WINTER 2017 | VOL. 22 NO. 1

northeast carwasher

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ON THE COVER

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northeast carwasher

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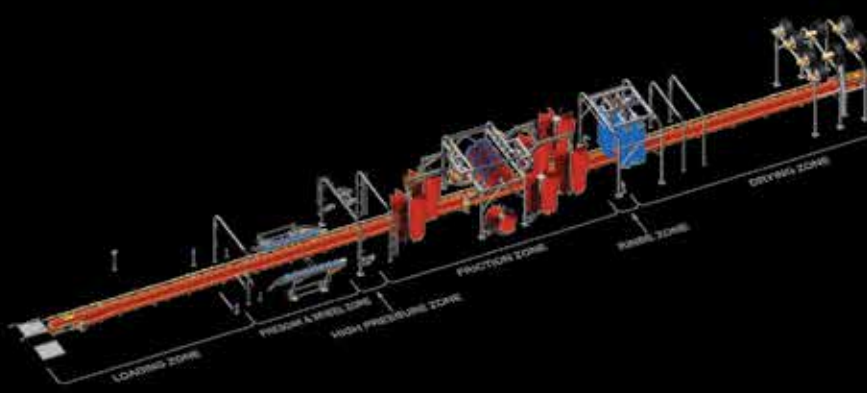

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This issue went to bed just prior to the outcome of the November 8 election. That being said, whether Secretary Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump is elected as our next President, change will happen. Politics aside, we will need to embrace the next President and hope that he/she will lead us into a prosperous, healthy and unified future.

As carwashers, you also need to embrace change in your operations. You need to try new things and not be satisfied with the status quo simply because that is the way you always did things. Our cover story on page 12 focuses on creating visions and strategies to ensure customers for life. It's not an easy task. It takes experimentation and dedication. It takes exceptional customer service and the ability to exceed the needs of your customers on a consistent basis. Remember, it's 10 times more costly to reacquire a customer than to retain one. That high-value customer, who will come back frequently, is the one you need to retain, "value" and reward.

NRCC Breaks Records

It's hard to believe but the 27th NRCC is history and by all accounts a record-breaker with 312 exhibits. Planning for the 28th show is already under way with the Connecticut Carwash Association at the helm led by Co-Chairs Mike Benmoschè and Bob Rossini. You all know how important this show is to each association; financially and educationally. It's the perfect setting to learn, network, see and feel the best and most innovative products our industry has to offer without breaking the bank.

The feature recapping the show is on page 14. It highlights some of the "whys" behind the show. Why Atlantic City, again? Why not a venue on the boardwalk? The NRCC board works tirelessly to provide a show that is not only cost-effective to attendees but vendors. It would be great to take the show to New York City or Philadelphia, but it's also cost prohibitive. The NRCC has grown over the last 27 years and can no longer fit into the smaller venues we once occupied, but yet we are too small for some of the larger venues. The board and management team, however, continually explore other options and my guess is that one day we will venture out of AC, but for now it makes the most sense for our needs.

The board also works tirelessly putting together a comprehensive educational track. We always try to hit the mark but sometimes we don't and for that we apologize. Like a good carwash operator, we try new things and think outside our box. We welcome your feedback and got a lot of it from the recent SurveyMonkey we sent out after the show. But we want to hear from more of you about what seminars you want to attend and how we can improve the product. If you know of a great speaker, by all means, tell us. If you have an idea about a social event, please share it. Shoot an email to info@nrccshow.com. We want to make the 28th NRCC the biggest and best ever. Please help us do just that!

Suzanne L Stansbury
Editor/Publisher Northeast Carwasher magazine

2017 NRCC
October 2-4
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Great Idea!

Balise Car Wash in Springfield, MA, has a unique way of getting customer feedback. They ask for it by displaying a business card that reads, "Share Your Story." On one side of the card is their company website, and on the back of the card they ask their customers to "Share Your Story" and let them know how they are doing. ■

Nora Knows a Good Read!

This future carwasher, Nora Shackett, knows just where to get all the news that's fit to print on the East Coast – the *Northeast Carasher,* of course! She's one smart young lady! ■

11 Make PC/D's 2016 Top 50

Congratulations to the Northeast carwash companies that made *Professional Carwashing & Detailing's* 2016 Top 50 List of Conveyor Carwashes, sponsored by PECO Car Wash Systems. *The listing is made up of the largest conveyor carwash chains in the United States and is ranked by number of locations.

#3 Wash Depot, Malden, MA (51 locations)

#6 Delta Sonic, Buffalo, NY (29 locations)

#11 Golden Nozzle Car Washes, Springfield, MA (21 locations)

#13 Splash Car Wash, Greenwich, CT (19 locations)

#14 ScrubADub Auto Wash Centers, Natick, MA (18 locations)

#17 Hoffman Car Wash, Albany, NY (15 locations)

#18 Mr. Sparkle Car Washes, Hartford, CT (14 locations)

#20 Personal Touch Car Wash & Detail, Cromwell, CT (12 locations)

#21 Haffner's, Lawrence, MA (11 locations)

#21 Shammy Shine, Milford, NJ (11 locations)

#24 Car Pool Car Washes, Richmond, VA (8 locations) ■

2017
Northeast Regional Carwash Convention
Save the Date!
October 2-4, 2017
Atlantic City Convention Center
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WASH VOLUME INDEX

We have taken the pulse of four East Coast operators to see where their volumes are compared to last year (YTD). It appears we only have one winner through October and that's the Mid-Atlantic's Dave DuGoff who is up 11 percent. The rest of the crew is down with upstate New York's Stephen Weekes being down most significantly with a -9 percent fall. Let's hope the white stuff starts to fly this month and everyone's numbers turn around!

Thanks to Doug Rieck on the Jersey Shore, Dave DuGoff in the Mid-Atlantic, Ron Bousquet in Boston and Stephen Weekes in upstate New York for giving us a picture of volumes in their markets. ■

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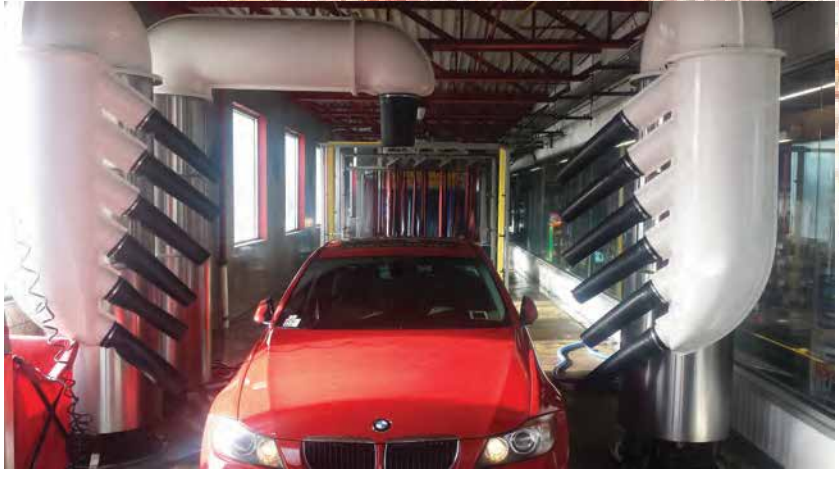

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SONNY'S LAUNCHES NEW SITE WITH MONEY-SAVING FEATURE

Sonny's The CarWash Factory, Tamarac, FL, has launched a new website and included a money-saving feature for all online orders, www.Sonny'sDirect.com, according to a company press release. "Two years ago, we were able to leverage our shipping volume to guarantee three-day ground shipping anywhere in the continental United States, said company CFO David Shield. "Now, with the launch of our new website, we were able to negotiate an even better deal for our customers." He added, "We're calling it our Ground Guarantee, which basically means that no matter how heavy your shipment is, or where it's going, you'll get it in three days or less and the freight charge will be fixed not to exceed a set amount." ■

For more information
visit sonnysdirect.com

CSI LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE

Cleaning Systems, Inc. (CSI), DePere, WI, has launched a new website, www.cleaningsystemsinc.com, according to a company press release. The new site is faster, easier to navigate, more user friendly and is fully functional on all mobile devices.

Key enhancements include searching and sorting products by wash type; FAST form is now posted on all pages; it is mobile friendly; can be used as an improved presentation tool and includes easy access to the iLevel portal. ■

For more information
visit www.cleaningsystemsinc.com

NCS LAUNCHES COLLEGE OF CLEAN

National Carwash Solutions (NCS). Grimes, IA, has launched a NCS College of Clean that opened this past fall. This service provides current, new and prospective carwash operators with the ability to learn from the industry's top professionals and experts through comprehensive training, said a company press release. "The institution combines a specialized course curriculum with class instruction in an interactive training center that allows participants to work directly with functioning carwash equipment and complete systems," said Mike Gillen, CEO of NCS.

The training center features full tunnel equipment to friction and frictionless rollovers providing trainees with all-encompassing instruction and experience, said the release.

2017 NCS College of Clean courses include a: new investor workshop; rollover equipment maintenance and repair; tunnel equipment maintenance and repair; carwash chemical management and carwash management. ■

For more information email collegeofclean@nationalcarwashsolutions.com or visit nationalcarwashsolutions.com

CSI PROMOTES ANTHONY SHIFFLETT

Cleaning Systems, Inc. (CSI), DePere, WI, has promoted Anthony Shifflett to Director of Key Accounts. Shifflett lives in Charlottesville, VA, and has been with CSI since 2013 in the role of Regional Sales Manager in the Mid-Atlantic area.

According to Dave Krause, President and CEO of CSI, "Anthony's expertise in carwash chemistry and strong commitment to customer satisfaction has led to great success in growing CSI-Lustra's presence throughout the region. He is well respected by carwash operators and throughout the industry as a leading expert in providing value through chemical application and performance." ■

For more information
visit www.lustrabear.com

PDQ, DOVER DONATE $10,000 TO MAKE-A-WISH®

As part of its ongoing campaign to support the charitable work of organizations that serve local residents. PDQ Manufacturing, Inc., DePere, WI, a leading manufacturer of inbay automatic vehicle wash systems, has made a $5,000 donation to the Make-A-Wish® Foundation of Wisconsin. The amount was equaled through a matching-grant initiative created by the Dover Foundation, which is the philanthropic arm of PDQ's parent company, Dover Corporation, for a total of $10,000, said a company press release. The Dover Foundation was created in 2011 as a way to help support not-for-profit organizations, causes and/or projects that benefit the local communities in which its operating companies are located.

This marks the fifth consecutive year that PDQ and the Dover Foundation have made a donation to Make-A-Wish of Wisconsin, which grants the wishes of children who have been diagnosed with life-threatening medical conditions. This year's donations helped make the wishes of two ill Wisconsin children come true. ■

For more information visit pdqinc.com and wisconsin.wish.org

MACNEIL UNVEILS NEW WEBSITE

MacNeil, Barrie, Ontario, has unveiled a new, responsive website that makes it even easier for customers to find the information they need online while improving the overall usability, said a company press release. "MacNeil's new website has greatly improved the ease-of-use for our customers when it comes to identifying and accessing the information they are searching for," said Mike Gilen, CEO of National Carwash Solutions.

With the website redesign, MacNeil has moved the parts ordering portion of the old site to a separate site, www.macneilwash.direct.

MacNeil Wash Systems, a National Carwash Solutions company, provides carwash equipment to the tunnel carwash industry, automotive dealers, fleet and rental markets. ■

For more information
visit nationalcarwashsolutions.com, ryko.com and macneilwash.com

DRB, UNITEC UNITE

DRB Systems, Inc., Akron, OH, has joined forces with Unitec, Elkridge, MD, according to a company press release. DRB Systems' President and CEO Bill Morgenstern said he and Unitec President Pam Piro have agreed to bring their two companies together formally after many years of collaboration. The long-standing relationship has enabled both companies to benefit from market experience, customer insight, technological innovation and passion about commitment to customers' success, said the release.

The DRB and Unitec operations will retain their identies, employees and locations, according to the release. "Officially, DRB Systems has acquired Unitec, but the deal is just the tip of the iceberg," said Morgenstern. "Together, DRB and Unitec will deliver the power and energy to continue leading our industry, but now with the combined strength of these two premier providers working in concert with each other to serve our customers' needs," he said.

Piro noted the newly combined organization has remarkable resources, talent, experience and market penetration. The acquisition brings together nearly 300 employees serving a combined install base of more than 14,000 carwashes. ■

For more information visit www.drbsystems.com and www.startwithunitec.com

BLENDCO HIRES JERRY VICERS

Blendco Systems, Bristol, PA, a subsidiary of DuBois Chemicals, has hired Jerry Vicers as a regional manager, according to a company press release. Vickers will be a sales associate responsible for developing and implementing Blendco's strategic tunnel program.

