the return tank thereby raising the water temperature to a point where the pump becomes ineffective; the mechanical action of the pump and extra heat supplied by the pump motor are enough to push the water in the pump to the boiling point. Viola! Vapor lock by another route.

If there are several traps blowing through there will be a continuous stream of steam from the return tank vent on the roof. An easy way to troubleshoot this problem is to get a bag of ice and place it on the pump (not the pump motor but the pump where the piping is). Also, if you have access to the make-up water valve you can add cold water to the tank itself. Within a minute or two the pump will begin to move water into the boiler. Obviously if this is the problem you need to find and repair the faulty steam traps.

Bruce Grossman is the chief of R&D for EZtimers Manufacturing, the manufacturer of the Tat-tler steam trap tester; Drop In The Bucket and Sahara line of high purity separator water mister/evaporators and the new EZ Level line of return tank level and temperature controllers. The EZ Level replaces the problematic ball-float valve in your boilers’ return tank, helping to eliminate boiler damage and lost production caused by boiler down time. See our ad in this issue and for further information on the EZtimers product line or visit www.eztimers.com. Address any questions or comments to bruce@eztimers.com or call (702) 376-6693.

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SHIRT TALES



BY DON DESROSIERS

Doing shirts with limited service

You can make a grave error in figuring your costs. I have seen many people do this. Let’s set up a hypothetical scenario so that I can illustrate my point.

Imagine a shirt department that has two pressers, a touch-up person and a bagger/assembler plus a wash person. The press team regularly averages 100 shirts per hour. Five people in total do 100 shirts per hour for an average of 20 pieces per labor hour (PPLH).

This is a PPLH that is better than average (17-18 PPLH is average), but poor by my standards (Tailwind clients average 27.2). But, 20 is a good number to use here because I want to paint a picture that depicts a plant that has better-than-average management and in general is better than most.

At 3,200 shirts per week, this is a well-equipped plant that isn’t bulging at the seams. A bit more volume is possible, but the employees are content with 32 hours per week. A surge in business would probably not lead to overtime. Mondays and Tuesdays are eight-hour days; the remaining

three days are around five hours each. Nobody pads the time clock. Employees clock out when they are done. For the purpose of illustration, let’s say that the employees average \$10 per hour including PTax and associated expenses. Gross revenues per shirt averages \$2.25 each.

Management has done a good job of calculating cost per shirt and that is outlined in the table on top, to the right. (Note: Costs such as supply costs vary, but we’ll calculate this to be at least six cents per shirt. There is always something that we didn’t figure on, so add a penny per shirt for Misc. costs, etc.)

Let’s assume that this plant operator is on the ball and knows these numbers. If you asked him what his cost per shirt is, he’d answer in a heartbeat: “Just a hair under a dollar and 57 cents. We make 68 cents per shirt.”

The plant has a history of good service and good quality and they are reasonably friendly with their competitors. A friend or quasi-competitor asks this plant owner to do his shirts wholesale.

Hmmm. Food for thought. More information is needed and sought, and in the end the proposal is as follows:

Someone who is not truly a competitor wants you to do 150 of his shirts every day. He explains that he is at capacity, or whatever. He offers to pay you \$1.25 per shirt. You do not need to tag, wash, touch-up, assemble or bag the shirts.

The shirts will come in wet and extracted. All you need to do is press the shirts. What do you do? Perhaps you reason that this is a cash cow. It takes five people to do shirts now, but for these 150 shirts, the touch-up person, the assembler and the washer are not needed. It costs you a mere 20 cents each to press them and you gross \$1.25 per shirt, over \$900 per week. Sweet! Or, is it?

