



National

Clothesline



April 2026

Volume 64 Number 7

www.nationalclothesline.com

DLI opens 2026 Hall of Fame nominations

Beginning on April 1, the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute (DLI) will be accepting nominations for its 2026 Hall of Fame Award — the association's highest honor that recognizes individuals whose leadership and service have strengthened the drycleaning and laundry industry.

DLI invites all industry professionals to submit a nomination, and it is important to emphasize that *membership is not required to nominate a candidate or to be selected*. The deadline for receiving nominations for this year class of inductees will be on May 15.

The Hall of Fame Award celebrates those who have advanced the industry through lasting contributions, meaningful innovation and a com-

mitment to raising standards for cleaners everywhere.

Candidates for the award include industry pioneers, exceptional business leaders and community advocates. DLI intends to shine a spotlight on individuals who have made a lasting positive impact on the industry.

Nominations forms are available online at www.DLIonline.org/HoF. Applications have a three-year shelf life, meaning any nomination that is filed may be considered for up to three years.

To date, there are 15 industry legends who comprise the ranks of DLI's Hall of Fame, including: (top row, left to right) Jim Barry of GreenEarth Cleaning; Walter "Buster" Bell of Bell Laundry and Cleaners

in SC; Milt Chortkoff of Milt & Edie's Drycleaning and Tailoring in CA; Barney Deden, retired cleaner in NE; James Douglas of GreenEarth Cleaning; (middle row, left to right) Chris Edwards of A Cleaner World in NC; spotting guru and educator Dan Eisen; Don Fawcett of Dependable Cleaners in MA; Stan Golomb of The Golomb Group in IL; Jeffrey Miller of Miller's Fine Drycleaning in NC; (bottom row, left to right) Michael Nesbit of MW Cleaners; James Peuster of The Route Pros; William Joseph "Dixie" Stoddard, inventor of Stoddard solvent; Sid Tuchman of Tuchman Training Systems in CA; and industry educator and consultant Jane Zellers.

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DLI's Scalco to chair AATCC methods committee

Mary Scalco, CEO of the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute (DLI), recently accepted an invitation to serve as the new chairperson for the American Association of Textile Chemists and Colorists (AATCC) Research Committee RA43 (Professional Textile Care Test Methods, formerly Drycleaning Test Meth-



ods). The committee develops, maintains and supports test methods for measuring the effect of professional textile care including drycleaning, wetcleaning, finishing and spot removal, on the properties of textiles.

Scalco began working with the AATCC through her

work as a textile chemist for DLI's Textile Testing Department in the late 1970s.

Her department's work helped advance standardized cleaning procedures and textile care test methods.

DLI's laboratory capabilities have supported AATCC initiatives over the years by providing access to specialized equipment and solvents that are not widely available in many testing environments.

"AATCC is excited to reactivate a research committee with a specific focus on

drycleaning and professional care of textiles," said Gregg Woodcock, AATCC executive director. "This is an important area in the care of textiles, and it has been under-served in recent years. Mary's extensive experience will bring instant credibility and leadership to this committee."

As committee chairperson, Scalco will help guide conversations and standards development during a time when the drycleaning industry is rapidly evolving, particularly as legacy processes and test methods

perchloroethylene (perc) are replaced by new alternatives.

"This invitation melds two worlds: the garment manufacturing world and the drycleaning professional care world, essentially before care and after care," Scalco said. "The people who generally attend AATCC meetings tend to be garment manufacturers and chemical suppliers. I will be able to highlight the drycleaning industry and put more of a focus more on after care con-

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Obituary: John Houston Riddle, Sr.

Longtime Clean Show steward passes

John Houston Riddle, Sr., owner and president of Riddle & Associates, the Atlanta-based trade show management company that oversaw the Clean Show from 1992 until 2019, passed away in mid-February at the age of 85.



John Riddle

Prior to his career in trade show management, he spent

time playing Triple-A baseball. He was signed by the Baltimore Orioles and made his debut with the Appalachian League hitting .288 with 16 homers and 60 RBIs. He was considered a considerable slugger before he suffered an Achilles injury that ended his playing career. He then worked for the Atlanta Braves for nine years as the director of operations and the director of sales.

Originally, he was born in 1941 to William Homer Riddle and Fannie Johnson Riddle in Kannapolis, NC. He attended Mars Hill College where he was inducted into the Hall of Fame for his accomplishments on the baseball diamond. Then, he began his career as a professional baseball player in the Baltimore Orioles organization.

Riddle was an excellent hitter who once played for the legendary Earl Weaver in the Triple-A leagues and

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Saying goodbye to a sweet, slugging steward

During his days playing professional baseball, John Houston Riddle, Sr. (see his obituary on the front page) earned a reputation as a formidable slugger. He played in the minor leagues from 1962 to 1966, originally debuting with the Baltimore Orioles' team (the Bluefield Orioles) where he hit .288 with 16 homers and 60 RBIs in the Appalachian League.

He also added eight homers and 52 RBIs for the Aberdeen Pheasants, 15 homers and 71 RBIs for the Stockton Ports, another eight home runs and 75 RBIs for the Elmira Pioneers, and seven home runs and 21 RBIs in only 40 games with the Rochester Red Wings.

As a slugger, Riddle was charged with getting as many of his fellow players home to score as possible — a role he excelled at for much of his career. Though it ended prematurely from an Achilles injury, John told *National Clothesline* in an interview from 2005 that playing professional baseball was definitely a big highlight of his life. As he explained it, baseball also taught him a thing or two. *It's a game with a lot of ups and downs, so you have to work through the slumps*, he noted. John did that perhaps better than anyone, always keeping an optimistic and gregarious attitude and a kind and genuine smile.

Many years after his baseball career ended, he started the trade show management company Riddle & Associates in the early 1980s, and John first began working with the Clean Show back in 1981. A decade later, his firm would bid on the contract and win. They first managed the Clean Show in 1992. "I was given the contract for one year to see if I could do a good job," he said. "I have been here ever since."

Riddle & Associates would indeed manage *every Clean Show* through 2019. It was a challenge that Riddle relished. Some years, that formidable feat would require the use of 100 forklifts, 250 trucks and a thousand men.

"You're building things to work for 4 days, but you have to build them and they have to be sturdy enough because you've got 15 to 30,000 people in that hall and it's got to be a safe environment," he explained. "Let's say that you have a trade show that has 15,000 people in it... in one building. You're providing them with medical, safety, food, water, etc., for 8 hours. You're actually running a city."

It was exhausting work, but also very satisfying. "To be able to walk into a building and see nothing, and then six days later, you're seeing men and women there exchanging ideas and talking and doing business. To say, 'I had a hand in that' is very rewarding," he added.

Being a ballplayer was far from the only thing Riddle excelled at. Not only was he very good at bringing his teammates home, he became exceptionally gifted in drawing people *away from their homes* in order to attend some very large and successful trade shows.