Vickers has more than 19 years of experience in the carwash industry. "We are excited to have Jerry on our team and look forward to his success within our tunnel division," said Brett McCurdy, president of Blendco systems and the DuBois Transportation Davison. Added National Tunnel Sales Manager Bill Carbonel, "Jerry brings with him the skillsets necessary to help us continue our aggressive growth in the tunnel market. Jerry joins a team of exceptional professionals that have helped establish Blendco as a leader in the tunnel market segment." ■

For more information visit www.blendco.com

BAGNARA JOINS ICS TEAM

Innovative Control Systems (ICS), Wind Gap, PA, has hired Tom Bagnara as Director of Petroleum Sales North America, according to a company press release. Bagnara is a 26-year veteran of the carwash industry with an extensive background in sales management, key account management and distributor relations. He will be responsible for new business development of C-Store/Petroleum corporate accounts, as well as developing and maintaining relations with the distribution channel in North America.

"Tom has proven himself as a leader in the vehicle care industry," said Brian Bath, ICS's Vice President of Sales. "He has been involved in all facets of the industry from chemistry development to manufacturing support to account management." ■

For more information visit www.icscarwashsystems.com

CAROLINA PRIDE CELEBRATES 50 YEARS; OPENS NEW MANUFACTURING FACILITY

Carolina Pride Carwash Systems & Solutions, Roxboro, NC, celebrated its 50th year in business with a grand opening luncheon at its new 90,000 square foot manufacturing and distribution facility in Timberlake, NC, in late October, said a company press release. Carolina Pride President and Owner Dale Reynolds, hosted the grand opening luncheon for more than 200 guests at the new facility. North Carolina Governor, Pat McCrory, Roxboro Mayor Merilyn Newell, Person County Commissioner Chairman David Newell, Person County Board of Education Chairman Gordon Powell and Piedmont Community College President Dr. Water Bartlett, were among the special guests, according to a company press release. Carolina Pride founders, Billy and Kay Reynolds, were the honored guests. According to Dale Reynolds, "The facility is an opportunity for us to continue to grow."

Reynolds also thanked Gordon Powell, Chairman of the Person County Board of Education for Carolina Pride's financial gift to help fund the Electrical Trades Program at Person County High School. Carolina Pride and the Board of Education have worked together to develop high school training in specific areas that will help train students for employment opportunities in the carwash industry. ■

For more information visit cpcarwash.com

Carwash Operators Must Create Vision, Strategy to Attract Customers for Life

By Alan M. Petrillo

Carwash operators face a lot of hurdles in attracting and keeping customers, from basics like providing a quality product, having a clean and inviting facility, a properly trained staff, and top-notch marketing and promotion. Yet operators also need to develop a customer strategy and customer vision, according to a nationally-recognized marketing professional, as well as provide stellar customer service, in order to produce customers for life.

Steven Jeffes, a marketing and business turnaround expert, said that the foundation for any program looking to create customers for life relies on determining a customer strategy and vision.

"You have to ask yourself, 'What kind of service do I want to deliver to my customers,' and 'What is my business going to be recognized for,'" Jeffes said. "You have to determine how you are going to serve the customer, and when that customer leaves your premises, know how they will identify with your business, and how they'll feel about your business."

Once an operator has figured out how to do all those things, Jeffes said, all the internal business processes, all employees have to deliver what is determined to be the company's customer vision.

"Remember, it's ten times more costly to reacquire a customer than it is to retain them," Jeffes observed. "Sure, there are the shoppers who buy around from different businesses, but you want the loyal customer, who is usually a high-value customer, who will come back frequently and spend a lot when he is at your business." Jeffes added, "You always have to give good service so those people will feel comfortable giving you a good share of their wallet and remain loyal to you. Typically, you'll see 80 percent of your revenue from 20 percent of your premium customers."

First, an operator has to identify those high-value customers, and then do everything possible, from loyalty programs to perks for frequency of use, to recognize them and reward them for their loyalty, Jeffes pointed out.

"If you don't recognize and reward them, it's a detriment to your company," he said. "You can't treat those high-value customers as an average customer. If you want them to feel good about your business, you have to reward them in some way."

Mark Curtis, chief operating officer of Splash Car Wash, in Greenwich, CT, concurs with Jeffes' assessment of treating customers well.

It may be hackneyed advice, Curtis said, but "treat your customers well and they'll stick with you. Ultimately, whether new or old, customer retention is primarily predicated on how well they are treated when they come in, and how clean their car is."

Curtis added that, "I'm sure that operators who have POS (point of sale) systems that can track their customers realize their ability to know their best customers."

Splash Car Wash has 18 locations in Connecticut and New York, offering full service, hand wash, and express exterior carwashing, oil lube service, and full and express detailing.

Paul Ferruolo, owner of Mr. Sparkle Car Wash, in Hartford, CT, believes that developing a customer for life comes down to giving the customer good value.

"To develop a customer for life, you have to provide them with a clean carwash location, backed up by excellent customer service, and a quality product," Ferruolo said. "Everything needs to work well at your location so you're sure you're delivering the quality you intend. That's giving your customers the best value possible."

Mr. Sparkle Car Wash has 14 locations in Connecticut and Massachusetts offering soft cloth and touchless automatic in-bay carwashing, as well as traditional self-service bays.

Jeffes noted that carwash operators have to monitor what customers are saying about their business.

"If someone has a particularly positive review about your business, contact that person and get permission to use their review in your marketing programs," he said. "On the flip side, when there's a negative review, you want to be on top of that in short order. Respond quickly and show that you are doing the best to make the situation right for the customer. You don't want to ignore a bad review, but rather should show yourself as a proactive, quality-conscious owner who cares about his customers."

Jeffes also recommended that carwash operators post customer-friendly policies on social media. "That showcases your customer vision, and when people see how you have turned around a customer situation, it shows them you go the extra mile for your customers," he said.

Jeffes pointed out that Facebook is the most interactive of the social media platforms, while Instagram is great for posting photos, and YouTube for posting videos. "Use Facebook as a hub for central interaction with your customers," he said. "Also make use of the other social media platforms, and link among them all. It will give your business a dynamic presence, where you can incentivize customers through contests. You might want to post the best customer videos on site and give a reward for the best three videos. That will encourage customers to participate and be a part of your business, building loyalty at the same time."

In addition, such interaction can be entertaining and have an educational value, Jeffes added.

"It makes it engaging for customers to go to your site," he said, and shows you as customer friendly."

Finally, Jeffes noted, "Every part of your organization has to be in sync and of equal value to the customer, and all highly consistent. You don't want any broken links in the chain, so you have to continually monitor things to be sure your customers are delivered a high, consistent value." ■

Alan M. Petrillo is a Tucson, AZ-based journalist, a former upstate New Yorker, and contributing editor of Northeast Carwasher. *He's the author of the historical mysteries,* Full Moon *and* Asylum Lane, *and his latest historical mystery,* A Case of Dom Perignon, *all available at www.amazon.com.*

NRCC Continues to Evolve, Innovate

The 27th Northeast Regional Carwash Convention is in the record books. The annual event, September 19-21 at the Atlantic City Convention Center (ACCC), was the largest show in the NRCC's history with 312 booths and 1461 attendees, also up from last year's number. We talk a lot about the show in the pages of this magazine, but let's ask this year's Chairperson, Ron Bousquet of the New England Carwash Association (NECA), what really makes this show tick and why it should be a "must attend" for every East Coast operator.

NECA President Dave Ellard (left) and 2016 NRCC Chairman Ron Bousquet present Patti Kaplan with the 2016 Most Distinguished Person Award at the Awards Luncheon.

2016 Hall of Fame recipient Dave DuGoff of the MCA. He was awarded the honor by 2016 NRCC Chairman Ron Bousquet.

ICS East Coast Sales Manager Brad Metcalf (center) meets with customers on the show floor.

NC: You were one of the original innovators who conceptualized this show in Mory's, adjacent to the Yale campus, more than 27 years ago. Did you ever think it would evolve into the stellar trade show and educational opportunity it is today?

RB: When we started thinking about this shown all we wanted to do was to bring good education to our members who couldn't make the big shows (ICA) and also provide networking opportunities. We also thought that some social event would be good for members who wanted to bring spouses and have a good time. I don't think that any one of us could have envisioned the show today.

NC: The original tenent of the NRCC founders was to make this show accessible to all East Coast operators. They wanted a viable educational and trade show option in case the national show was out of reach financially or logistically for their members and fellow operators. The show has been in the Catskills, Saratoga, Boston, Providence and Ledyard, CT, but it appears that it's current "home" is Atlantic City. Tell us why.

RB: Yes, the original intent was to move the show to difference parts of the Northeast to let small operators have a chance to get good education and to see new equipment and not have to be gone from their location long. However, when we have the show in Atlantic City we get the best attendance and that is what our exhibitors like. Also, Atlantic City is very reasonable for all to attend. Hotel rooms at our host hotel are extremely reasonable and the hotel is first rate. If we traveled to Philadelphia or Baltimore, for example, rooms would be must more expensive as would exhibiting for our vendors.

Continued on page 16...

The pool at the Water Club was a breath-taking setting for the Welcome Reception sponsored by ICS.

Kleen-Rite Corp.

Micrologic Associates

The 2016 NRCC has a record-breaking 312 booths and more than 1460 attendees.

Erie Brush

Frank Millman Distributors

Hydro-Flex, Inc.

Qual Chem LLC

Towels by Doctor Joe

More photos on pages 16-22!

NRCC ... *continued from page 15.*

NC: Have you explored other venues?

RB: We have and continue to do so, but the size of our show now inhibits us from some of the smaller venues. In fact, the Atlantic City Convention Center (ACCC) is the only facility that can accommodate us now in Atlantic City. The rest of the venues are too small.

NC: How have you been able to be so dedicated to the success of the NRCC while running your own business? Why is so important to you?

RB: When I started in this industry my father in-law, Tom Rando, was on the NECA board and one of the things that he would say is that we need to give back to our industry what it gave us. He would share ideas with everyone because he would always get new ideas back, and in the end that is how our industry got bigger and better.

NC: The NRCC board conducted a SurveyMonkey right after this year's show to gauge vendor and attendee sentiment, and to work toward improving an already exceptional product. What did you learn?

RB: For the most part we did very well, yet we did learn that we can always do better. In regard to education, our Welcome Reception, and the trade show floor attendees and vendors gave us some great ideas to help us improve our show.

NC: Education has always been extremely important for NRCC attendees and the board. How difficult is it to keep it fresh and relevant while providing your attendees with a well-rounded lineup?

RB: Education is very important to our show and that is why our show has been able to grow. Every year the board spends many hours trying to see what our members want and need for education; not just what is popular now but always looking to see what's coming in the future. And with the showing continuing to grow, we hope to get the best speakers that we can.

NC: You have dedicated so much time, energy and sweat into making this an exceptional event. What advice do you have to newer board members who are still grasping the culture of the NRCC?

RB: I would like the new board members to always try and do better every year. Always be conscious of what worked and what didn't and make it better. Don't ever be afraid to try something new; some will work great and some will not but you will never know until you try. And one last thing, listen to the attendees and vendors because what they have to say may be one of those GREAT ideas. ■

Continued on page 18 ...

The team from ICS, sponsors of the Welcome Reception at the Water Club.

Heather and Mike Ashley and Dana Elchlin.

Ofer Tal and his son.

Donato DePinto and Stu Levy.

The crew with Posh's Chris Zona (third from left) enjoyed the Welcome Reception!

Team Carwash Insurance Program by McNeil strike a handsome pose.