On the surface, it appears clear that you don’t have to do much, or incur much expenses, to process shirts that only require pressing and nothing more. A closer look will yield an entirely different conclusion. More importantly, in a vast majority of these situations, the gross revenue per shirt isn’t

Variable Costs		Total for 3,500 shirts	Cum. Cost/ Shirt	
Supplies (incl. hangers, poly, detergents, pads & covers)	.22	\$770	.22	
Labor (5 people @ \$10/hour = \$50/100 shirts/hr)	.50 (10 cents per shirt per person)	\$1,750	.72	
Utilities	.15	\$525	.87	
Claims	.005	\$17	.875	
Fixed Costs				
Repair & Maintenance	.02	\$140	.895	
Rent (500 sq.ft. @ 20/ft.)	.054	\$192	.949	
Equipment Depreciation	.01	\$35	.959	
Customer Service Labor	.50	\$1,700	1.459	
Amortization	.03	\$105	1.489	
Employee Benefits	.05	\$170	1.539	
Admin, Office, Management	.02	\$70	1.559	
Misc., Other	.01	\$35	1.569	
Income				
3500 @ \$2.25				\$7,878
Less Costs				(\$5,491)
Profit (or loss)				\$2,387
Profit per shirt				.68

Continued on page 20

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Variable Costs		Total for 4,250 shirts	Cum.	Cost/ Shirt
Supplies (incl. hangers, poly, detergents, pads & covers)	.22	\$770		.06
Labor (5 people @ \$10/hour = \$50/100 shirts/hr)	.50 (10 cents per shirt per person)	\$1,700		.533
Utilities	.15	\$525		.10
Claims	.005	\$17		.005
Fixed Costs				
Repair & Maintenance	.02	\$140		.02
Rent (500 sq.ft. @ 20/ft.)	.054	\$192		
Equipment Depreciation	.01	\$35		.01
Customer Service Labor	.50	\$1,700		
Amortization	.03	\$105		
Employee Benefits	.05	\$170	1.539	.05
Admin, Office, Management	.02	\$70	1.559	
Misc., Other	.01	\$35	1.569	.01
Total cost/ wholesale shirt				.788
Income				
3500 @ \$2.25 per shirt, plus 750 shirts at \$1.25				\$8,815.50
Cost for the first 3,500 shirts				(\$5,491)
Cost to produce those extra 750 shirts				(\$591)

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Columbus, GA

“ My favorite things about DLI used to be the **problem garment bulletins** in the back of the magazine. Now, it's the **live spotting web series**. Do it! **It's well worth the money**. ”

Angela Rowekamp

Mascari Cleaners
Indianapolis, IN

“ DLI assists us with **marketing ideas, news articles, blogs, and webinars** to help us cope with this pandemic. With our **busy work schedules**, we don't realize we're working with **blinders on**. DLI helps us **focus** on the creative insights we often overlook. ”

Angelo Nguyen

British Dryclean Club
Santa Ana, CA

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Don Desrosiers

Doing shirts with limited service

Continued from page 18

anything near \$1.25 per shirt. It is more like 75 cents. That sounds like a 1980s price (and it is), but the rationale is, once again, that you only pay two people to press them. There is no washing, bagging, assembly. Nothing.

So, even at that price, you nearly triple your money. You receive 75 cents to press the shirt and only pay a mere 20 cents to get them pressed. Netting a clear 55 cents per shirt, which, at 150 shirts per day for 21 business days per month, is \$1,732.50 in pure profit. Or, is it?

Remember, we are not trying to figure out average cost per shirt. We want to figure our cost for the additional 750 shirts. There is an important difference that must not be ig-

nored. If we were looking at average cost per shirt, we would be forced to compare it to the average revenue per shirt. Average revenue per lesson in figuring your costs. Even though you only need to press these wholesale shirts and not touch them up, bag them or assemble the orders, it pressers, to clock out during the time that those wholesale shirts are being pressed. That's not going to happen.

The support staff (that is,

I have seen shirt launderers miscalculate their costs over and over again.

I think they weep at night because they can't figure out why they aren't laughing all the way to the bank.

shirt used to be \$2.25. The wholesale shirts have caused that to plummet to \$2.07.

This is not a testament as to whether or not you should do these wholesale shirts; it is a doesn't cost you 20 cents per shirt. It is still 50 cents! The only way to reduce the labor expenditure to 20 cents per shirt is to get all of your employees, aside from the the staff members aside from the pressers) will have it easy because they won't have much to do during the 90 minutes per day that you are doing the wholesale stuff, but you'll pay

them anyway.