During his tenure as a steward of the Clean Show, it regularly appeared in Trade Show Executives (TSE) Gold 100 Awards which recognizes the top 100 trade shows held in the U.S. in terms of attendance. As always, when John was needed the most, he would come through with a big hit. His caring for others was often his biggest strength.

Not surprisingly, John Riddle cared a lot about drycleaning, too.

"Drycleaning is a big, big industry and it's something we all need," he explained. "We all have to have water. We all have to have food. We all need a little bit of love, some appreciation and we also want our clothes to be clean. These guys do that. I'm proud, pleased and elated to be a part of this industry."

The industry was lucky to have this sweet slugging steward help guide the path of the Clean Show for almost 40 years. Thank you for all the big hits, John. You will be greatly missed, but not forgotten.

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NATIONAL CLOTHESLINE (US ISSN #07446306) is an independent trade newspaper published monthly by BPS Communications Inc. Periodical Postage paid at Willow Grove, PA, and at an additional mailing office. Postmaster: Send address changes to: The National Clothesline, 1001 Easton Rd., Suite 107, Willow Grove, PA 19090.

• Subscription price for anyone actively engaged in the drycleaning and laundry industry in the United States: \$35; Canada \$40 (US); All others, \$75 (US).

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SHIRT TALES



BY DON DESROSIERS

What do shirt customers hate the most?

If we can get inside our customers' heads to understand what makes them happy and what makes them angry or annoys them, then we should be able to follow a path that leads us to a better shirt. I think that, in reality, *we think we know what is in their heads*, but I suspect many times we concentrate on our own pet-peeves and forget to put ourselves in the customer's place. We forget to think like them.

What makes this particular column difficult to write is that if my studies have shown that a missing button is a bigger service/quality violation than, say, a pressed-in crease across the back, there is some kind of implication there that suggests if a shirt has a missing button and a crease across the back, you must get the button first and, if you have time, fix the crease across the back. Or, if you replace the button but forget to fix the crease, you are better than if you fix the crease but forget to replace the button. This is not my intention.

My intention is to remind you to think like a customer and see the big picture as well as the details — and to see the big picture *in spite of* the details. I believe many launderers over-emphasize one detail while remaining oblivious to the importance of another that, to a customer, is at least as significant as your personal pet peeve. The customer never sees the big picture. All they ever see is their shirts — first soiled and wrinkled, then clean and pressed.

Consider this hypothetical shirt with a missing button and a wrinkle across the back. Assume the inspection process caught one of the defects, but not the other. Take your pick. It doesn't matter. There is a part of our brain that wants credit from the customer for the defect we did fix. Yes, it may be a *subconscious desire* for credit.

In actuality, we (probably) don't say; "Yes, Mr. Smith, you're right. We smashed the collar buttons on your shirt and left them that way, but there used to be wrinkle in the cuff, and we fixed that. Aren't you glad about that?"

You surely know a customer could not possibly care less about anything you did, but he will likely be perturbed about the things you didn't. The realization that doing shirts is a thankless job can't be a surprise. Coming up with a list of

what is important to a customer is arbitrary, but there is some logic and science to it. So, based on my experience as a customer, coupled with my experience as a shirt launderer, here is my semi-subjective list

Based on my experience as a customer, coupled with my experience as a shirt launderer, here is my semi-subjective list of possible quality defects. There are but two items on it.

of possible quality defects. There are but **two items** on it.

1) The worst thing you can do is send a shirt back with a critical button missing.

A non-critical button would be one that does not render the shirt unwearable, such as a sleeve button or the bottom button on the front or a pocket button. A **critical button** is probably any of the others.

I remember something that happened about 30 years ago when I was relatively new in the wholesale shirt business. I expected that I may be recognized as the "shirt guy" when I packed my bags to attend. Wanting to make a good impression, I packed a neatly and professionally folded button-down dress shirt — just one. I also brought along some casual clothes for the prior evening's festivities.

The morning of the convention I was absolutely mortified that the singular dress shirt I packed was missing a collar button! I was frantic. After all, it was my employee that allowed this to happen. I sought out one of those little sewing kits from the hotel's front desk, cut off the button on the sleeve and used that to button-down the collar. Then, I sewed the button from the little sewing kit to the sleeve to replace the one I'd cut off. I was extremely unhappy about doing this. I did not think like a shirt launderer or a drycleaner that day.

Thinking like a drycleaner may have happened if I had with me another shirt to wear. I didn't and was suitably annoyed. This experience taught me to think like a customer.

I would have learned little or nothing if I had simply tossed the unwearable shirt back into my suitcase and wore another one, perhaps just a tad sympathetic to plight of plant employees. I got my shirts done for free. There were no al-

lowances for that in my thought processes on this particular day. A customer would likely be even more perturbed if he or she had jingled up a couple of bucks for an unwearable garment.

2) If any area in the upper, front part of the shirt has a hard, pressed-in wrinkle, like a diagonal crease going from the collar button area down towards the armpit, the shirt is unwearable.

Picture a shirt folded over an 8"x14" shirt board. The collar and any other part that is visible while the shirt is folded is the critical part of the shirt. This area is top priority. I hate when I see a touch-up person ironing out the wrinkles in the tail of the shirt, justifying their existence, but then leave an ugly crease in the collar or at some other, clearly visible place. I guess they leave the latter because it's harder to fix.

The problem here is failure to think like a customer. Do you really think that it matters to the average customer whether or not the tail of the shirt is pressed perfectly wrinkle-free? It is a low priority touch-up. Now, my own words are misleading. *Low-priority touch-up* sounds like something you do when you run out of *high-priority touch-ups* or there are *no high-priority touch-ups*. This is flawed for at least two reasons: First, it leads to a variable standard. Second, it will cause a touch-up person to migrate towards the easy types of touch-ups that are not important to the customer.

Outwardly, your touch-up person will look busy but the labor will not be significantly improving your shirts. Doing unnecessary touch-up often leads to excess labor cost. It snowballs into extraordinarily high labor costs if left unchecked. When management sets standards for touch-up people, it is easy to measure their effectiveness. For instance, the standard at XYZ Cleaners will be these three quality points:

1) All wrinkles removed from the tail of the shirt. The touch-up person must remove

curls or folds that have been pressed in by the body press.

2) The box pleats on the back of the shirt need to be within an inch of each other in length. There are some cleaners that have this rule. I

want to make clear I don't disapprove of this, it's just I doubt a customer would consider it important.

More importantly, there are perhaps more generic — less specific — defects that a customer would object to, but because the quality of the shirt cannot be judged so decisively as it can be with a yardstick in this case, management may unconsciously approve a sub-standard shirt.