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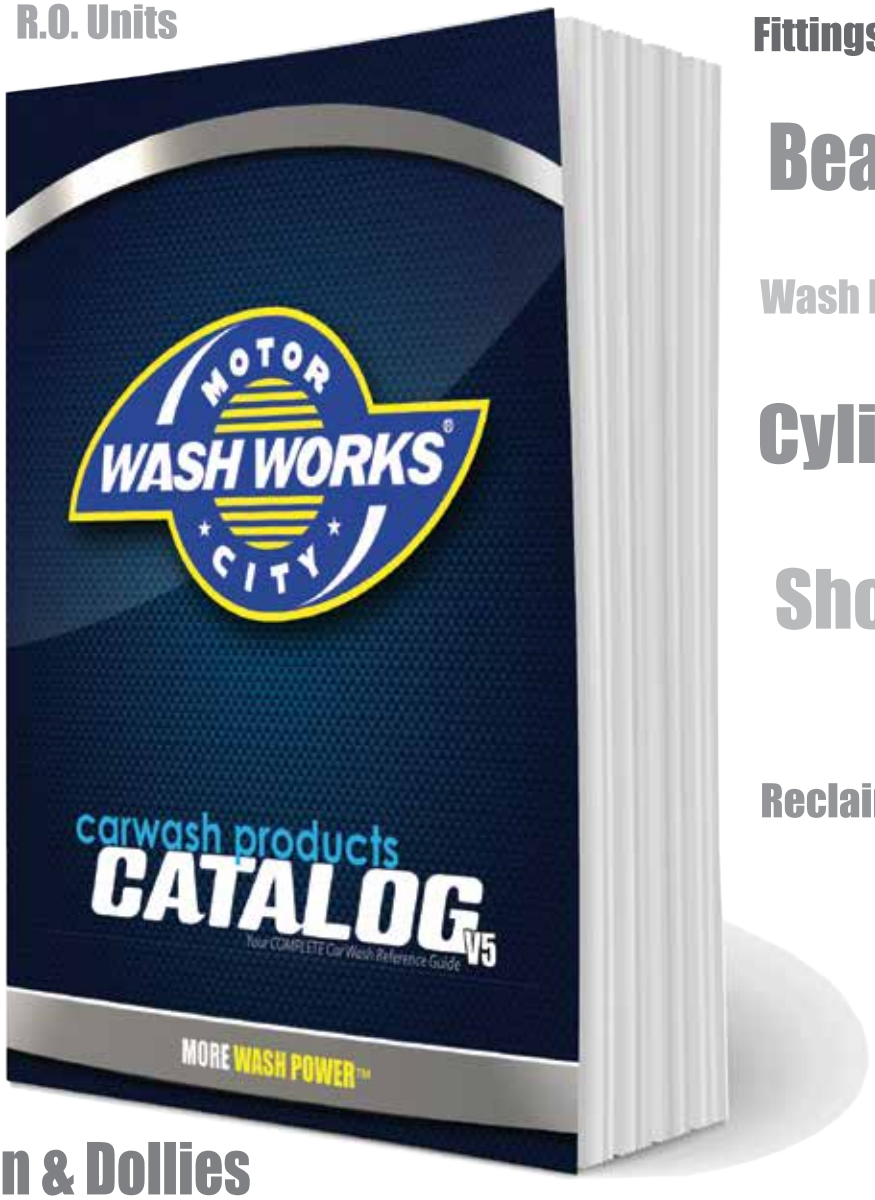

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The PC & D and AutoLaundry News teams enjoy the night.

NECA members Steve Harris, Ron Bousquet, Bobby Paisner and Nathan Harris.

The NRCC management team of Brigitte Connors and Heather Courtney.

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Continued on page 20...

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NRCC ... *continued from page 18.*

Jeff and Allison Shackett from Car Washing Systems.

Coast Commercial Credit

The NRCC, now in its 27th year, never disappoints!

Sonny's the Cawash Factory

Auburn, NY, operators Terri and Chris Kubarek chat with Diamond Shine reps.

TSS and South Brunswick Carwash strike a pose.

Motor City Wash Works

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NRCC ... *continued from page 20.*

The lovely Linda Feriod and ICS' Brian Bath

Mark and Chris Kubarek

Rochester's Team Landers

NYSCWA operators Gary Baright and Doug Kleeschulte

Louise and Fred Grauer

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So You Sold The Wash, Now What? Part 2

By Lou Rendemonti

In my last article, I explained that because of low distribution rates on an investment portfolio, otherwise known as the "safe withdrawal rate," the carwash operator who sells his business has a paramount problem trying to match his pre-retirement income cash flow and lifestyle. In the old days, the success of your retirement was based on some number. The bigger the number, the bigger your retirement. However, what is most important is what to do with that number. The success of your retirement is dependent on two factors; how much guaranteed income you have, and taking the risks of inflation, long-term care volatility and longevity off the table. So what is the carwash operator to do in order to increase cash flow in retirement?

The only possible solution is creating a pension for himself using actuarial science. Back in 1981, 80 percent of workers in large companies had a pension. Fast forward to today and only 18 percent of workers in the private sector are covered by a pension (Bureau of Labor Statistics December 2012). Corporate America, Union employees and government agencies use actuarial science from the life insurance industry to calculate pensions. Now the individual must do the same. By using a "Life Only" income annuity, an individual can create a pension for himself. However, in order to calculate the highest guaranteed income for life, the annuity must be based only on the participant's life. At death, payments cease and whatever unused principal is spread out to the rest of the individuals in the pool. These are called "Mortality Credits" and only a life insurance company can do that. Stocks, CD's or bonds cannot do this. That is how the life insurance industry is able to pay out between a 6-9 percent distribution rate depending on the age of the annuitant.

But what if you have a spouse, family members still dependent on you or seek to leave a legacy to a charity or cause you feel strongly about? If you select a life annuity and die prematurely, payments stop. The solution is having permanent life insurance on the annuitant to cover or replenish the annuity principal to a spouse, children or favorite charity income tax free. Although most life insurance policies end after a certain period of time is used up known as level-term policies, permanent life insurance is in force for the rest of your life. Redirecting current savings, retirement plan contributions or repositioning safe assets can help you acquire permanent insurance so you can position yourself to be able to take advantage of this efficient strategy.

Throughout my 25+ years working in the retirement planning industry, the happiest least stressed retirees are the ones with the most guaranteed income for life. Combined with Social Security, adequate reserves and an investment portfolio for inflation, guaranteed income is the goal.

In conclusion, through a combination of permanent life insurance and lifetime income annuities, a retiree is able to achieve much higher distribution rates on the proceeds from the sale of the carwash. However, the carwash operator needs to plan now to guarantee that he will be able to take advantage of this planning strategy in the future. This strategy also known as "spending your assets down" or a "permission slip" to spend all your assets and thus creating maximum income at retirement solves most of the threats a retiree is going to face like market risk sequence of returns risk, inflation, deflation, critical illness, and the most serious threat – longevity risk. Why wait to do this in the future? Because age, health status and cash flow constraints may prevent one from initiating this important strategy. Now is the time to get your ducks in a row so you too can take advantage of much higher distribution rates and take all the risks off the table.

For a complimentary retirement income analysis, please call our office or email me and mention this article. ■

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21 Tough Questions to Foster An Excellent Customer Experience

By JoAnna Brandi

"Delivering a great customer experience" has become imperative in business. Competition is tougher than ever and the "customer experience," for most all of the companies I work for is a top strategic objective.

Of course, that makes sense. When customers have great experiences with your carwash they are more likely to buy more, more willing to tell others and act as referral sources. This makes doing business easier and your bottom line more robust. An increase of only 5 percent in your profitable customers can drive 25-100 percent more profit to your bottom line.

These days I'm focusing more on helping clients remember that a customer's experience is usually only as good as the employee's experience. It's simplistic to say a happy employee = a happy customer. We know it's more complicated than that, but we can say that an engaged and happy employee who is focused on creating a great customer experience is significantly more likely to achieve it.

Happy workers are up to 31 percent more productive than unhappy ones and they are three times more creative. Happy salespeople sell 37 percent more, and companies with happy engaged people have happier more loyal customers – some estimates say up to 50 percent more loyalty! Wow. I'd like you to look within and ask some seriously tough questions about your internal environment to get you ready to improve the customer experience and build a more sustainable competitive advantage. It all starts with your people and the culture in your workplace!

In order for employees to provide the level of "caring" that customers want to experience, companies had better provide an engaging work experience that is rewarding, meaningful and fun (yes, fun!) to those responsible for consistently delivering remarkable customer care.

The bottom line: If you want to create more value in the marketplace, you must create more value in the workplace. If you're ready to make that leap, and you want to get the most and the best from your workforce take my 21 Tough Questions to your next leadership meeting to raise the workplace issues that need a value-boost. They'll also raise everyone's consciousness about what is and isn't working in your company culture. Are you ready?

1. Is the level of trust in our organization high or low? If low, how might we improve it?

2. How do we help individuals cultivate a feeling of pride in their work?

3. When we delegate responsibility, do we delegate authority along with it?

4. Is a participative process in place that encourages employees' input in matters that affect their future?

5. Knowing that creativity and innovation are critical in a competitive economy, is training and development an important part of our strategic plan?

6. What methods do we use to show people we appreciate them and their work?

7. What mechanisms are in place to reward the kinds of customer-caring behavior we want to see repeated?

8. Do employees really believe that open and honest communication on their part will not damage their careers here? Do they feel emotionally safe?

9. What are we doing to encourage people to constantly think about "continuous improvement?"

10. What flexible work practices are in place to accommodate workers' growing needs for family balance? Are people able to use these options without fear of recrimination?

11. What are the five most important values in our organization? How are they demonstrated by our leadership and staff every day?

12. On a scale of 1-10, how much real, honest-to-goodness fun are people having in our organization? How happy are they at work?

13. What five things do we have in place to support wellness in our organization?

14. What are we doing to foster "emotional literacy" in our leadership team?

15. If we ask our employees to take risks, are we wholeheartedly accepting their failures (learning experiences) as well as their successes?

16. Do we really believe our employees are capable of being "fully empowered"? If not, what's missing?

17. Are there negative consequences when someone makes the decision to please the customer rather then please the boss?

18. Have we changed our corporate definitions of success to encompass non-monetary things like happiness, job satisfaction and individual growth? If so, how do we measure it?

19. Have we recently surveyed the staff to find out how they really feel about working here, and whether or not they really have what they need to take "exquisite" care of our customers?

20. Many changes have occurred over the past few years, both reactive and proactive; what are we doing to support the people who are upset by the changes? What system do we have in place to help people through the change process?

21. And here is one more question to shake things up at your next leadership meeting: If the most important factor in gaining a customer's loyalty is the "customer experience" – their perception of the value they received – what are we doing to coach our team to the highest level of skill necessary to consistently create that branded experience?

Contrary to what many believe, the challenge of leadership is to ask the right questions rather than have the right answers. My 21 Tough Questions should give you a good start. Remember, if you want to create more value in the marketplace, you must create more value in the workplace. Go to it!

JoAnna Brandi is the author of "54 Ways to Stay Positive in a Changing, Challenging and Sometimes Negative World." You can learn more from JoAnna at Joanna@returnonhappiness.com or visit www.ReturnOnHappiness.com

JoAnna Brandi

JoAnna was the Keynote Speaker at the 2016 NRCC in Atlantic City in September. Visit www.nrccshow.com to view her presentation!

Got Happiness?

Happy customers become loyal customers – they come back, buy more and bring friends. Happy employees are more productive, more engaged and healthier than unhappy ones. According to Gallup, the 70% of unhappy and disengaged employees in this country cause the American economy about $600 billion a year in direct costs alone.

A successful 'Customer Experience' is all about emotions. *If a customer feels good about the value you provide - if they are happy doing business with you - they are more likely to return.* If you are looking to create consistently ***positive*** customer experiences that differentiate you from the competition - *look to your people first.*

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Dear Venus and Mars,

Winter washing is upon us ... what tips have youl learned over the years to make high-volume days run smoothly?

Heather Ashley

Venus Says

That is a very timely question as Mike and I are at our most rural location as I begin to write this. We have a total of three very rural country self-serve washes with automatics. We just started our winter preparations this weekend (late October) beginning with the final mowing of the season.

I would say the main thing we do to prepare for the heavy use times is to prepare for the freezing temps. In fact, we have learned to over do it in terms of prevention.

In our location that is surround by mountains, we have learned the hard way how to keep from icing up. We use a combination of a heated trough and weep system. We have engineered a heated trough for plumbing going to and from the bays. We use hot water from the floor heat as well as thermostatically controlled heat tape. We learned the other winter that we sometimes need both. Think ice cave. Somewhere I have one picture though it may be a mental one. It was a bad day, week, and month. It is still not ok to bring it up.

In all of our locations we use a weep system that we reclaim. For the automatics we have one set off breakaway doors and one with metal garage doors. Our doors are fixed and do not open for washing. Doors are shut when temperatures loom near freezing. The automatics are heated but the expense of heating the outside all night along with the potential for freeze up outweighs what we would make in profit.

We used industrial propane heaters in one location. Our automatics shut down at 10 pm due to several Autoteller thefts in the past.

We typically check our washes two or three times a day

Continued on page 31 ...

Paul Vallario

Mars Says

We all look forward to those busy carwash days where the cars are lined up down the street. It seems we wait all year long for the snow and pollen to arrive so we can max out our volume. Along with the increased volume comes the increased likelihood of problems occurring, however. So, being prepared to handle the volume is extremely important on these days.