Note that in the lower table (page 18), the total cost per shirt for the wholesale shirt is a hair under 79 cents. That is nearly 400% of your knee-jerk reaction price! For a gross revenue of \$1.25 per shirt, you do net \$.45 per shirt. This is a good margin, but you won't think so if you were expecting two times that much.

Remember, you were thinking 20 cents per shirt, no 79 cents. So, if you expected the line item to read \$150 (750 shirts times \$.20), you are having a bad day.

Your volume is now up to 4,250 shirts per week. This accounts for your 3,500 retail shirts, plus 150 shirts per day for five days. This is already a problem. Now you are looking at overtime.

At 100 shirts per hour — certainly respectable by anyone's evaluation — isn't enough to curb overtime. So, now your total gross payroll isn't \$1,750, it is five people at \$10 per hour for 40 hours (\$2,000), plus 10 overtime hours at \$15 each for a total of \$2,150. This raises your cost per shirt for labor from 50 cents to a little more than fifty-and-a-half cents. But, we are trying to determine the cost of the additional shirts, not the average cost.

Therefore, the extra 750 shirts add \$400 in payroll, making the cost per shirt for labor over 53.3 cents! This is more than two-and-a-half times as much as you thought it would be! This is a huge miscalculation. You thought that you could do these shirts for less money because they cost you less, but what a surprise to learn that they cost you more!

I have seen shirt launderers miscalculate their costs over and over again. "All I gotta do is press 'em and put 'em on a hanger." They chuckle with glee as though they had just found the key to the treasure room. I think they weep at night because they cannot figure out why they aren't laughing all the way to the bank.

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

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 40 Winchester Ln, Suite #5, Fall River, MA 02721, by cell (508) 965-3163, or email at tailwind.don@me.com. The Tailwind web site is www.tailwind-systems.com.



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AN OUTSIDE PERSPECTIVE



BY PETER BLAKE

Always deal from a position of strength

As this global pandemic lingers on, and in some cases reverts backwards, the pressure on small business is continuing to build. There are some very good business operators who have continued to do what they have the past few years and are surviving, but the truth of the matter is, in order to come out of this industry tailspin, most businesses are going to have to change, pivot, and adapt to a new landscape.

I know there will be a great number of businesses that will not only survive, but thrive in the coming months and years. Let me be clear though: There will also be several cleaners who unfortunately will not be able to continue the fight, and we are already seeing that across the country. Size will not be the only determination of who will stay and who will go.

It will be those who best understood their local economy, consumer needs, and were able to establish themselves in the community that will prosper.

As Thucydides, a Greek historian/philosopher wrote about the wars of Sparta and Athens:

"The strong do what they can, while the weak suffer what they must."

This is the philosophy you need to embrace during times like this. You need to be strong and position yourself to take advantage as times change and opportunities arise.

Strength through knowledge
You need to know what is happening around you. You need to understand both the dynamics of the industry and the community you serve. There is no one answer, no panacea that is going to magically help you and your business recover. Instead it will be a combination of moves and

"The strong do what they can while the weak must suffer what they must." — Thucydides

changes you implement that will stem the tide and position you for growth.

The best way to recognize these potential changes is to learn all you can about the pressures you and your peers are encountering. You need to take advantage of each and every opportunity to grow stronger.

Drycleaners and launderers are extremely lucky to have a wealth of information within their grasp. I am proud to play a small part in bringing one of the best educational summits ever available to our industry: "Fall Fest Expo Week — Witness the Future." This virtual conference is a unique blend of virtual education, equipment demonstration, peer-to-peer interaction, and includes insights from some of the leading experts forecasting where our industry — and economy — is headed now and in the future.

The one low price entitles you to send as many of your staff to as many of the sessions as you wish and provides you with continuing access to the recordings and additional resources for a minimum of three months.

DLI remains one of the most important business tools you can have. Weekly webinars,

33 years, and at no point in time has there ever been so many resources available to small businesses, but you have to act and take advantage of these opportunities now.