3) Tail clamp mark, if by chance you still have them, must be removed. Just like items one and two, this is easy to evaluate: It is pass or fail, yes or no, black or white. All of these standards will raise the quality standard of your shirts, but they include an unspoken assumption. That assumption is the shirt is already *perfect*. Huh?

If you adopt standards such as these, you must start off with an exceptional shirt. All of the things a customer expects must already be a given. If you choose to raise the bar beyond what a customer expects, then you are an exceptional business man.

So, the key is to know what they expect, never forget it, give them that, then go beyond. Let's take a look at what they expect:

- A clean shirt, no ring around the collar, no stains.
- A smoothly pressed collar, no wrinkles.
- The collar folded exactly where it should be — right on the seam.
- The perfect level of starch. They might not know what it's called, light starch, heavy starch, secret-double heavy starch... but they have in their minds what they think is right and what is wrong.
- Two collar buttons in the perfect condition, firmly attached with the proper color thread. If the button is

chipped, cracked or broken, they will not understand because they are not likely to be familiar with the processes through which their shirts undergo. If a button looks like it went to war, the customer may conclude that you put the shirt through a more rigorous ordeal than they do themselves.

- A smooth, hard-pressed button-hole band. No bubbles, wrinkles or rough-dry look.

- The entire front of the shirt free of pressed-in wrinkles. No rough dry area.

- The entire back of the shirt free of pressed-in wrinkles. A perfect box pleat. No rough dry areas here, either.

- There are probably more things.

Frankly, I could go on and on and still forget some specifics. My point is to remind you to take care of your customers' annoyances before your own, even though you may find that your customers' annoyances are harder to measure than your own.

In a nutshell: ABC Cleaners and XYZ Cleaners both do an extraordinary shirt. ABC Cleaners wants a competitive edge over XYZ. He decides to iron in the sleeve pleats, clip the cuffs together with clips and iron out every little crease in the tail of the shirt. ABC oozes attention to detail and trumps XYZ.

Of course, we must assume that ABC is still doing all of the things that had him doing an extraordinary shirt in the first place. If ABC gets so caught up in doing the three little things that were meant to outdo XYZ that they start to allow buttons to become a problem, ring around the collar to be more common and press quality to become an issue, does ABC still trump XYZ?

"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 by cell phone (508) 965-3163, or email to: tailwind.don@me.com.



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THE ROUTE PRO



BY JAMES PEUSTER

Top 5 excuses drivers give for limited route growth

After 25 years of route building and ride alongs, I have seen it all — from the backgrounds of the drivers to the hurdles presented to them for route growth.

The Route Pros continue to train on the art of face-to-face sales knowing many still wish there was a magic pill for growth.

This leads me to this month's topic: The **Top 5 Excuses** drivers hold onto that limits route development.

1) Nobody Is Home.

We still hear this all the time from drivers. It is as if the neighborhoods were all evacuated.

I am not asking for 100 customers a month... just 100 attempts per month. The reason why you experience failure is that you replace the word can't with won't.

Sorry, but you don't need to watch *Myth Busters* to prove this wrong. Some are still at home; you just have to look for

them. This is why talking to those walking around is just as, *if not more*, important than ever.

In fact, if they aren't home we actually can have a conversation through the Ring doorbell.

2) They Do Not Need Our Service.

Yes, drycleaning has decreased each and every year.

Last time I checked, *everyone* does laundry. Thus, if you haven't jumped on board the W-D-F train, hurry up... everyone else already has.

Also, I'm sure they can have comforters cleaned, as well.

3) Five Years Later, COVID Still Scares People to Talk Face-to-Face.

Remember face-to-face sales is *not in your face*.



Respect that space and you will do fine!

When I hear this one, I struggle sometimes to find the right words on how to change this mindset.

4) Nobody Wants to Say Yes.

This is definitely all about the follow-up. Grant Cardone says 85% of prospects takes four to five touches for someone to say *yes!*

Yet, 85% of drivers don't make a second attempt. This is where a manager must go out with a driver once in awhile. Failure to do so results in listening to the excuses of a driver and believing it to be true.

5) My Driver Can't Sell.

This is definitely not true. I am not asking for 100 customers a month... **just 100 attempts per month.**

The reason why you experience failure is that you replace the word *can't* with *won't*.

Some drivers strive to get **two to three a week** while others are getting done by 2 to 3 in the afternoon.

The bottom line is this: We hear these excuses all the time and I completely understand the reasons why any of these appear to be true.

Most operators put their routes on cruise control and fail to manage the systems or the personnel.

Stay focused, engaged and be a part of the route end of your business.

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, email RouteProsJames@gmail.com, or visit www.theroutepro.com.

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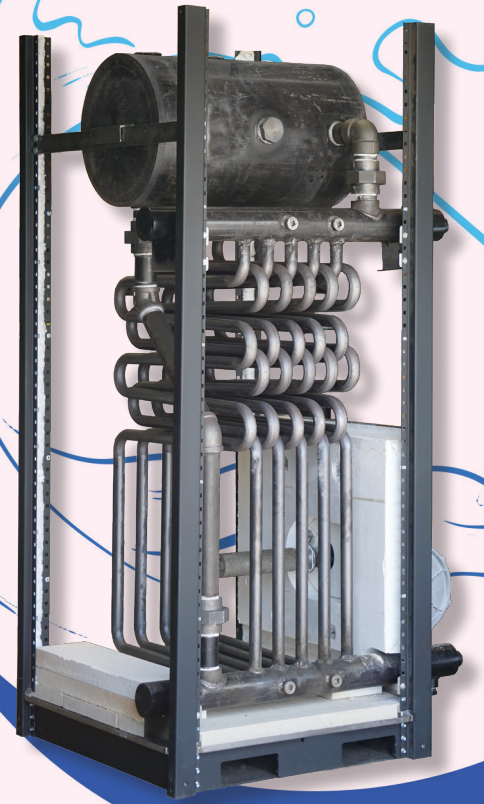
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DLI opens 2026 Hall of Fame nominations

Continued from page 1

DLI CEO Mary Scalco noted, "Professional drycleaning and laundry operators from all over the world contribute to the betterment of our industry every day. Our goal with the Hall of Fame is to recognize contributions made by

any professional in our industry who has made a positive impact and honor them as examples for other members of the industry. All cleaning professionals, regardless of membership, are welcome to nominate industry professionals they see as inspirational for

this award."

Once the May 15 deadline passes, DLI's Board of Directors will review applications and recipients will be announced by mid-September.

"DLI's Hall of Fame award is just one of many aspects that makes our industry great," said

Mark Albrecht of The Route Pros in NJ. "We all have so many true mentors and drycleaning superheroes. This award will ensure that those peoples' legacies are at the forefront of so many of our minds as we move into the future."

To be eligible, candidates

must have a minimum of 10 years of experience working in the drycleaning and laundry industry. Awardees will be publicly announced and celebrated. All 2026 recipients of the Hall of Fame Award will be recognized at regional or national events.