First and foremost you are going to want to make sure all of your equipment is prepared for the volume. Is everything in peak working order? It would be a good time to fix that loose roller wheel that you've been meaning to do for a week or unclog the rinse nozzle that you noticed yesterday; all little things you can get away with on an average day. But when the tunnel is maxed out you want everything working as it should.

Just as important as the equipment is the chemical room. You never want a drum of product to run dry when cars are bumper to bumper in the tunnel. Go through your inventory and make sure you have more than enough product on hand. Always keep back-up drums nearby so that a change is quick and seamless. And never let a drum run dry because it will take several cars to pass through to get the line primed.

One of the most important things, and probably the most difficult, is making sure you are adequately staffed. On those peak days you can never have too much help. It is good to factor in people for positions you may not normally need like directing traffic and property clean up. Staffing a carwash is never easy with the weather inconsistencies we face. It seems that whenever I have a large staff it gets cloudy but being shorthanded is even worse. There is nothing more frustrating than

Continued on page 31 ...

Venus and Mars, aka Heather Ashley and Paul Vallario, are carwash industry veterans. Heather Ashley is the President of the Mid-Atlantic Carwash Association. She is also co-owner of Virginia Car Wash Industries, Inc. and Shenandoah Valley Coin Laundries, and Ashley's Shenandoah Valley Rental Properties in Toms Brook, VA. You can reach Heather at mhashley@gmail.com, as well as Linkedin and Twitter @hrashley or www.thecarwashblog.com. Paul Vallario operates Westbury Personal Touch Car Wash in Westbury, NY, and is the President of Urban Avenue Carwash Distributors and Consulting. He is a board member of the New York State Car Wash Association. You can reach Paul at iwashcars@optonline.net.

If you have a question for Venus & Mars please send it to: Media Solutions, 2214 Budd Terrace, Niskayuna, NY 12309, mediasolutions@nycap.rr.com

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Is This the Right Part for the Job?

By Gary Sokoloski

These are the parts of our lives. No, not the good ones, they are the ones that keep our carwashes running day in and day out. While some may say a part is just a part, it takes the right part, in the right application, to make a machine work correctly. While most of us shop on price, it is more important to shop for the part that is not only the correct fit but also the correct material for the job at hand.

It seems that on a daily basis we are faced with the question, "Is this the right part for this job?" Understanding the application, tolerances and environment of any part we choose, is one of the most important and lasting decisions in any project. While it may seem as simple as part "A" from this vendor is the same as the one we found online from another at a lower price, be careful to look at the details, materials and make up of these items.

To illustrate let's use a simple and common plumbing part known as a hose barb. This item is most commonly used to convert from hard plumbing (copper, stainless or PVC) piping to a flexible hose. We prefer to use what are referred to as hex barbs. A hex barb is a fitting that has male pipe threads to screw into the hard plumbing on one end and a tapered barb on the other in which the hose connects. The defining word in the description is "hex," which refers to the part inbetween the male pipe thread and the barb. It is hex shaped so that a standard open-end wrench can fit on it to tighten or loosen the fitting. If this part were to come from a typical carwash manufacturer, it would be considered standard. But walk into almost any plumbing supply house or home improvement store and try and find this part. It is almost impossible. They all carry what could be considered the same part in functionality, however, the big difference being the "hex" is not there. It is rounded and meant to be tightened with a pair of channel lock pliers or a pipe wrench, which is fine for a plumber or a do it yourselfer; not so good for a carwash application.

In many of the assemblies used in the carwash industry, the space is not available to use those tools and they can also leave undesirable marks on the fitting from the teeth on the wrenches. This small but important difference can be found in almost all the plumbing parts we use or need to find replacement for on a daily basis.

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Also be aware of the material makeup of parts. The most common materials used in our industry are stainless steel, brass or PVC. Some manufacturers might use galvanized fittings (you should think twice before buying those products). If you are building a soap chemical manifold and know it is an aggressive product, don't use a brass or galvanized fitting. Get the stainless steel or PVC fitting that might cost a little more now but will most likely out live whatever system you are putting it on. On the other hand, if you are building an air manifold in the equipment room, brass is the perfect product to use, at a more reasonable price, for this application.

This is why it is so important to find a supplier or suppliers who have the parts you want not just the parts you need. It is also a good idea to make sure when you find this supplier or suppliers, in your area or on the web, to make sure they have all the items you need or they can get them quickly. Almost nothing bothers a technician, installer or operator more than having to use the wrong part to put together something that may last for a decade or more. These little things are the difference between getting the job done and getting the job done right. ■

Gary Sokoloski

Gary Sokoloski owns Centerline Carwash Sales and Service in Wales, ME. He can be reached at 207/375-4593 Office, 774/248-0171, or at gscarwash@gmail.com

Venus ... *continued from page 28.*

ourselves during the winter as opposed to once a day in warmer months. We also hire someone locally to close the wash doors as needed.

The bottom line is that we run from location to location ensuring nothing freezes. When snow falls above an inch or so, we push our own lots. Our ice melt is near the doors and our shovels are at the ready. We eagerly await the months of increased revenue. ■

Mars ... *continued from page 28.*

not being able to process all the cars efficiently. So, be sure to staff accordingly and always try to foresee that monster day.

Another tip is to stock up on small change for your cashiers or greeters. Whether you go through singles, fives, tens or quarters the most make sure you have an adequate supply. Things will slow down dramatically if you run out of singles!

All in all these little things can make a big day go much smoother. Don't get caught with your pants down and be prepared. ■

What Towels Do Other Carwashes Use?

By Valerie Sweeney

Every few years I take a look at a large sampling of Northeast carwashes to see what types of towels are being used. In 2008, cotton terry towels were still the preferred towel for many carwashes. When re-exploring the towel usage in 2013, Terry towels were still most popular overall in the Northeast, but microfiber towels were increasingly being used by many washes. In 2016, our findings indicated another shift.

We took a sampling of 100 carwash and detail centers in the Northeast who ordered towels sometime between 2015 and 2016. When comparing Huck towels, microfiber and terry towels, here is what we found:

- **Huck towels:** Accounted for a total of 20 percent of all towel orders.
- **Microfiber towels:** Accounted for a total of 40 percent of all towel orders.
- **Terry towels:** Accounted for a total of 40 percent of all towel orders.

There are many reasons why Microfiber towels are now equally as popular as Terry towels. First, Microfiber towels used to be a more expensive option. Over the years, the price of high-quality Microfiber towels has decreased. The price of Microfiber and Terry are now very similar. In some instances, Microfiber can be the lower cost option.

Secondly, most carwashers are more comfortable with using Microfiber cloths now, and are doing a better job at laundering and maintaining them. When Microfiber towels first came onto the market, many carwash operators were unknowingly damaging their towels by treating them like regular cotton towels and washing them either in hot water or drying them with high heat. The tiny microscopic filaments of Microfiber can melt in a dryer, and the towel doesn't look any different out of the wash when this occurs. As a result, people naturally just thought that Microfiber towels didn't work. There is more education out there, and owners/operators are more knowledgeable. This is producing better results, and towels are lasting longer.

The third reason is that Microfiber is the most versatile of all towel types. Microfiber towels can be used to clean windows, bodies and interiors. They are equally effective for body drying towels as they are for cleaning windows.

Huck Usage

There are still a large group of carwashers who continue using cotton Huck towels for glass, especially in the winter.

Continued on page 34 ...

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Towel Tips ... *continued from page 32.*

Some carwashes have observed that using microfibers in frigid cold winter months can be challenging here in the Northeast. They absorb so much liquid that sometimes they freeze in the cold temperatures and don't perform as well, particularly on windows. This seems to be the main reason why some washes have chosen to stick with Hucks.

Lastly, Microfiber towels can be a huge energy saver. You can fit many more Microfiber towels than cotton Terry towels in a typical laundry load. It is imperative that microfibers be washed in cold to lukewarm water. Both of these factors help to drive down overall energy costs.

One thing that many carwash and detail centers have in common is that they typically employ a mix of towel types in their business. I have referred to a "towel toolbox" in my previous articles. A towel toolbox is simply about having the right mix of towels for your wash, whether it's Terry on the body and Microfiber on the windows, or all the same type of towels color-coded for specific tasks. Find the mix that works best for your wash. ■

Valerie Sweeney

Valerie Sweeney is a towel consultant with ERC Wiping Products. You can reach her at 800/225-8473 or erc@ercwipe.com

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27TH NRCC Filled with Innovation, Opportunity

By Doug Rieck

Just as the rest of the country is awash in the promise and change represented by the recent Presidential election, we in the carwash industry are waiting for nature's decision about our winter washing season. Will it snow? If it does snow, will it rain the next day or turn sunny? The long-range forecast looks promising but there are no guarantees with Mother Nature. The dreaded El Nino is gone, but is it enough to break last year's pattern? Certainly, weather can affect any retail business, but here in the Northeast the additional volume that snow and salt generates is relied upon. That's why attending the Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC) is important for us. The timing is perfect (in the fall) so that we can plan and make changes in time for the coming wash season. When we visit The Carwash Show in the spring, we are still washing cars, and the next season is more than nine months away.

The other part that I love about attending the NRCC is being exposed to new ideas. The day-to-day running of a carwash causes many of us to lose perspective. The show floor and the educational sessions are perfect vehicles for helping us run new concepts past fellow operators.

This year the NRCC show floor was the biggest and best yet. What I'm going to do now is to talk about some of what I saw and found interesting. The scope of our industry is so large that I know I did miss a lot of good stuff. I believe that all of our suppliers are great, but I spend most of my time and energy looking at a few that are most relevant to me. I'm sure that I have overlooked many ideas, so the loss is mine.

What Stood Out to Me

The show booth with the most visible, or perhaps visual, display was of course TSS – signage and LED's and more signage and ideas. What I was looking at was their Grand Entrance Arch. I used to laugh at them, now I believe they are a valuable sales tool. These can be put inside the carwash or outside, but the concept is to combine the traditional disclaimer signage along with service confirmation lights and add some marketing pizzazz. I like them and feel that they add value to the carwash for the consumer. Not to be forgotten is the Mr. Foamer Inc. booth also featuring carwash signage and dispensing systems.

Upstate New York's own G & G LED had a booth displaying their high-quality UL listed LED lighting for bays and tunnels. Their units feature easy installation, better lighting and completely weatherproof light tubes. This year they added colored LED light tubes to arches.

The Mile High LED Systems' booth was showing their displays of LED conversion kits for existing bays and lot fixtures and Cree lighting fixtures. Lighting is part of your visual marketing. Whatever your usage on property it is time to plan out a transformation. I acknowledge that we all have different situations but it is past the time to start converting your facilities if you have not done so already.

No carwash show is complete without a visit to SONNY's The CarWash Factory. As always, it was a cornucopia of carwashing ideas. The one that I latched onto and was impressed by was their new double counterweight Reversing Top Brush. This brush is supposed to do the front and back of the car completely because it goes all the way down. The brush rotation reverses direction which enables it to clean the backs of cars effectively. Reversing Top Brushes have been tried before, but with modern VFD control systems and SONNY's building it, this should deliver on the promise.

MacNeil Wash Systems had a booth combo with their inbay brother Ryko Solutions and both were displaying and offering a chance to win YETI® coolers (Yeti coolers sell for more than $500 and are the most stolen item in boating).

Belanger, Inc., as they did at The Carwash Show, had a full carwash on display of their new SpinLite™ system. I believe this is the future of our industry because they are so customer friendly. The brushes use slow-turning Black Foam with a unique (New Finger design) with illuminated LED cores. The LED lighting has a central controller for color. Wow! It is hard to describe and breaks quite a few carwash conventions but promises a truly consumer-friendly quiet, great wash. Included in this new line of slow turning equipment they have a DuoScrubber. This is an innovative rotary dual foam brush wheel and rocker panel scrubber. Not only does it clean the wheels, but it cleans the rockers. I'm waiting for the first to be installed so I can visit it!

As always, I spent time at the Innovative Control Systems (ICS) booth looking to see what is new in carwash POS computers. I saw on display some of the new PCI compliant card readers which are becoming the new necessity. The EMV chip cards are here. It is amazing how essential POS systems are to today's carwash, and not just for equipment control. I was talking with an owner of a well-run volume Pizza restaurant with fancy touchscreen terminals. Because he uses a separate Bank supplied card and chip reader, he is still using Windows XP for his point-of-sale. In the carwash industry with our integrated POS systems that would be unheard of for security reasons. In other words, carwash POS systems have to be state-of-the-art for security.