A sense of community builds strength

We are not going through this alone, and there is no better time to engage your com-

or honoring the first responders. Action now will translate to business as your community recovers. Customers have long memories.

Communication builds strength

You may be tired of hearing me expound on the virtues of communication, but I only do so because I think it is the single most important thing you can do to thrive. Communicate to your customers and your community early, often, and do so in a variety of ways.

Personal phone calls are still the most effective marketing tool you have. Engage with your best customers. Ask how they are doing and listen. Empathize and try and assist if there is an opportunity to do so.

Email is still one of the best vehicles to let your customers know changes you have made for safety and survival. Let them know how they can protect themselves and their family. Let your customers know what services you offer, and how they can access them.

Finally, social media is a great way to go beyond your customer base and into the community. Do not get bogged down in just posting info, you also need to engage within your community.

Look to other similar service businesses and interact on their pages. Share their posts, "like" their pages, and ask they do the same. As I pointed out earlier, we are all in the same storm, so help them navigate a little easier.

I want to help you. I want to help make sure you will thrive as we recover from these dark times, and I want to play a role in your success. I am truly humbled by the strength and resiliency of our industry and I know there are great times ahead.

I sincerely hope you continue to strengthen your own business and if there is a way I can help please reach out to me at (617) 791-0128.

I hope to see you during Fall Fest Expo Week growing stronger by the day.

Peter Blake serves as executive director of the North East Fabricare Association, the Southeastern Fabricare Association, the MidAtlantic Association of Cleaners and the California Cleaners Association. He can be reached by email at peteblake@aol.com or by phone at (617) 791-0128.

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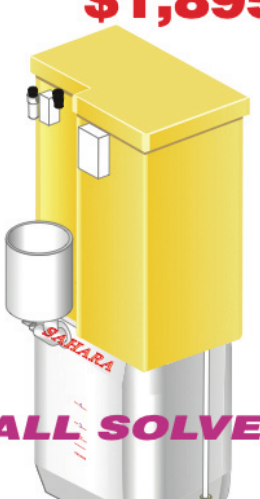
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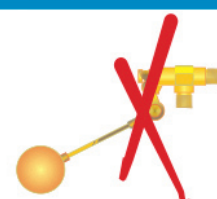
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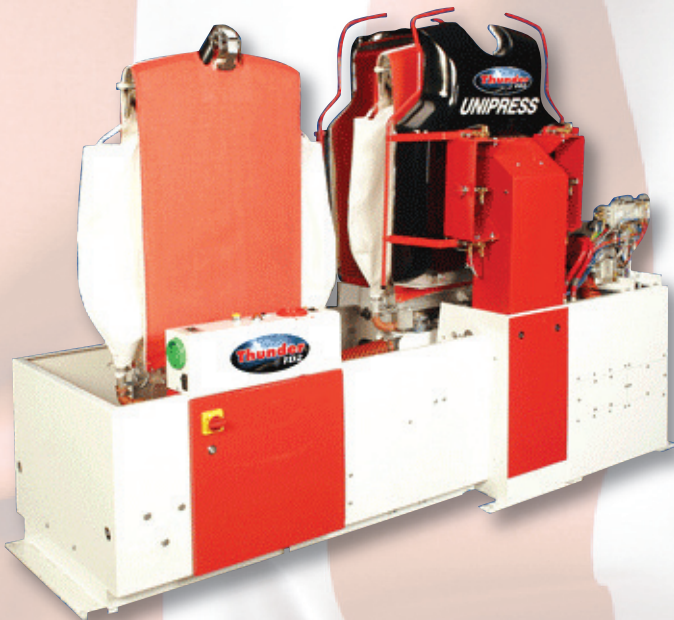
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THE ROUTE PRO



BY JAMES PEUSTER

Cleaners must decide to grow or go

This is the beginning of my 20th year in the industry, and boy has the industry gone through many changes since 2001.

From environmental changes to restoration to routes, the drycleaning industry has evolved and dissolved. The industry had been hit hard by the 2008 recession, as well as 2020 with Covid. Many new players have entered our world and some of them disappeared just as quickly. Point of sales have adjusted accordingly while marketing and margins have become more important than ever.