DLI's Scalco to chair AATCC methods committee

Continued from page 1

siderations. Garment manufacturers don't focus too much on after care."

AATCC develops test methods and standards to ensure textiles perform as intended through real-world care processes.

Historically, one widely used drycleaning test method has included perc, meaning updates will be needed as perc is phased out and alternative processes become more common.

DLI expects Scalco's leadership to amplify the practical "after care" perspective: how garments hold up once they reach professional cleaners and consumers.

"We have participated in several AATCC projects over the years," Scalco explained. "We influenced all sorts of test

methods using the specialized equipment in our lab. Not everyone has access to the various solvents we have here in our facility. We took part in AATCC studies on shrinkage, color fastness, water repellency, to name a few."

Scalco noted AATCC's work often begins with textiles and chemical innovations, then must be proven through standardized methods that reflect real cleaning environments.

"Let's say a manufacturer comes out with a new dye. They want to put a 'dryclean only' label on garments using the dye. AATCC develops standardized test methods by using our lab and other labs across the U.S. Then they'll take a test sample to a drycleaner to see if the method works as intended," Scalco

said.

"Mary brings instant credibility and experience to this committee," Woodcock said. "By bringing her experience, Mary will be able to ensure that the existing test methods are accurate and valid in the present environment."

Woodcock noted some of the current tests were developed as long ago as 1957. "Mary will also be able to guide the committee to develop new test methods that are important in today's marketplace," he said.

"It's exciting because we're at a crossroads. Perc drycleaning is being phased out. We have to come up with new methods. There is an opportunity to make sure the American standards and the European standards match," Scalco said.

Longtime Clean Show steward passes

Continued from page 1

found himself in a slump. During an interview with *National Clothesline* from 2005, he relayed a funny story about how he had a good idea while grocery shopping on the road. "I saw some carrots in the produce department. I thought, 'They say carrots are good for the eyes.' So, I bought a carrot. Went to the ballpark that night and got a base hit. I'm telling you the truth – the next day I went to the same place at the same time and bought two carrots. Got two hits that night. Went back the next day, did the same thing... bought three carrots. Three hits. Went back the next day, bought four carrots and got four hits!"

Then, he figured, why not keep going. "I went the next day and bought five carrots and went 0 for 4. I pushed the limit. I had everybody on our

ballclub eating carrots. I still eat them to this day."

In addition to working many years in the Atlanta Braves organization, John served as general manager at the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau in the 1970s.

During his tenure of managing the Clean Show with his firm, Riddle & Associates, many of the shows he managed and produced were typically a staple at the Trade Show Executives (TSE) Gold 100 Awards & Summit.

"John was a great friend to everyone in the industry, who shared his experience and relationships freely," noted Rick Simon, TSE chairman. "He was a regular attendee at our TSE events, and he lit up the room with his smile and wit. He will be deeply missed by all those who had the pleasure of working with him."



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~ John Mertes, Ziker's Cleaners

"FlightPlan is a fantastic tool for improving labor efficiency and monitoring PPLH. It's essential for cutting costs."

~ Lee Turley, Five Corners Cleaners

"For years, our plant struggled with marginal productivity.

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~ J.M.



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NEWSMAKERS

PROS Parts announced that Operations Manager **Bruce Hope** officially retires at the end of April after more than 35 years in the industry.

At PROS, Hope wore many hats. He managed IT functions, supported operations and inspired the sales team to build strong relationships with customers and vendors.

"Bruce has been my partner throughout the nearly 40 years I have owned PROS," said **Barry Victor**, owner of PROS Parts. "He has been instrumental in building innovative systems that have moved us forward. He is a trusted friend and partner to our customers and vendors, and he brings humor to all he does. He will be missed by many, but his professional legacy will live on. We are grateful for all Bruce has added to the success of PROS and our customers."

Following his 42 years as president of **Puritan Cleaners**, **Gary Glover** announced his retirement. He took over lead-

ership of Puritan Cleaners from his father, **Ed Glover**, in 1984. He represented the third generation to lead the family business, originally founded by his grandfather as Progressive Cleaners in 1937.

"I am extremely proud of the legacy of Puritan Cleaners, and of every member of our Puritan family. I am especially grateful for the important role that Puritan Cleaners plays in the Richmond, Virginia community, Glover noted.

Glover sold Puritan to an investment firm based in Richmond; he will remain an executive advisor. Operational leadership will continue with **Norman Way**, vice president, who has been instrumental to the company's growth and success for 22 years.

"The entire team at Puritan Cleaners is happy for Gary and his wife Petra. We will keep building upon the hard work and devotion to community that began with the careful stewardship of Gary and his family." Way said.

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BUILDING VALUE



BY KERMIT ENGH

How to get rich in 3 (very difficult) steps

Like many of us, my wife and I escaped last May for a very much-needed vacation. I took along a book I had not read in a long time. I am now having my son read it to better understand the real concept of money. It was the classic *Rich Dad, Poor Dad* by Robert Kiyosaki. The biggest takeaway is a shift in mindset about life, income and wealth — or building value. Becoming wealthy may not be your primary goal, but if it is, there is a reasonably predictable way to get rich in America.

Step 1: Ignore Your Parents

Parents around the world typically encourage their children to get educated so they can get a *good job*. This may mean becoming a doctor or lawyer, although neither tends to be a path to significant wealth. High-paying professions provide an excellent income stream, but two insidious forces undermine a professional's ability to create significant wealth: taxes and spending.

I can personally relate to this first step. Some who know me will recall that I have been the

victim of three corporate layoffs in my life. The last was as director of marketing services for a prestigious hospital.

After that layoff, I decided to control my own destiny and purchase our first business. It just happened to be a cleaner. Building a successful business took several years — and about that same amount of time for my parents to express that same level of pride.

I have always believed in working hard and feel fortunate that my wife and I have passed this down to our children (though sometimes they still want to ignore me).

The Tax Challenge. It is difficult to become wealthy based on salary alone. Income is taxed at the highest possible rate, leaving you with little more than fifty cents on the dollar. As many readers have experienced personally, owning the real estate you operate in provides income not subject to normal withholding taxes.

The Spending Trap. The other challenge with a high income is that it creates a *wealth effect* that triggers spending.

Thomas J. Stanley, author of the classic, *The Millionaire Next Door*, points out that some professionals — particularly lawyers — spend a large portion of their income to create the appearance of success, partly because their job does not provide much social status.

In other words, when you earn \$500,000 a year, you might buy a Range Rover or send your children to an elite private school — at least in part because you want people to think you are wealthy.

There is a balance between looking successful and creating an image that is difficult to maintain. A great friend of mine who has been highly successful still drives an old Volvo.