The age of carwash computerization and POS systems is at its peak, driven by many factors, but $15 an hour employees are certainly a push for late adopters. That means that anyone who feels they have the space to do so is looking, or will be after this winter, into gated-entry and sales terminals. If you don't have the space to change, life will become more difficult. As an example of trends, my 12-year-old son much prefers that we dine at the Applebee's because they have a touchscreen gaming and order terminal on each table. My

local Wal-Mart just installed about 10 self-service cash registers.

I believe that Wash Clubs are essential for conveyor carwashes. Two drivers are guaranteed income rain or shine and customer loyalty. I have had friends try doing wash clubs by hand without the POS backbone and invariably they don't work out. These full-scale POS systems are by necessity. They are expensive, but essential.

On the show floor I found a new company called Everwash. They offer a cloud based wash club system using customers' cell phones. They claim it is completely free for the carwash to join; with all fees being commission based. On the surface, I am concerned that without a positive form of ID for the vehicle such as an RFID tag there is room for customer abuse. On the other hand, if you don't have a POS system, this could be a lot better than nothing.

Moving on to chemistry, Simoniz USA had their consistently impressive display, and one of their featured products was a Diamond Plate coating applied in your detail shop. It is a nano ceramic long life coating for car paint protection. I like it and feel it has much better profit potential than just ordinary waxing. I don't see how you can lose with it.

ZEP Vehicle Care displayed its new line of chemistry dispensing and of course their champion online carwash product, Armorall Extreme Shine. One of the surprises for me at the show was that now ZEP owns PurClean/PurWater reclaim systems.

We all want the most efficient and effective application of our chemistry and I have heard of Cobra Systems before but I spent some time talking with them at this show. Their product is a heated CTA applicator. There are two heater dispensers each with spray nozzles and one is put on each side of the car to spray heated CTA chemical on the wheels. The system heats the chemical up to about 120 degrees. Touch free inbay automatics for years have relied on heating presoak chemistry to make cleaning more effective. So the concept is proven. Heated chemical works better. Neat idea.

As a Laundromat owner I was pleased to see two different Philadelphia Laundromat distributors present. One, AC Power Company, was selling Wascomat/Electrolux and the other, Equipment Marketers, sells Maytag/Continental. I have owned a Laundromat at one location for more than 25 years and regard it as a nice add-on business. I have had pleasant dealings with each company.

One of the standards for Express carwashes is offering free vacuums with the wash. Whether you like the concept or hate it, free vacs drives volume.

Vacutech had a booth on the floor showing off its array of beautiful central vac systems and the eye-catching overhead steel booms.

Also on the show floor was Auto Glanz Solutions with its line of individual high-powered vacuums. Their concept being a separate vac for each stall. I think either way will work. It

Continued on page 38 ...

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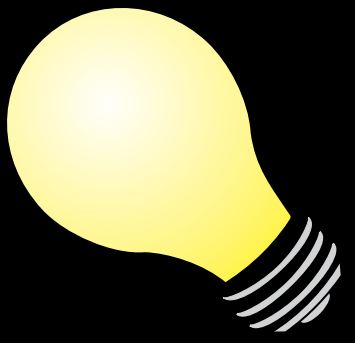

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Talk Internet for Car Washers

Doug's Perspective ... *continued from page 37.*

is just a matter of choice. I guess that is why there are 32 flavors of ice cream!

In the self-serve field, accepting credit cards has become as essential as dollar bill acceptors and foam brushes in the bay. You just have to have it. When I was walking the show floor, I saw that WashCard Systems is offering a new concept added onto their swipe system. On each of their bay swipe terminals they are putting a scannable barcode. When the customer scans they are taken to a website where they can pay for the bay or vacuum as a guest or member with their credit card. This way the customer does not need to swipe their card. That also means we as carwashers do not have to worry about Chip Card Readers. I feel that our Millennial customers will love this as it offers another way to accept money. This new method may eliminate the need to put Chip Card Readers in a wet, self-service bay. I like it.

Of course, CryptoPay was at the show and they were showing off their new Fleet Card Service. Fleet Cards are a valuable addition to the self-service carwash, and so much easier and more accountable than just handing out tokens.

Hydro-spray was showing off its self-service systems, and they had two neat extra items, the first being an add-on roll under the car spray wand for self-service bays. When the customer makes the selection, the water sprays out to wash road salt off the vehicle's undercarriage.

The other neat idea was LED floor guide rails for inbay automatics.

Kleen-Rite had its normal collection of hardcore self-service supplies. They also had the nicest giveaway logo zipper bag. I felt guilty taking two, but use them every day for papers to bring home.

The floor was immense, 312 booths, a record, and I know that this is just a tiny sampling of what you could see and touch. What did I buy? I saw some stuff that I am in the process right now of finishing up on. Was the show helpful? Very much so!

The bottom line is that we are an equipment-centric industry. Nobody looks in the restaurant's kitchen to see the age of the stove. But all of our customers see our tunnels every time they wash. That means that we have appearances to keep up.

By the time you read this our new President will have been determined, and the first flakes of winter will have flown (we hope!) I'm hoping both are good, but regardless we all will keep on washing! ■

Doug Rieck

Doug Rieck operates Magic Wash in Mahahawkin, NJ, and is a past president of the Carwash Operators of New Jersey. He also sits on the CWONJ and NRCC boars of directors. You can reach him at 609/597-SUDS or dougrieck@gmail.com

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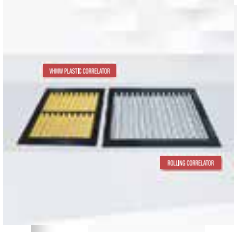

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

What a year this has been. Across the board, our industry has endured the usual challenges, but there have been opportunities for those with the vision and tenacity to persevere. Our industry, along with many small businesses, has struggled for several years to leverage capital needed for growth and to accommodate ever-changing regulations to keep our doors open. We often say that these are challenges that remain outside of our control, but when we take an honest look, is that really true?

Our country just experienced one of the most intense elections in history. Regardless of your politics, I believe the message was clear – people are tired of "business as usual" in government. While I certainly understand the frustration, I believe we all assume some responsibility in how our government has evolved, as we were the electors. It's been said that you get the government you deserve, and I believe there is truth to that theory. How many of us sit on the sidelines and simply expect a politician to do what you'd like after you push the button for him or her? 50 to 80 percent of us, depending on the election year, don't even vote. I'm continuously surprised by the lack of political engagement by business owners. Government has evolved into the over-reaching regulatory beast it has because voters have failed to hold them accountable. How many of you know who your township supervisor or borough officials are and what's on their agenda? How many of you have contacted your state or federal legislators to express your concerns regarding their votes? Government has been able to conduct business as usual because most of us aren't paying attention to their agendas, nor their activity, until we are on the receiving end of a policy detrimental to our livelihood.

As we move forward into 2017, I implore all of you to lift your heads, ask questions and get educated about the individuals serving at all levels in your government. CAP has always been available as a resource to members to find their elected officials, policy impacting the industry and information on how to get involved. We will continue playing this role for members – I only hope our members take advantage of this and report their activity so we may all stay informed. I wish everyone a prosperous and engaged 2017.

Keith Lutz, President
Carwash Association of Pennsylvania

Carwash Association of Pennsylvania

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Connecticut operators had a really tough 2016. First, the sales tax was imposed at the 11th hour, without any opportunity to contest it, and then we lost the fight to win repeal of that tax despite countless hours at the Capitol lobbying our Legislators. We will keep fighting, rest assured!

Then the drought hit and many municipalities were faced with water restrictions and the constant threat of wash closure hanging over our heads. For the first time, six of eight counties in the state were in a drought watch. At the time of this writing, New Haven and Tolland counties were just below drought watch status. For many reasons we need to hope for a healthy snowfall this winter and some better luck for Connecticut operators in 2017. The association will continue to monitor the drought situation and provide you with current information and our Drought Awareness Kit to provide you with the tools needed to meet with your local municipalities and educate them on how little water we actually use.

At the time of this writing we had just finished our carwash tour of three Springfield, MA, locations – Personal Touch, the newest Golden Nozzle location and a brand-new Balise wash. A full bus of carwashers toured these impressive sites providing our members with the opportunity to learn about and observe some really great wash operations. We plan on doing another tour in 2017, so keep an eye out for information on it and visit our website often at wewashctcars.com

Also on the docket for 2017 is the 28th Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC), October 2-4, at the Atlantic City Convention Center. The CCA is this year's host association. Please make every effort to come out to this great event. There's a huge show floor and some great education. It's just a quick drive away and the economical accommodations at the Borgata make this show a great opportunity to get your key people to a professional trade show without taking too much time from your wash.

The CCA board is also working hard to attract new members and officers to our ranks. We have cut back on the number of board meetings, as everyone's life is incredibly busy. It's not impossible to work being a board or committee member into your schedule, and the rewards I can tell you are infinite. If you have any interest in learning more, give Suzanne a call at the office at 800/287-6604. I can't tell you how happy I am to be part of the CCA.

Bob Rossini
CCA President

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CCA MISSION STATEMENT

The Connecticut Carwash Association (CCA) is a member-driven association: it exists solely to serve members' needs, protect members' best interests, and to be responsive to members' requests. The list of tangible CCA membership benefits is long (and growing), but the list of intangible benefits is even longer. How can you put a price tag on the camaraderie you enjoy with your industry peers? How can you place a value on having the ability to make connections on a regular basis with other carwash operators who can help you through tough times? What price would you be willing to pay to have the chance to learn from our industry's most successful operators? Stay active in your local industry trade association.

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Connecticut Issues First Drought Watch

By P.J. Cimini

Due to the severity of an ongoing drought, the Connecticut government issued its first-ever drought watch for six of eight counties in the state in October. The drought watch affects Fairfield, Hartford, Litchfield, Middlesex, New Haven and Tolland counties. New London and Windham counties have both received enough rainfall to remain in drought advisory – a step below drought watch status.

According to the State of Connecticut Water Status, several criteria triggered the drought watch. These include three months of 65 percent below average precipitation, as well as several months of below average groundwater and streamflow. The Interagency Drought Workgroup, a multidepartment coalition including the Office of Policy and Management, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Public Health, recommended the decision based on these criteria.

In the state's drought preparedness and response plan, the drought watch advises Connecticut residents to reduce water usage by 15 percent, a measure more severe than the drought advisory issued statewide last June, which requested a 10 percent reduction in water use. In addition to residents' voluntary reduction of water use, drought watch actions include requesting that public water suppliers ask their customers to reduce water use, as well as encouraging municipal governments to conserve water by 15 percent, according to the Connecticut Drought Preparedness and Response Plan. Governor Malloy has also asked the state's Department of Administrative Services to determine how state government facilities can conserve water, according to the press release.

Multiple agencies were involved in determining the state's drought watch status. According to Department of Agriculture supervising environmental analyst Stephen Anderson, agencies such as the U.S. Geological Survey regularly attend workgroup meetings and the National Weather Service provides data on precipitation and other criteria. In fact, he said the decision to issue the drought watch was not surprising given that precipitation has been below average for the past three years. As the drought watch goes into effect, the Interagency Drought Workgroup will continue to monitor the drought's severity.

Workers Comp Rates to Fall

Connecticut employers will see a 10.9 percent reduction in workers' compensation premium rates next year. The state's Insurance Department announced approval of a September filing by the National Council on Compensation Insurance seeking the reductions. The decision covers both the voluntary loss and assigned risk markets for policies renewing on or after January 1, 2017. Loss cost reductions vary by industry classification, ranging from -9.1 percent for goods and services to -12.7 percent for contracting.

In its filing, NCCI cited a continuing decline in claim frequency, an improvement in combined ratios, and decreasing medical and indemnity costs. The council reported that workers' comp claims dropped four straight years in Connecticut through 2014. Connecticut's total benefits costs were split almost evenly between indemnity (51 percent) and medical benefits (49 percent) in 2013 and 2014, the years NCCI used for its rate-filing request. Per case indemnity costs fell to $30,916 in 2014, a 1.7 percent drop from 2013 when costs hit an eight-year high.

Medical costs also declined in 2014, to $28,799 per lost-time case, the first decrease since 2008. The department approved a 3.9 percent reduction last November for rates charged this year. Rates dropped 0.6 percent in 2015, following five consecutive years of increases.