But there is one thing for sure: Routes are where the best cleaners are thriving.

The hard part about being a consultant is many operators are sitting on a pot of gold and yet are trying hard not to grow by their own undoing. Many don't want routes to succeed while others are holding onto the hope that stores will rebound.

Many of you made quick adjustments to your systems based on hope or theory instead of the best practices out there.

No matter what you do, there is one ingredient that makes or breaks your routes, and that's the driver.

The route driver is the driving force behind sales, customer service and efficiency. Sure you can count on optimiza-

tion to try to make it more efficient; however, when you do as many ride-alongs as we have, you will see the good drivers know the better ways to go. You can go with automatic customer service options, but without a face-to-face presence and personalized touch, your attention to retention is limited.

Finally, if door hangers and direct mailings worked consistently, then there would be no need for route development. However, we all know how well that works and the average acquisition cost of a new customer.

Those who are growing have drivers who don't act or think like a typical driver. From their appearance to their attitude, route drivers are running a store on wheels and must be hired, trained and motivated to do so.

Cutting back on development and expectations will lead to your routes not growing. Those who do this end up with routes that are over 100 miles a day of driving with limited customer service interaction.

It's time for many of you to decide if you want to grow or go.

The bottom line is that failure to focus on the development of your route personnel will lead to failing to develop your routes. I continue to watch and work with cleaners who have added no

vans during 2020 while others complain to each other about being down.

Time is running out in some markets as aggressive cleaners are taking more and more market share away from you and their competition. Don't just sit there and blame Covid — do something about it and look for growth.

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



ANDY'S CLEANERS in Oak Ridge North, TX, purchased a Union HL 860K running K4 solvent from Gulf States Laundry Machinery. Owner Andy Le and his wife Lisa Tran (left) are pictured with Matt A. Lipman from Union Dry Cleaning Products.

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EPA eyes perc. EPA released its draft risk evaluation for perc, continuing a review process that began several years ago.

Crisis marketing. Stay in touch with your customers and be ready for the reopening of business, advises association executive Peter Blake.

An essential service. Drycleaners' services have been deemed essential during the shutdown. Pickup and delivery is essential to provide that service.

Steps for reopening. Frank Kollman offers practical and legal considerations for cleaners as they plan for a full reopening of business.

Cleaning by hand. Even if the label says "Do Not Dryclean or Wash," you can still clean it, says Dan Eisen.

SDA plans to meet. The Southwest Drycleaners Association is planning to host a membership meeting and seminar in July — emphasis on the word planning. Nothing is set in stone in the Covid Age.

Online gatherings. With coronavirus restrictions on travel and group gatherings, industry groups are opting to hold meetings online.

Complete table of contents of this issue [here](#).

View the flipbook version [here](#).

facebook

Seeking recovery – and forgiveness

After a brutal month of April that saw business off as much 80 percent from a year ago, drycleaners were witnessing a recovery of sorts in May in which business "improved" to a level of 65 to 70 percent off year ago figures as people began slowly emerging from a virtual lockdown in the face of the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Government ordered shutdowns of business that were beginning to loosen in May didn't effect most cleaners directly since they were generally deemed essential and allowed to remain open. But being open did not equate to having business. [More...](#)

We'll meet again



Scenes like this seem to be from a distant past, but it was just one year ago this month that the industry gathered for the Clean Show in New Orleans. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused the cancellation of many industry gatherings, including regional trade shows planned by the Southwest Drycleaners Association in Ft. Worth in April and the South Eastern Fabricare Association show planned for this month in Kissimmee FL. It remains to be seen if other regional trade shows will be able to go on as planned. The Clean Show is still on track for next June in Atlanta. As the old song goes, "We'll meet again some sunny day."

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Tampa Florida - Seitz Chemical - The Fresher Company has introduced a new, revolutionary product that is poised to storm the industry.