Step 2: Start Something

Most wealth in America is created through owning a business. Recently, MassMutual examined the percentage of business owners within different wealth categories. They found that 17% of people with between \$100,000 and \$500,000 in investable assets were business owners. Keep in mind there are roughly eight million

employer-based companies in the U.S. That means the natural rate of business ownership in the general population is about 3%. So, if you grabbed 100 people walking down the street, on average three of them would be business owners.

However, if you took a random sample of 100 people with investable assets between \$300,000 and \$800,000, about 17 would be business owners. That means you are more than five times as likely to find a business owner in this wealth segment than an employee. The trend becomes even more pronounced the higher you climb up the wealth ladder.

Among investors with between \$800,000 and \$1.5 million in investable assets, the proportion of business owners jumps to about 27%. For investors with \$1.5 million to \$10 million, that percentage rises to 52%. Among individuals with \$10 million to \$50 million in investable assets, approximately 67% are business owners. And for those with more than \$50 million in investable assets, the number rises to 86%. Simply put, if you meet someone who is very wealthy, there is a strong likelihood that they are or were a business owner.

Step 3: Turn Business Value into Liquid Wealth

The next step is focusing on improving the value of your company so that you can either sell it for a premium or operate it at a very profitable level.

Being a successful entrepreneur alone is typically not enough to become wealthy. At some point, you must find a way to convert the equity locked in your business into liquid assets. When it comes to selling a business, there are three common options:

1) Acquisition. This is the headline-grabbing option where an entrepreneur sells their company outright. When Facebook acquired WhatsApp for \$19 billion, founders Brian Acton and Jan Koum became extraordinarily wealthy.

2) Recapitalization. A minority or majority recap occurs when you sell part of your company — often to a private equity firm — while continuing to run the business as both a manager and part owner, with a portion of your wealth outside the company. This has occurred several times in our industry, with varying results.

3) Management Buyout. In

a management buyout (MBO), you allow your management team or family members to purchase the company over time. This is often funded through a combination of business profits and debt taken on by the buyers. There are other ways to convert business equity into cash — such as an IPO — but the key idea is turning illiquid business value into diversified liquid wealth.

One advantage of selling a business is that the wealth created is often taxed at a much lower rate than employment income. However, consult with your tax professional before entering into this type of transaction. The financial difference can be substantial.

Keeping all your wealth tied up in your business can be risky. Just ask the entrepreneurs once featured in the pages of *Success* magazine who are no longer on any most successful lists today.

Illiquid wealth cannot easily be used to enjoy life. You cannot buy an around-the-world plane ticket or a ski chalet in Aspen using shares in a private company. At some point, you have to get liquid. There are many reasons to build a business. For some, wealth creation may not be the primary goal. You may simply want to create a great product or lead an exceptional team. But, if financial success is your objective, there is no better path in America than building — and eventually selling — a successful business. Until next time, enjoy building value.

Kermit Engh has been an owner/operator in the drycleaning industry for over 33 years. Notable awards include CINET's 2016 Best Practices for *sustainability and country*. He has been a Methods for Management member for over 30 years. His current position as managing partner and business coach with them allows him to share his extensive background in strategic planning, finance, process improvement, succession planning, acquisition and disposition analysis, packaging and branding, corporate culture, employee training programs, profitability, quality and production standards, cost analysis and development of management KPIs as well as being a Certified Value Builders Coach. Contact him at kengh@mfm.com.

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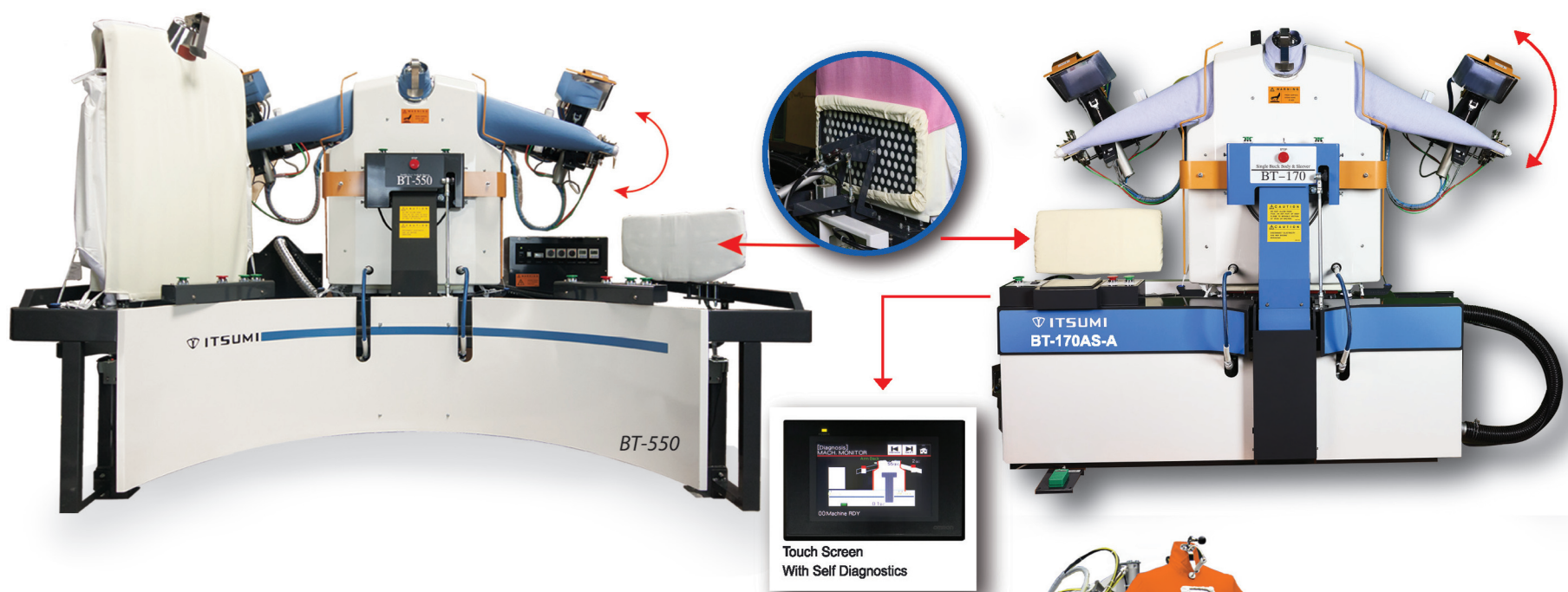
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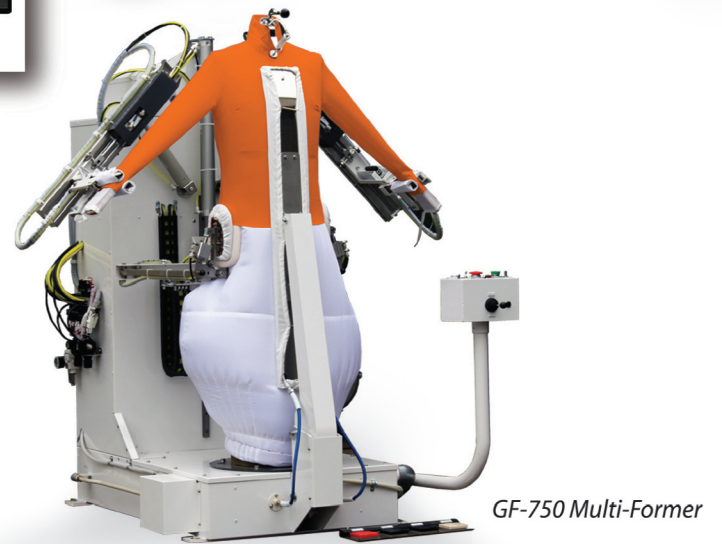
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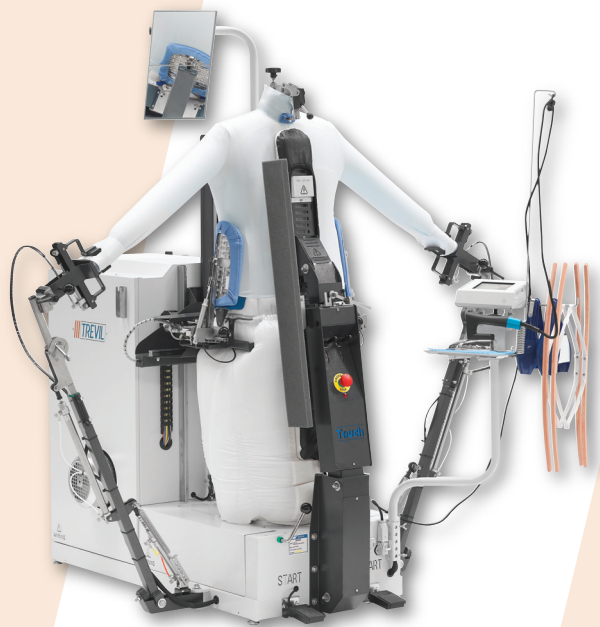