New State Laws In Effect

October 1 marked the effective date for a number of new or revised state laws impacting Connecticut carwash businesses:

- Tree removal. Under PA16-86 (HB 5150), trees and shrubs on public lands that may interfere with power lines or transportation corridors will now have greater due process rights before they can be removed.
- **Privacy protections.** PA 16-148 (HB 5640) changes the rules concerning disclosure of communications content and geo-location data, affording certain privacy protections to telecommunications subscribers. Law enforcement will have to meet a higher standard (probable cause) when issuing orders to telecom companies to release certain information. The law also provides for the release of information without a court order in emergencies involving danger of serious physical injury or death.
- **Transporting hazardous waste.** PA 16-55 (HB 5412) requires commercial drivers transporting hazardous materials to comply with federal regulations on these materials with violations treated as an infraction or misdemeanor, depending on the severity.
- **State water plan.** PA 16-137 (HB 5540) implements new procedural requirements concerning the adoption of a state water plan. While it is no longer a requirement, certain legislative committees now may hold hearings on the plan. In the event the Legislature does not approve the plan, the Water Planning Council will have more time to revise it. Unlike current law, should the Legislature fail to approve the plan within two years of submittal, the authority for approval will shift to the Governor who may adopt or reject the plan.
- **Spill reporting.** Under PA 16-199 (SB 301), the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection must now

adopt regulations creating specific thresholds for the reporting of spills to the agency. The law does not require it but it is the agency's intent.

- **Payroll cards.** PA 16-125 (SB 211) allows employers to pay their employees through payroll cards under certain conditions. An employee must voluntarily and expressly authorize, in writing or electronically, that he or she wishes to be paid with a card without any intimidation, coercion, or fear of discharge or reprisal from the employer. No employer can require payment through a card as a condition of employment or for receiving any benefits or other type of remuneration.
- **Small business regulations.** PA 16-32 (SB 302) requires state agencies to better understand, analyze, and report how proposed regulations would impact small businesses prior to holding a public hearing and ultimate approval by the legislature. These new requirements are consistent with what is required of state agencies in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. This law also changes the definition of small business from 75 employees or fewer to 250 employees or fewer.
- **Regulatory review.** Additionally, PA 16-58 (HB 5498) requires more regular review of state regulations. At least every seven years, legislative committees must conduct a review of regulations for agencies that have regulations pertaining to that committees focus. This same law makes minor changes to certain deadlines and effective periods associated with emergency regulations; and expands the reasons for which agencies may propose amendments to regulations without prior notice or public comment.
- **CDL licenses.** Under a provision of PA16-55 (HB 5412), courts are now prohibited from suspending prosecution and ordering treatment of people with drug or alcohol dependency if they operated a commercial motor vehicle or held a CDL license when charged with certain crimes. ■

P.J. Cimini

P.J. Cimini, Esq. is the CCA's Lobbyist and a partner in Capitol Strategies Group, LLC, in Hartford. You can reach him at 860/983-2581 or pj@csgct.com

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19th Annual Golf Classic A Hole In One!

HARWINGTON, CT — The Connecticut Carwash Association's (CCA), 19th Annual Golf Classic, September 13, was a hole in one, according to CCA President Bob Rossini. The annual gathering included breakfast, lunch and dinner at the challenging Fairview Farm Golf Course here. "The day was amazing and the event was as well," said Rossini. "This is the perfect setting for having fun and hanging out with a great group of carwashers."

The 18-hole event, in its third year at Fairview Farm, also featured extensive raffle prizes, a putting contest to benefit the Bob & Lynn Rossini Children's Education Fund, a chance to win a two-year lease on a car courtesy of Hoffman Auto Group as well as several other fun events to make the day memorable. "You can't beat this event for what you get," said Event Chairman Todd Whitehouse.

Team Bradley Auto Wash Wins!

The team from Bradley Auto Wash in Springfield, MA, led by past CCA President Tom Mathes with Bill Corbin, Pete Clark and Chris Tapases, took home first place. Second place went to Eric Sehl from Mighty Auto Parts, and Pete LaRoe and Chad Wade from Personal Touch and third place went to Team Splash consisting of Mark Curtis, Chris Fisher, Charles Bronstein and Dan Petrelle.

Charles Bronstein with Splash won the Men's Longest Drive and Joan Larkin of Team Larkin won the Women's Longest Drive. Harold Violette with Connecticut Carwash took home the prize for closest to the pin on Hole #7. First place received a $75 gift certificate to the pro shop while second place received one for $40, and closest to the pin and longest drive each earned a $25 certificate.

CCA Treasurer Allison Shackett helped out the Pro on hole #10 with the new Beat the Pro contest.

Team Connecticut Car Wash!

Team Jet Spray tore up the links!

CCA President Bob Rossini MC'd the raffle with enthusiasm.

Team Larkin Captain, Joan Larkin, won the Ladies Longest Drive and was presented with a gift card to the pro shop by CCA Golf Chairman Todd Whitehouse.

Tim Weigel, Don Barbierio, Brad Metcalf and Tom Tessitore enjoyed the day!

Team Larkin was out in force!

Picturesque Fairview Farm Golf Course.

Many raffle prizes including a 32" and 24" television, Sony portable speaker, Beats Solo 2 wireless head phones, Ugly Stick fishing pole, TaylorMade Aeroburner Driver, Nike and Bridgestone golf balls, Jack Daniels Whiskey and cash were some of the featured gifts. C.A.R. Products/Blendco donated an iPad Air 2.

Event sponsors included Gold Sponsors/Lunch Capitol Strategies, Innovative Control Systems, Kleen-Rite, New England Carwash Equipment; Silver Sponsors/Prizes AutoShine, Car Washing Systems, Stoner; Bronze Sponsors/Beverage Cart Carwash Insurance by McNeil & Co., Media Solutions/Northeast Carwasher magazine, National Ticket Co.; Golf Cart Sponsor Simoniz USA; Beat The Pro AutoShine, Personal Touch, Torrington Car Wash; Raffle Prize Sponsor C.A.R. Products/Blendco; Coffee Break/Breakfast Sponsor DRB Systems Inc.; Water Bottle Sponsor Ardex; Driving Range Sponsor Fred's Car Wash; Golf Towel Sponsor ERC Wiping Products; Hole-In-One Sponsor Hoffman Auto Group.

Hole Sponsors included Benchmark Payment Solutions, Crossroads Car Wash, FL Roberts/Golden Nozzle, Hoffman Auto Group, Mighty Auto Parts of CT, Mr. Sparkle, New England Car Care, LLC, Splash, Torrington Car Wash.

The 20th Annual Golf Outing is slated for Tuesday, September 12, 2017, at Fairview Farm Golf Course. For more information visit we washctcars.com

Team AutoShine of New England.

Mighty Auto Parts and Personal Touch team up.

The winning foursome from Bradley Auto Wash.

The crew from Simoniz USA.

The foursome from Splash strike a handsome pose.

Team Rossini tore up the greens!

Team Stanley Street.

The team from New England Car Wash Equipment.

CCA Lobbyist PJ Cimini got a few putts in!

Mr. Sparkle Employee Kwak Dies at 80

Long-time Mr. Sparkle accountant/assistant, Konyong Joseph Kwak, 80, passed away unexpectedly on October 12. Mr. Kwak was born on March 24, 1936, in Onchon, South Korea. He grew up in Inchon and served in the Korean Army. He came to the United States in 1966 and lived in East Hartford before moving to South Windsor nearly 40 years ago. Prior to his retirement, he was a manager with Hartford Steam Boiler. After retirement he was the bureau chief in Connecticut for *The Korean Times,* and also worked part-time at Mr. Sparkle Car Wash as an accountant and owner Paul Ferruolo's assistant. "He was always an upbeat and happy guy, " said Mr. Sparkle owner Paul Ferruolo.

In addition to singing in his church choir and eventually becoming its Director, he liked to play golf and was an avid Red Sox fan. He and Team Sparkle attended many CCA golf classics over the years. He will be missed. The CCA board sends it heartfelt condolences to his family and wife Young (Suk) Kwak. ■

Team Sparkle golf devotee, Konyong Joseph Kwak (second from left), passed away on October 12 at 80.

Receives Legislative Champion Award

Rep. Berger Meets with Members at Jet Spray in Waterbury

Association members met with State Representative Jeffrey J. Berger of the 73rd District at Jet Spray Car Wash in Waterbury to bestow upon him the CCA's 2016 Legislative Champion Award in honor of his support of the state's carwashing industry. "Rep. Berger has been a great supporter of the carwash industry and has always gone the extra mile to make time to meet with us and listen to issues we are facing and give us the opportunity to explain issues of concern including water policy and tax policy," said CCA Lobbyist P.J. Cimini. "Rep. Berger is committed to working to repeal the tax and has stated his opposition to it, especially the sales tax on coin-operated machinery in our industry. At the same time, he called on all CCA members to stay vigilant during the upcoming legislative session and work with their State Senators and State Representatives to reinforce the importance of this issue to our members and the entire carwash industry," added Cimini. ■

Jet Spray owner Tony Setaro educates Rep. Jeffrey J. Berger on his wash process.

Reps from area washes met with Rep. Jeffrey J. Berger at Setaro's Waterbury wash to present him with the CCA's 2016 Legislative Champion Award.

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

At the time of this writing (late October), we are on the verge of change in our country. Whatever your political views, the new President will have a lot on his or her plate and will be faced with making decisions that may change the future course of this great country we live in. (In the spring issue I'll speak more on those results.)

But change is a good thing much of the time.

Our speaker at our December membership meeting, John Carroll with Yelp, will speak about his company's impact on business and he will teach us how to use what Yelp does to our advantage. Many of you out there really dislike this product. You feel that those who have had negative experiences at the wash do not represent the majority of your customers and that is probably true. You do not like how they can bad mouth your business and share it with so many others. But there are ways to turn that negative into a positive and turn that disgruntled customer into a customer for life and John will tell us exactly how to do that. Yelp reviews don't have to be the enemy.

Also at this meeting we will hear from G & G LED reps who will explain to us the current innovations in LED lighting and how you can brighten up your wash while saving money. They will also explain the state's rebate program and offer real solutions to your high energy costs.

These topics will contain valuable information for you as operators. What the association tries to do is educate, inform and provide a forum for you all to learn and grow as carwash owners and suppliers. Sometimes we hit the mark and sometimes we don't, but every meeting I attend I take home some information that I use at my location. If you enjoy the December meeting tell a fellow operator who has not been to a CWONJ meeting. Explain how inexpensive your membership dues are and tell him or her what value you take home. This is your association. Help us grow it and make it the best it can be. We value your feedback and welcome it. Tell us what you think at mediasolutions@nycap.rr.com or call the office at 800/287-6604.

I hope you are all very busy washing cars this winter!

Mike Conte
CWONJ President

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Patent Applied For

New Jersey Operator Converts New Full Serve to Express Exterior

By Alan M. Petrillo

Mario Mendoza, a New Jersey carwash owner and operator for more than 20 years, now has an unusual distinction to add to his resume. He's believed to be the only carwash operator in the state who has taken a brand new full-service carwash that he built and converted into an express exterior carwash.

The carwash in question is Speedy Shine Express Car Wash at 201 Clinton Ave., in Plainfield. It's the site of a full-service wash built in 1968 that was run down when Mendoza bought it.

"I completely gutted the building, but kept the shell," Mendoza said. "I had to redo everything, and put in all new equipment, and while I saved some of the concrete, we had to pour a new pit for the conveyor."

The end result was a 90-foot full service tunnel with a 120-foot conveyor.

"We opened in December of 2015 and the wash was doing okay, even though it was in a pretty rough area," Mendoza pointed out. "We were washing a lot of cars and had a decent spring and summer. But I had been going to shows and talking with operators of express exterior washes in New Jersey

CWONJ board member, Mario Mendoza, took a new full-serve wash and converted it into an express in Plainfield after running it as a full serve for a year.

The express exterior has cut down on labor and has gone from 12 employees to four. His bank of self-serve vacs accept credit cards.

Continued on page 54 ...

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Speedy Shine Express... *continued from page 53.*

and other states. Finally, I decided to switch it over to an express exterior wash."

Mendoza said he had a pay station added to the carwash, as well as some self-service vacuums that take credit cards.

"We don't do any detailing at Speedy Shine," he said. "The customer stays in the car, so we were able to shut down the store inside the wash, and all we do are exterior washes and service our monthly wash passes."

Mendoza also owns Extreme Clean Auto Spa in South Plainfield, a 100-foot full service tunnel with a 120-foot conveyor, that has both mobile and express lube services. He's owned Extreme Clean for 12 years and says the location typi-

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cally washes more than 100,000 vehicles a year.

The converted Speedy Shine Express Carwash opened in September of 2016, and Mendoza said that while car counts have dropped, he puts the reduction down to it being a seasonally slow time.

"But our bottom line at Speedy Shine doesn't look bad because our expenses are so low," he pointed out. "Our payroll went down dramatically with the express exterior model because we are running with four employees instead of the 12 we had as a full-service wash."