Most cleaners polled agree that alternative solvents have been in the forefront and on their mind for some time now. Unfortunately, until now, the only way to add alternative solvents to your plant is through a sizeable investment in a new cleaning machine with a hefty price tag of between \$25,000 and \$100,000. In order to make a solvent change, assuming you are using Hydrocarbon Solvent of some brand now, to one of today's alternative solvents, you must commit to a weekend of plant time beginning with draining and disposing of your current solvent. Bleach out, rinse, and dry your base tanks, water separator, and still. A complete filter change including cleaning out of the canister and cycling and cleaning out of spin disc filters. So far, you have had a day's work and nearly \$2,500 out of pocket. Next is the purchase of new solvent to refill the base tanks, another investment of \$2,500. Five thousand dollars and a weekend later, you can now begin to see the benefits of your labor.

No more... Seitz - The Fresher Company has introduced **Ultra Intense** - "The Conversion Solution". With the introduction of the new solvent conversion process using **Ultra Intense**, you will simply add the solvent conversion liquid to your current hydrocarbon solvent at a predetermined ratio and through its proprietary blend and binding agents you will now be cleaning with **True Intense**! The results of the conversion will be seen immediately. Your KB will be increased from around 24 to nearly 75 on the first load. 300% better cleaning and degreasing. Additional benefit of **Intense** is the ability to carry moisture. Hydrocarbon alone virtually carries no water/moisture. You will see that **Intense** will carry between 5-7% in

turn allowing for better solubilizing of wet side soils.

Many of you have questions about this solvent and the conversion of your machine. We asked Seitz Chemical - Here are some of the answers:

What is Intense®?
Intense is a carbon- and hydrogen-atom-based along with Glycol derivatives bonded solvent newly developed by SEITZ. **Intense** has an innovative booster system that clearly increases cleaning performance. **Intense** is the brand name for this solvent, globally protected by SEITZ.

How much research and testing of Intense® has been done in use of this as a dry cleaning solvent?
SEITZ introduced the first high flash point solvents on the German market as early as 1990. Based on this experience, Seitz's research department continued to develop this and complementary products further. **Intense** is the result of decades of research and experience in terms of modern hydrocarbon and blended solvents.

Why was this solvent developed?
Oils, fats, and water-soluble contamination is not easily removed by hydrocarbon solvents. To be able to achieve a good cleaning results, the conventional solvent had to be changed and optimized.

Do I still need a detergent?
A detergent not only improves the cleaning but also has a hygienic result. This, along with adding "Body" and "Touch" aids in the ease of finishing. Additionally, soil must be released from the textile and kept afloat/suspended to avoid greying/redeposition. **Intense** and the associated detergents have these properties as well.

Where can I buy Intense®?
Intense can be purchased around the world, but only through SEITZ,

and/or its international branches and their authorized sales partners and distributors.

What does Intense® smell like and will solvent odor remain in the clothes after cleaning?
Intense is a transparent, clear liquid and has a product-specific mild smell. With proper solvent care, the clothes will have a neutral/fresh smell after cleaning.

What is the solvent's physical makeup?
Dissolving power: 73 kb
Density: 0.79 g/cm3
Flash point: >64°C (147.2°F)
Viscosity: 1 cp
Boiling range: 180–210°C (356–410°F)

How safe is handling of Intense®?
Generally, there are no safety-relevant concerns when handling **Intense**. The respective safety measures should be observed when handling any solvent(s).

What is the cleaning result like and what are the advantages of Intense® over Hydrocarbon?
Intense has a higher cleaning power and improved stain removal particularly water-soluble contamination can be removed much more easily thanks to the innovative booster procedure. This makes it much easier to remove water-soluble contaminations and stains from the fabric. Due to its molecular structure and the connected high KB figure, **Intense** can safely dissolve grease and wax-based stains. **Intense** cleans gently and leaves the textiles in their original shape. This makes the finishing even simpler and faster. Thanks to the special components, **Intense** offers easier spot removal and reduces the effort for pre- and post-cleaning.

What advantages does the solvent have over Perchloroethylene or Hydrocarbon?
Intense is an environmentally neutral solvent and therefore has lower

requirements by Regulatory authorities than perc. Since **Intense** carries much more moisture and better water separation, this will in turn reduce the buildup of moisture and therefore reduce the potential of a bacteria and odor "Bloom" or growth that is inherent with Hydrocarbon.