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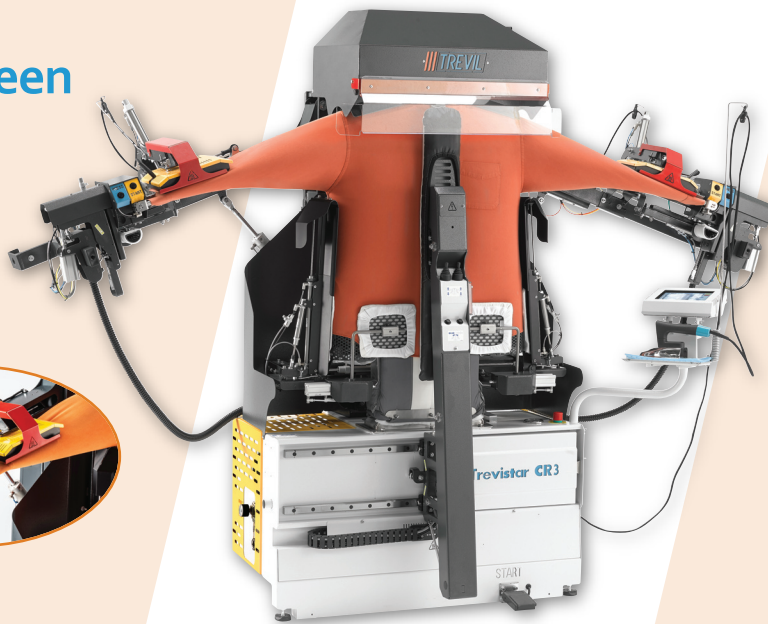
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THE SPOTTING BOARD



BY DAN EISEN

How much wetcleaning is really possible?

The advancement of wetcleaning technology has been significant. I have been teaching wetcleaning for 40 years and have seen cleaners increase their wetcleaning percentage from 5% up to 65%. This is due mainly to advancements made in wetcleaning detergents, additives and spotting agents.

The advancement of wetcleaning is also attributed to

acrylic.

2) Yarn construction. A fiber is spun or thrown into a yarn. The tighter the twist, the more durable it is. Yarns with a high twist are more durable and possess less chance of shrinkage. At this stage all fibers and yarns can be wetcleaned. The next phase of our discussion turns yarns into fabrics that may not be wetcleanable.

shrinkage. Although many wool knits and angoras are not pre-shrunk, it is easy to block the fabric into shape after proper wetcleaning.

When a fabric is a tight weave that is not pre-shrunk, it is difficult (sometimes impossible) to shrink back into shape. For example, when shirts are laundered that are not pre-shrunk, the shrinkage that occurs is often permanent.

cleaning dye setting agent can not set a fugitive dye.

5) Prints. A design imparted to a fabric is referred to as a print. There are many different printing processes used; some may be wetcleanable and some may not be.

Some types of printing that usually are wetcleanable are surface, pigment and gilt print. Some other types of printing may be screen printing, direct printing or discharge printing.

Some of these printing processes may not be resistant to the wetcleaning process.

6) Sizing. Many fabrics are sized to stabilize the fabric and add body, sheen, feel and hand. In wetcleaning, the sizing can be removed, causing a change in the fabric that cannot be corrected. This includes rayon and silk matte jersey as well as many chiffon and taffeta fabrics.

7) Pleating. Any fabric can be intricately pleated and fluted. Silk, cotton, linen or rayon, when intricately pleated, can not be wetcleaned since pleating and fluting will be removed.

This loss of fluting or pleating cannot be easily restored. Pleated fabrics made of polyester, nylon or acrylic are usually safe to wetcleaning because the pleating is heat set and is permanent.

8) Trimmings. A light colored garment trimmed with dark suede or leather may not

be wetcleanable due to the dyes that may bleed. Other types of trimming may also have poor resistance to wetcleaning.

9) Garment construction. A fully lined garment with padding and interfacing may not be wetcleanable if made from silk, wool, acetate and cotton. This is due to the fact that the fabric cannot be pressed or finished to resemble the original state of the fabric.

10) Wedding gowns. Polyester and nylon wedding gowns pose no problem in wetcleaning. Many silks also pose no problem.

There are many wedding gown fabrics that are not suitable for wetcleaning. This includes sized silks with trimming, rayons and acetates. The wetcleaning process can remove the sizing and finish, making it impossible to restore the fabric to its original state.

The finishing agents used by the drycleaner are usually not the same as those applied by the manufacturer. If the wedding gown is intricately trimmed, the refinishing process can be long and tedious, making it cost prohibitive.

Summary. The information presented in this article points out the fact that **the wetcleaning percentage that is possible depends upon the type of fabrics received.**

A cleaner that receives mostly denims, khakis, shirts, some simple wools, knits and polyesters can probably accomplish 100% wetcleaning.