Price points for washes at Speedy Shine, Mendoza noted, are $8 for the basic wash, followed by washes costing $11, $15 and $17.

Mendoza said he was planning on a big direct mail campaign to promote Speedy Shine as an express exterior wash, and probably would do something special for the holiday season. He's also considering another express exterior wash, once he is confident Speedy Shine is on a solid footing.

"I might buy another express exterior," he said, but want to see that this one is going in the right direction first. Once I have two express exteriors working well, I will revisit the idea of converting the South Plainfield location too." ■

Alan M. Petrillo is a Tucson, AZ-based journalist, a former upstate New Yorker, and contributing editor of Northeast Carwasher. *He's the author of the historical mysteries,* Full Moon *and* Asylum Lane, *and his latest historical mystery,* A Case of Dom Perignon, *all available at www.amazon.com.*

CWONJ Giving Reaches $57,000 For Children's Specialized Hospital

UNION, NJ – The Children's Specialized Golf Outing, August 15, at Suburban Golf Club, went off without a hitch, according to Car Wash Operators of New Jersey (CWONJ) President Mike Conte. But more importantly, he said, it was an event that raised money for an extremely worthy cause, The Children's Specialized Hospital. This hospital is the nation's leading provider of inpatient and outpatient care for children from birth to 21 years of age facing special health challenges – from chronic illnesses and complex physical disabilities like brain and spinal cord injuries, to developmental and behavioral issues like autism. Children's has 12 New Jersey locations and treats more than 16,000 children annually from all over the country. "Our association has been raising money for Children's since 2004, and to date we have raised $57,000 for them. We are very honored to have been able to do that," said Conte. "This event means a great deal to our members."

The CWONJ presented The Children's Specialized Hospital with a generous donation from proceeds from the outing. Pictured are Shanette Pereira, Children's Engagement Coordinator Alexis D'Anton, Khalil Pereira and CWONJ President Mike Conte.

Children's Community Engagement Coordinator Alexis D'Anton spoke on behalf of the hospital before introducing a family who has experienced the benefits of Children's firsthand. Shanette Pereira, spoke from the heart about her family's experience with Children's after her son Khalil, suffered a traumatic head injury after the vehicle he was riding in flipped 15 times. After a year of therapy at the hospital, Khalil is now speaking and walking and has plans to attend a junior college to begin work on his degree. He aspires to be a nurse but his journey could not have been possible without the tireless efforts of the team who has worked with him for the last several years. "The story that Shanette shared with our members was poignant and heartbreaking," said Conte. "It just drives home the importance of our event and the money we raise for the hospital."

The association would like to acknowledge its vendor sponsors without whom the event could not happen: Buffet Dinner Reception: Innovative Control System, ZEP Vehicle Care; Lunch on the Porch: Simoniz USA; Lunch Beverage: Olde Granddad, Service Champ; Cocktail Hour: Micrologic Associates; Beverage

CWONJ Awards Cuevas Scholarship

The Car Wash Operators of New Jersey (CWONJ) awarded Luis Cuevas a $1,000 scholarship at their August 15 Annual Golf Outing at Suburban Golf Club in Union. Cuevas started working at age 13 selling jewelry every weekend at a flea market 45 minutes from his home. With transportation being an issue he found employment at Rainbow Car Wash in Mahwah, where his boss, Bryan Tortos, says he has an ambition and work ethic second to none.

Luis was the Captain of his Varsity wresting team, a member of the Ramapo Youth Ambulance Corp, an ASPIRA Club member and active in his church community. He is now attending college at Dominican College in Orangeburg, NY, where he is studying Occupational Therapy. ■

For more information about the CWONJ Scholarship visit cwonj.com or call 800/287-6604.

Scholarship Chairman Gerry Barton with winner Luis Cuevas and his mom.

What a motely crew!

Cart: Optisure Risk Partners/The Alliance Group, Prime Lube; Goodie Bag: Service Champ; Hole In One: Birchwood Insurance Group, Northeast Carwasher magazine; Sponsor the Pro: Eastern Funding; Longest Drive: Advantage Contractors LLC, Fowler; Golf Carts: Rosey's Tank Cleaning; Closest to the Pin: Circle Lubricants, Inc., Qual Chem, LLC; Raffle Prizes: Stoner; Golf Towels: ERC Wiping; Holes: Broad Street Car Wash, Butch's Automatic Car Wash Inc., In Memory of Carolyn Coates, DRB Systems, Inc., ERC Wiping, Frank Millman, Harvey Fruchter, Attn. at Law; G & G LED; Gliptone; Marlton Classic Car Wash; Mike Conte & Family; Kirikian; Kleen-Rite Corp.; Lorco; Motor City Wash Works; Pay-Media; Protapes; Rendemonti Wealth Management; State Farm Insurance (Dave Roy); Tameric; TransActiv; R & T Electric; Val Pak of Central NJ; Washtech.

The winning foursome consisted of Steve Liebhoff, Chris Coleman and Joe Malkin of Circle Lubricants and Kenny Young of Frank Millman Distributors. Second place went to Dave Roy, Chris Hart and Pete DeFazia of Prowash. They each received pro shop gift certificates. Kevin Cooper of Shine Auto Spa had the longest drive on hole #4. Jeremy Liebhoff of Circle Lubricants had the longest drive on hole #12. Joni Millman of Frank Millman Distributors had the closest to the pin on hole #11 and Robert Fagan of Eastern Funding had closest to the pin on hole #16. ■

Picturesque Suburban Golf Club in Union.

Gerard and Trista Ricciardelli

Lou Rendemonti and Mike Conte.

This team is poised to win!

The team from Frank Millman Distributors.

The Boffa team from Transactiv.

Team ZEP led by George Ribeiro.

Father & Son Team Up to Build, Operate 110-foot Fair Lawn Tunnel

By Alan M. Petrillo

It took two years and plenty of research, effort and collaboration, but the father-son team of Ed and Edward Bergen weathered the challenges and recently opened Big Ed's Car Wash, Detailing and Quick Lube at 17-16 River Road in Fair Lawn, NJ.

The facility consists of a 110-foot full service tunnel with all Belanger equipment and ICS controls, a three-bay oil change quick lube, and a free-standing detailing building that has three bays, each capable of holding three vehicles. Big Ed's Car Wash sits on a 1.5-acre parcel of land.

Son Edward Bergen pointed out that he and his father have had a life-long love of cars, and have always been interested in the carwashing industry. When his father retired three years ago, they wanted to do a project together and decided on a full-service carwash and detailing center.

"I threw myself into the project, Edward Bergen said. "I went to carwash industry shows and expos, met with equipment representatives and was able to work at carwashes owned by Belanger to get some practical experience. Rich Boudakian of Tameric Equipment, my equipment rep, and Dan Poltrock, my equipment and chemical rep, gave us valuable advice and encouragement throughout the project and after we opened."

Bergen noted that he and his father are especially proud of the fact that the entire facility is environmentally conscious.

"We have our own water well and a water reclamation system, Bergen said. "We also use biodegradable soaps in our carwash, and have an oil reclamation burner that takes all the used oil from our oil change quick lube."

Big Ed's Car Wash, Detailing and Quick Lube has 12 employees and is beginning to build up its fleet services in the area, currently handling several body shops, limousine companies, as well as a local driving school's vehicles. The carwash also introduced an unlimited wash program very quickly, offering packages of $37, $49 and $69 a month, depending on the type of carwash chosen. Unlimited customers can upgrade to a higher cost carwash during any visit.

"The unlimited program has helped us build a nice customer base," Bergen said. "We know all our monthly members by name because our ICS computer system keeps the records, allowing us to treat each customer like family."

The carwash has six price points for washes. Exterior only is $9.95, Full Service is $12.95, Bronze is $15.95, Silver is $18.95, Gold is $24.95, and Platinum is $34.95, which includes a hand buff of the vehicle similar to what would be performed in an express detail.

The detailing shop performs both express and full detailing on vehicles, as well as other services such as scratch removal, hand waxing, steam cleaning, odor removal and window tinting.

Bergen noted that the facility has aggressively promoted itself in the area through its website (www.bigedscarwash.com), door-to-door direct mailings, print publications and a television commercial.

The 110-foot full serve is the father-son's first foray into carwashing. They spent several years researching and working at several Belanger-owned washes to get their hands wet. Big Ed's top-of-the-line wash includes a hand buffing.

"We offer a free 10th carwash for each customer," Bergen said, "which is simple for us because our system tracks the license plates. We also do a lot of mail and print coupons, which have been very successful for us. We want to do everything we can to build up the wash's traffic and keep customers coming back so that we can build long-term relationships."

Big Ed's Car Wash also is heavily into charitable activities, including the Fair Lawn Police Benevolent Association and the Fair Lawn High School football team. The carwash also serves as a Fair Lawn Food Bank drop-off location, and is working with the Fair Lawn Police Department on a Toys for Tots drive for Christmas presents.

"I love this business," Bergen said. "There's a little bit of everything involved from carwashing to customer service, to marketing and promotion. We are having fun running the carwash and want to stay heavily involved in the community."

What might the future hold for the father-son team?

Bergen said that, "I would love to have another location, but my dad says this one is enough." However, he added, "Down the road I would love to see a few more Big Ed locations in the New Jersey area." ■

Alan M. Petrillo is a Tucson, AZ-based journalist, a former upstate New Yorker, and contributing editor of Northeast Carwasher. *He's the author of the historical mysteries,* Full Moon *and* Asylum Lane, *and his latest historical mystery.* A Case of Dom Perignon, *all available at www.amazon.com.*

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

This fall, we have seen the most divisive and vitriolic election ever. Soon, the country will be on a new course, one way or another, and that course will affect our lives as carwashers. Hopefully, for the better, but who knows? And we may not really know for a while. But we do know at least two things.

❖ *Carwashing will not be replaced by the Internet. Dirty cars will still be coming to us to get clean. Not that we can ignore the online world, we have to engage it, and use it to our advantage. But, Amazon has the rest of the retail brick and mortar establishment teetering on the edge. Thankfully, we are not.*

❖ *We also know that when we come together as carwashers, we always learn something new, or remember something that we know, but have let slip. The value of belonging to a trade association is in attending and sharing.*

At our MCA meeting in Virginia Beach in October, our speaker was Chris McKenna, a consultant and carwash operator from California. Chris has written on Fleet Washing in ***Professional Carwashing & Detailing magazine*** *as a way of creating a new revenue stream using what you already have in place. He shared his experiences, good and bad, and made a number of very useful points. One in particular stands out that has a broad application – manage expectations.*

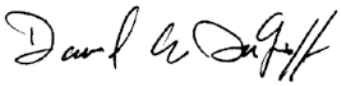
Think about your own experiences as a customer. Misunderstandings can be the most upsetting experience we can give a customer. The better we do at making it clear to our customer what they are getting and what they are not getting, the greater the likelihood that our customer will feel as though they had a positive experience and were treated fairly. For example, when I see a car in line for the touchless in-bay automatic (IBA) with layers of dirt that I know is not going to come off, I suggest to the customer that they really need the friction of the foam brush in the self-serve bay. A few will move over to a self-serve bay, but most don't. They say that they appreciate knowing, and will get the IBA wash today and if needed come back another day. The customer who could have been mad and given us a negative online review, just decided to return!

This rule applies to our other relationships as well. Our employees cannot perform up to our expectations if we haven't taken the time to explain what we want them to do. This also applies to our association members.

I expect our MCA members, that's you, to attend meetings regularly and be prepared to share your experiences and learn. That's the only way for you to get the maximum benefit of your membership. Meetings are four times a year, alternating between Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia and Delaware. Dinner is free for two operators from the same carwash company.

Next spring, we have dates you can put on your calendar. On March 8, we'll have a seminar in the afternoon with Chris Brown from Myrrh Consulting, at Arundel Preserve, titled "How to Maximize Revenue and Give Great Service." Then, on May 10, it's time to kick back and relax at the Dominion Raceway, near Fredericksburg, VA.

I also expect you to participate in the 5th Annual Wash to Save the Bay, on June 3. In 2016, we raised more than $10,000. This is a great way for you to let your customers know that you care about water and the environment.