What is the solvent Mileage or consumption?
Precise consumption values can be requested from the different machine manufacturers. Many operators are enjoying mileage up to 100,000 lb of cleaning per 200 ltr (53 gl) drum. Approximately 1.5 pennies/lb cleaned.

How does SEITZ support me in conversion and application?
SEITZ has put together a package for best use of the **Intense** procedure. It contains the generation of cleaning programs and training of your employees for the new procedures and their application.

Which approvals do I need/which provisions do I have to observe when operating an Intense® cleaning machine as compared to hydrocarbon solvents?
According to our information there should be no difference in operating using **Intense** instead of a hydrocarbon machine. In case of doubt contact your local authorities.

How can I dispose of distillation and filter residue?
The wastes and thus the distillation and filtration residue must be recycled or disposed of by a suitable disposal company and contact water should be treated in the same way as would that of Hydrocarbon contact water. Consult local authorities.

In which cleaning machines can I work with Intense®?
Intense can be used in all cleaning machines that are sold as "multi-solvent machines" by the machine manufacturers. Machines that are made for a flash point of

>61°C can easily be operated with **Intense**.

Whether older hydrocarbon solvent machines can be retrofitted must be determined from case to case by the machine manufacturers. Best to consult the Manufacturer and your Seitz Technical Representative.

Which manufacturers offer Intense® machines?
All nationally and internationally active dry cleaning machine manufacturers have tested **Intense**... intensely.

Which detergents, additives, and/or aids are needed?
A number of our Detergents, Pre-spotting and Post-Spotting agents have been tested intensely in combination with **Intense** and could be used with outstanding results.

The **Intense** Injection detergents recommended for use with **Intense** solvent is:
Our Detergent for **Intense**
Sigma **Intense** - W/Fresh System Scent
(OR)
Sigma Clear® - Fragrance Free
Some customer require additional body in the garment so we suggest **Intense** Injection Sizing:
Nova Finish
Seitz has great results in **Intense** brushing agent:
Polyspot Spray and Pre & Post Spotting with Solvex 1, Solvex 2 and Solvex 3.

Finally, for the Solvent Care of **Intense**, it is recommended to use Desolan NT – Additional Bacteria Inhibitor weekly.

What tasks do the Detergents have?
The detergents used in **Intense** have the task of supporting dirt removal. The classic properties of the detergents serve to wet the goods again, along with the solvent itself, carrying the moisture, provide a higher anti-static property and contain texture and feel of the garment. Good water binding capacity makes it possible to remove water-soluble stains very well. In addition to the typical properties, the cleaning detergents have the task of removing the dissolved dirt from the solution at the same time to keep the dirt from returning to the goods (inhibit redeposition) and ensure a higher dirt carrying capacity.

We hope that we have explained most of the aspects of **Intense**. Should you have any further questions or if you would like to make an appointment with our sales technician, please contact us. We look forward to answering all your questions and to converting your current Hydrocarbon Dry Cleaning Machine to **Intense**. If you are not still convinced, we would be happy to provide you with a list of the nearly 3000 U.S. based dry cleaners already using the solvent with amazing results!

Where do I get more information?
Please contact our office and set up a visit by one of our many field service technicians that live near you. Phone us directly at: (813) 886-2700 or by email to Info.USA@seitz24.com.

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HC

TO



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Better DeGreasing

Safe on Colors and Fabrics

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Inhibits Bacteria

Inhibits Odors


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Property	PER	HC	Intense
Solvent Power	90 KB	26 KB	73 KB
Density	1.6 g/ml	0.78 g/ml	0.79 g/ml
Flash Point	none	141.8°F	> 147.2°F
Viscosity	0.54 cp	1.2 cp	1 cp
Boiling Point	248°F	356–410°F	356–410°F
Odor	chlorinated	mild	mild
Machine	PER	Multi-Solvent	Multi-Solvent
Transport DOT	HAZMAT 6.1	III	III



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