Those cleaners who receive more upscale work such as lined rayons, silks and wools have a greater limitation of their wetcleaning capabilities. The wetcleaning processes that we have can not overturn the limitations of fabric construction, poor dyes and finish.

Dan Eisen is the former chief garment analyst for the National Cleaners Association and also an inductee of the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute's Hall of Fame, the highest honor the association can bestow on an individual. For questions and concerns, he can be reached at (772) 579-5044, or by e-mail at dan-eisen39@gmail.com or through his website at www.garmentanalysis.com.

This article will prove that it is not possible to obtain 100% wetcleaning unless cleaners receive all garments that are low end and casual wear.

the new sophisticated wetcleaning equipment and the tensioning finishing equipment. I have tested hundreds of fabrics and the fact remains that there are still many fabrics that cannot be wetcleaned.

This article will prove that it is **not possible to obtain 100% wetcleaning unless cleaners receive all garments that are low end and casual wear.**

In order to understand what can and what cannot be wetcleaned, we have to understand something about fibers, dyes, yarn construction, finishing agents, pre-shrinkage and fabric construction.

1) Fibers. A fiber is a hair-like substance that can be spun or thrown into a yarn. All fibers can be wetcleaned which includes silk, cotton, linen, acetate, polyester, nylon and

Weaves

If I now interlock yarns and create a weave, the resulting item may not be suitable for immersion in water.

1) Velvet. This is a woven fabric with a third set of pile yarns. Acetate, rayon and silk velvet cannot be wetcleaned. The pile will flatten from water causing distortion that cannot be corrected. Polyester, cotton and nylon velvet can be wetcleaned.

2) Crepe. This is a plain weave fabric with very high twist yarns. A rayon or silk crepe cannot be wetcleaned. The fabric absorbs moisture causing extensive shrinkage. Polyester and nylon crepe can be wetcleaned.

3) Pre-shrinkage. This is a process used in manufacture to stabilize the fabric against

A drapery fabric that is wetcleaned and shrinks only 2% can result in shrinkage over two inches. Lined fabrics such as wools, silks and rayons that shrink in wetcleaning cannot easily be blocked into shape.

Even if you do succeed, it is not time and cost efficient to attempt this restoration. It is interesting to note that manufacturers can produce a pre-shrunk washable rayon or a viscose rayon which is not pre-shrunk and loses 80% of its strength when wet.

4) Dyes. Fabrics can be dyed many different ways. Wool and silk can be dyed with direct, developed, acid, crome or vat dyes. Some of these dyes, when not properly applied, become fugitive and run or bleed when contacting moisture. Even the best wet-



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WRENCH WORKS



BY BRUCE GROSSMAN

Stopping a steam leak with a basic adjustment

Many of my service calls involve leaking buck valves — a common issue that not only makes it difficult to achieve a high-quality finished garment, but also reduces the lifespan of your press pad and frustrates garment finishers.

Because this problem is widespread, I am dedicating this month's article to describing a basic adjustment that frequently stops these costly and annoying leaks.

To make this process easier to understand, I will keep the written instructions brief and rely on an accompanying illustration.

Caution: The area you will be working in is going to be hot, so wear glove.

Before beginning with **Step One**, make sure to shut off the steam and return lines.

Bleed the steam from the press by closing the head and pressing both the steam and vacuum pedals until no more steam escapes.

Open the head and step off the pedals, then allow the press to cool for about 10 to 20 minutes.

Once it has cooled, remove the metal cover that encloses the buck steam valve.

Next, spray the area indicated in **Step One** (see illustration) with a penetrant, such as Liquid Wrench, taking care not to allow overspray to reach the press pad.

Set up your wrenches as depicted in the accompanying illustration.

Use the top wrench to prevent the valve body nut from rotating while you loosen the jam nut.

After loosening the jam nut, screw it down approximately 1/2 inch.

Once these steps are complete, open the shut-off valves for both the steam and return lines.

Then, follow the instructions in the illustration to finish the adjustment.

Afterward, clean the area with a rag to remove any penetrant and debris.

Finally, replace the metal cover over the buck valve and the adjustment is complete.

Should the problem persist, visit our website at www.EZTimers.com, then

ADJUSTING STEAM FLOW THROUGH A TYPICAL AIR OPERATED BUCK VALVE

STEP 1: Hold the VALVE BODY NUT with a 1/2" open end counter wrench then break the JAM NUT loose. Screw the JAM NUT down the valve body about 1/2 inch to allow a range of adjustment.

CAUTION!
THE AREA AROUND THE BUCK VALVE WILL BE HOT SO WEAR GLOVES

DO NOT DISTURB OR LOOSEN THIS NUT

STEP 2: With the foot switch off, adjust the steam flow by screwing the CYLINDER BODY **CLOCKWISE** into the VALVE BODY for a tighter seal.

STEP 3: Step on the foot switch and make sure the valve will open far enough to provide the proper volume of steam. If required screw the CYLINDER BODY slightly out of the VALVE BODY **COUNTER-CLOCKWISE** to achieve the desired volume of steam. You want no steam flow when the foot switch is off, and proper flow when on. When you are satisfied with the adjustment, screw the JAM NUT up to the VALVE BODY NUT, and tighten, as shown in STEP 1.

NOTE

Usually the CYLINDER BODY can be rotated without disconnecting the AIR SUPPLY LINE to the valve. If this is not possible remove the AIR SUPPLY LINE by push the collar of the push in fitting towards the fitting, then pull the airline away from the fitting. After an adjustment is made insert the air line and check the adjustment.

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click the News & Articles section in the header ribbon.

There, you can find the in-depth article on leaking buck valves.

Bruce Grossman is the Chief of R&D for EZtimers Manufacturing. EZtimers manufactures machines that make your machines run better. For those needing to replace Zero-Waste or Galaxy misters, see our SA-

HARA 2 model. For those with boiler problems, check out our EZ-Level and EZ-Dose machines. For more information on EZtimers products, visit www.eztimers.com. Please address any questions or comments for Bruce to bruce@eztimers.com or call (702) 376-6693.

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A new REALSTAR KM218-C was purchased and installed by Sun City Cleaners in Sun City, AZ. Pictured at the start-up were Yong Pak (left) of JP Trading and Don Clayborn, owner of Sun City Cleaners.

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Route Pros will host May leadership conference

Next month, the Route Pros will be hosting its 2026 Spark and Start Leadership Conference at Dublin Cleaners in Columbus, OH.

The event, which will take place from May 12 to 14, will include several guest speakers and will focus on a theme of "GRIT: Guts. Resilience. Initiative. Thrive."

Some of the guest speakers will include Chris White from America's Best Cleaners, Ryan Brown from Dublin Cleaners, Donald Carlson, Jr. of Carlson Cleaners and Tweeds Custom Suits, as well as James Peuster and Jennifer Whitmarsh from the Route Pros.

Things will initially kick off on the evening of Monday, May 11 when the Heartland Fabricare Association (HFA) host a meet and greet reception at 5 p.m.

On Tuesday, there will be a tour of Dublin Cleaners that will begin at 1 p.m.

The educational sessions will begin the following morning following opening remarks at 8:50 a.m.

Program planned for the morning include: "Ice-Dice Baby" at 9:10 a.m., "25 Years of GRIT to GREAT" at 10 a.m., and "Participant Rapid Fire" at 11:30 a.m.

Following lunch, there will be "Speaker Spotlights" that feature Ryan Brown at 1 p.m. and Chris White at 2 p.m. At 3:30 p.m., the day's programs conclude with a GRIT Analysis.

On Thursday morning, the first program will begin at 9 a.m. and focus on the topic of "From Front Counter to CEO."

At 10 a.m., there will be a "Speaker Spotlight"

featuring Donald Carlson, followed by "GRIT Mentorship: What It Truly Means to Develop Your Business" at 11 a.m.

After lunch, the final two educational programs of the conference will be "Leadership That Scales, Without Headcount" at 1 p.m. and "The Final Action" at 2 p.m.

The event is open to everyone in the industry.

Registration costs \$300 for Route Pros members, and \$200 for each additional attendee from the same member company.

Non-members pay \$450 each to attend, and the cost is \$300 for each additional attendee from the same company.

For more information or to register, visit the Route Pros site online at www.theroutepro.com.



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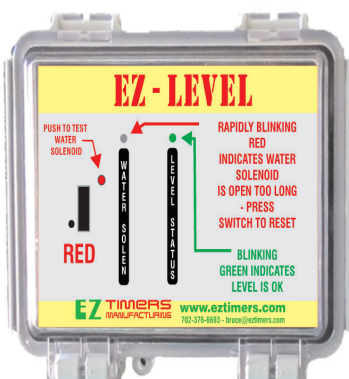
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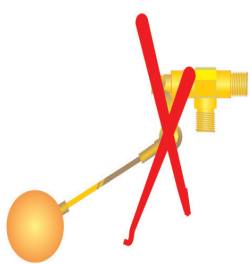
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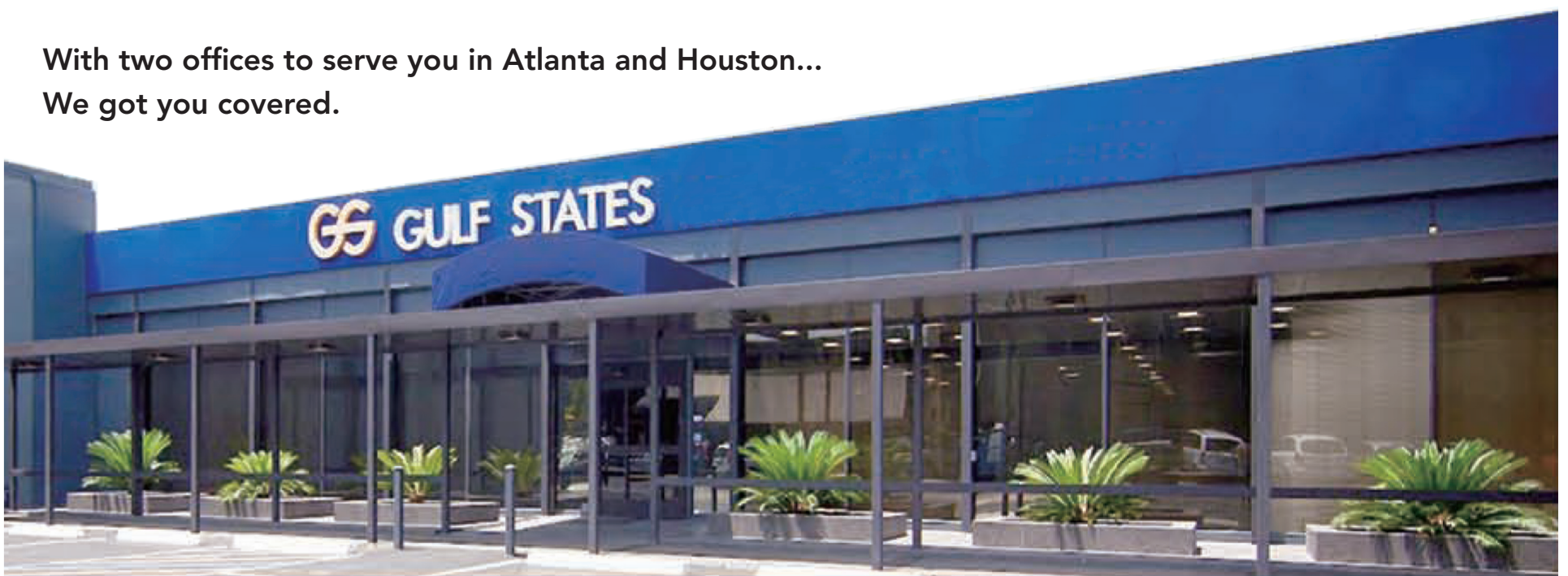
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NCL Profile
 Life goes on

For the Bodin family, starting a cleaning business in Yonkers, NY, was an opportunity for a clean slate. Before that, 12-year-old Paul Bodin and his father, David, had been forced to flee their native country during the Russian Revolution (during which the family business in Kiev was confiscated). An old article from the Herald Tribune...

[Read More](#)

Industry balancing act to continue in 2022

As cleaners prepare to close the door on 2021 (and perhaps throw away the key), the last 11 months have proven to be another arduous challenge, harshly punctuated by shortages of every imaginable kind: hangers, plastic, computer chips, steel and other metals, lumber, packaging materials, zippers and more.

[Read More](#)

FallFest EXPO pushes date back

Even though interest for FallFest EXPO remains high, many cleaners are too short-staffed and overburdened to spend three days devoted to it in early December. As a result, the North East Fabricare Association, the South Eastern Fabricare Association and the Pennsylvania and Delaware Cleaners Association have agreed to move the event...

[Read More](#)

Light always follows darkness
 by Peter Blake

It has been a long, interesting and challenging 18 months, to say the least. I know I have never worked harder or more hours than I have during the past year and a half. I also know I am not alone, and



Don's wishlist to St. Nick: 2021 edition
 by Don Derosiers

BH appy December! It is that time once again for my annual Christmas Wishlist. Every year, I send a plea to the great St. Nick for products that do not exist yet, but I believe they



A Tribute to James Peuster
 by Mark Albrecht and Jennifer Whitmarsh

As we round out 2021, let's recognize an achievement of a familiar personality in our industry... James Peuster, JP (as many know him) begins his 20th year consulting teams



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