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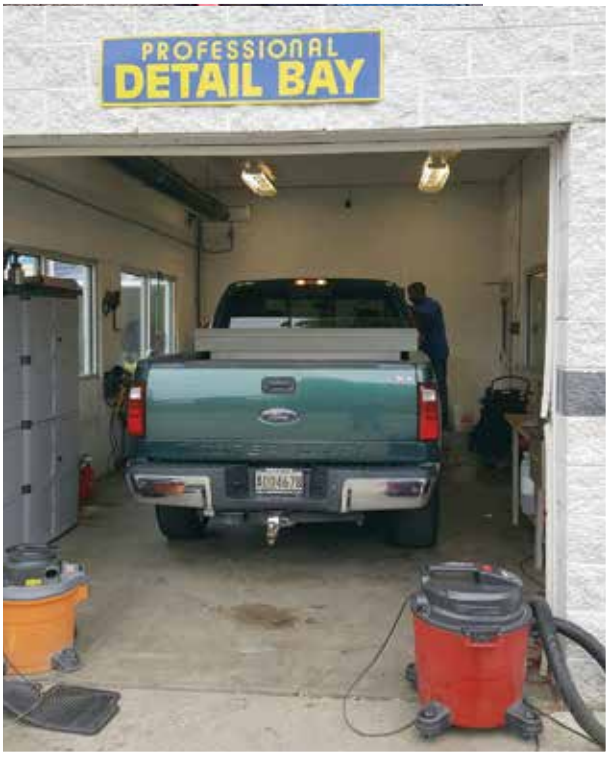
Longtime Chemical Rep Is Now Loving Being an Operator

By Alan M. Petrillo

Todd Whichard, long-time ZEP District Manager is now a full-time carwasher. He purchased Diamond Car Wash, a 100-foot flex serve in September in Middletown, DE.



A longtime chemical rep has given that career up and purchased a carwash in Middletown, DE, jumping into the business with both feet, a ton of knowledge and an upbeat attitude.

Todd Whichard purchased Diamond Car Wash at 104 Sandhill Drive in August of 2016, after he walked away from 18 years in the chemical business. "I started with Blue Coral Systems in 1998 and was there about three or four years when it was sold to Ecolab," Whichard said. "About 13 years later, we were sold to ZEP Inc., where I was District Manager for 11 years. Fortunately, the people and divisions stayed the same during each transition, and I was able to sell chemicals to carwashes for 11 years."

Whichard said he developed a close relationship with the prior owner of Diamond Car Wash, a former Maryland state trooper, who eventually was looking to make a change for himself. "With ZEP, I was traveling a lot, being away three to four nights a week, so I wasn't home very often," Whichard said. "We have a son who is nine and a daughter who is seven, and I wanted to be with them more, to go to my son's sporting events and help coach his teams, and to see more of my daughter's dance recitals."

Whichard said that Diamond Car Wash is about three miles from his home, so the purchase "made perfect sense."

Diamond Car Wash is a flex serve with a 100-foot conveyor tunnel, a detailing bay, an in-bay automatic, three self-service wash bays, and one dog wash bay. It's located just off a main road, Route 301, and nearby are an Arby's, Hampton Inn, Wal-Mart, home improvement stores, gas stations and retail outlets. "I hit every revenue program I could with this purchase," Whichard said. "I figured that if I was going to do it, I was going to do it right."

Prices for an exterior carwash at Diamond Car Wash range from $10.75 to $19.75, and customers can add a mini detail to any wash (vacuum, windows, doorjambs, and tire dressings) for $7 additional. Hand washes are $30, and

The attractive wash features a number of wash packages and unlimited options.

Whichard offers unlimited washes for $22.95, $32.95, $42.95 and $52.95 a month, depending on the type of wash chosen. He noted that there is no state sales tax in Delaware. "The previous owner had an Early Bird Special from 8 am to 10 am every day," Whichard pointed out, "where a customer got $3 off any wash. We continued that special and found that we are pretty busy during those first two hours after opening, especially on the weekends."

Whichard is making some small changes to the carwash right now, adding an express spray wax service, redoing some of the landscaping, putting in a new white PVC fencing line with marketing messages on it, and kicking up the advertising and promotion of the wash.

"We are in the local Clipper magazine, advertise with local retirement communities, in the church bulletin, with the Chamber of Commerce and in a movie theater that shows a video of our top wash on every screen," Whichard notes. But the Clipper magazine has been our most successful return so far."

Fleet services include a cleaning company, transportation company, and a broadband company, plus Diamond Car Wash washes all Middletown Police Department and state police cars for free.

As a new carwash operator, what does Whichard think keeps customers coming back to his wash? "We offer a 100 percent satisfaction guarantee," he said, "but we have very few rewashes. If anyone complains, there are no questions asked. We keep the carwash clean, inside and out, because you can't sell clean if your place isn't clean. Our motto is 'Take Price in Your Ride,' and we enjoy interacting with customers, talking with them and encouraging them to return."

Whichard credits his wife, Rae, and manager Trevor Lewis, who has been with Diamond Car Wash eight years, as part of the reason for the successful transition of the carwash. ■

Alan M. Petrillo is a Tucson, AZ-based journalist, a former upstate New Yorker, and contributing editor of Northeast Carwasher. *He's the author of the historical mysteries,* Full Moon *and* Asylum Lane, *and his latest historical mystery,* A Case of Dom Perignon, *all available at www.amazon.com.*

Out and About…

MCA President, Dave DuGoff, is elated after his 62 mile ride. He and 500 fellow bikers raised money for the Washington Area Bicyclist Association in September.

MCA President Dave DuGoff is pictured after completing a "50 States & 13 Colonies Ride" in Washington, DC, September 12, sponsored by the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA). The riders went down all 50 state-named streets of the District and through eight wards of the city, said DuGoff, an avid biker. The 62-mile trek, accompanied with a heat index of 103, did not deter some 500 bicyclists who were able to raise money for better bicycling in the District, Maryland and Virginia. "This was the longest I have ever pedaled a bike; 6.5 hours of pedaling over 10.5 hours," he said. Fortunately for DuGoff, upon completion of his ride, the Mellow Mushroom had Guinness on tap! Great job, Dave! You are an inspiration! ■

To learn more about WABA visit www.waba.org

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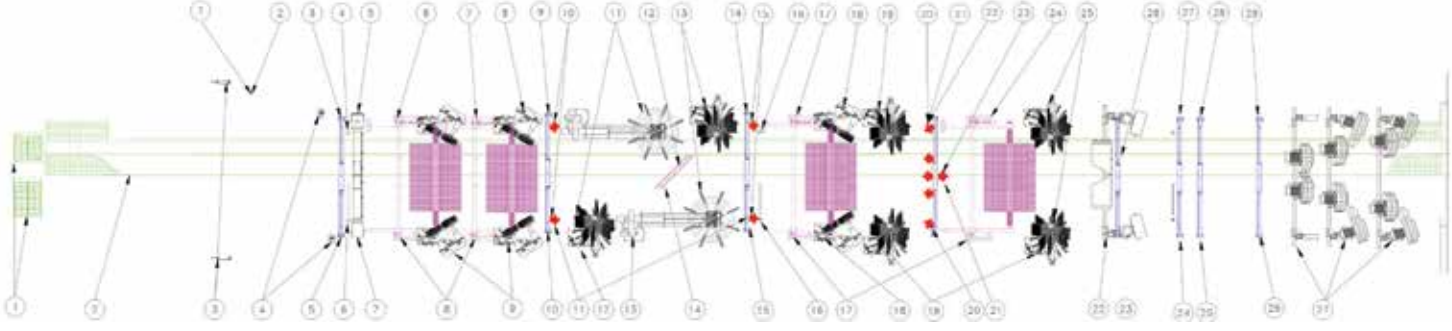

www.ascws.com

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

My two-year term as President of New England Carwash Association (NECA) is coming to an end. The time has passed so quickly. By the time you are reading this article, Dom Previte of Somerville Car Wash & Detail Center, will have moved up into this position for the next two years. Dom has a strong background in the carwash industry and has been very supportive as Operator VP during the past two years. I wish him the best as his success is our success as an organization. In my new role as Immediate Past President, I will encourage and assist Dom with his vision going forward.

NECA has a tradition of recruiting experienced new Board members. Adam Korngold, working with the Past Presidents, has assembled a strong group of leaders. I am pleased to report that this tradition is alive and well. Mat Paisner of ScrubaDub will be moving into the Operator VP position in 2017 after completing a term as our Treasurer. Mat provides the perspective of a new generation of Millennial thinkers combined with an entrepreneurial spirit and a proud history at the ScrubaDub family business.

Patrick Mosesso joined our Board one year ago and has agreed to move into the Treasurer's position for a two-year term. Patrick has managed carwashes for more than 30 years and brings maturity and an eagerness for continuous improvement to our business. Patrick comes to us from Rojo Car Wash in Norwood, MA, where he spends his time as General Manager of their large and diverse facility.

A special thanks to Steve Stockman of Trans-Mate Products, who has so ably served as our Supplier VP the past two years, and before that as a supplier director. Jeff Arimento will rejoin our Board as Supplier VP. Jeff had impressed the Board in prior years as a Supplier Director. He not only owns and operates New England Car Wash Equipment, but has recently purchased a carwash in New Hampshire. Jeff did a great job as chair of our membership committee and we look forward to his leadership skills moving forward. Welcome back Jeff!

We have some new operator Board members joining the team for 2017. They are Kevin McLoughlin of White Water Carwash and Detail Center in Dover, NH; Bob Brennan of All Washed Up Auto Wash in Medway, MA; and Mark Delaney of Allston Car Wash in Boston. We look forward to their fresh perspectives.

It takes many others to keep NECA operating well. I thank our ongoing Board members... Darold Evans of Sandwich Carwash, Brandon Berriault of Tapco LLC, Micah Smith of Global Partners LLC, Tony DeBarros of Balise Car Wash, Duffy Cink of Autowash Maintenance Corp.... for all their hard work in support of various committees. They are all capable of serving more years on the Board and I expect some to move into executive leadership positions in the future. And, thank you to David Blackman of Blue Wave Car Wash of Middletown, RI, and Peter Janis of Jamaica Plain Car Wash in Boston, who are leaving the Board.

NEW ENGLAND CAR WASH ASSOCIATION, INC.

OFFICERS

President - Dom Previte III
Somerville Car Wash and Detailing
680 Somerville Avenue, Somerville, MA 02143
617/625-9027 fax: 617/625-3309 dom@seeyoushine.com

Vice President/ Operators - Mat Paisner
ScrubaDub Auto Wash Centers
172 Worcester Road, Natick, MA 01760
508/650-1155 x241 fax: 508/655-9261 mat@scrubadub.com

Vice President/ Suppliers - Jeff Arimento
New England Car Wash Equipment
P. O. Box 1506 Littleton, MA 01460
978/268-0513 fax: 978/278-9292 jarimento@necwe.com

Treasurer/ Secretary - Patrick Mosesso
RoJo Car Wash
69 Providence Hwy., Norwood, MA 02062
781/762-8280 fax: 781/762-1465 patrick@rojocarwash.com

Immediate Past President - Dave Ellard
Triple Play Car Wash
100 Washington Street, Attleboro, MA 02703
508/915-4820 fax: 508/915-4824 dellard135@aol.com

OPERATOR DIRECTORS

Robert Brennan - All Washed Up Auto Wash
115A Main Street, Route 109, Medway, MA 02053
617/510-2826 rsbrennan@usa.net

Tony DeBarros - Balise Car Wash
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508/771-0003 fax: 508/957-2947 adebarros@baliseauto.com

Mark Delaney - Allston Car Wash
434 Cambridge Street Allston, MA 02134
617/783-4308 fax: 617/ 783-3915 allstoncarwash@gmail.com

Darrold Evans - Sandwich Car Wash
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508/314-1377 fax: 508/ 833-0249 sandwichcarwash@comcast.net

Kevin McLoughlin - White Water Car Wash and Detail Center
525 Central Avenue, Dover, NH 03820
508/560-4684 fax: 603/ 742-4338 kjmcloughlinjr@yahoo.com

Micah Smith - Global Partners LLC
800 South Street Ste 500 4th Flr. Marketing, Waltham, MA 0245
781/ 697-8438 fax: 781/ 674-7799 msmith@globalp.com

SUPPLIER DIRECTORS

Brandon Berriault - Tapco LLC
58 Shangri La Boulevard, East Wareham, MA 02538
800/977-8562 fax: 508/295-4101 tapco.bb@gmail.com

Duffy Cink - Autowash Maintenance Corporation
90 Canal Street, Malden, MA 02148
800/395-2155 fax: 781/324-2735 duffy@autowashmaintenance.com

ASSOCIATION OFFICES

NECA c/o The Association Advantage
591 North Avenue, Suite 3-2, Wakefield, MA 01880-1617
781/245-7400 F 781/245-6487
info@newenglandcarwash.org www.newenglandcarwash.org
Executive Director: Sherri L. Oken, CAE
Management Company: The Association Advantage LLC
solutions@TheAssociationAdvantage.net
www.TheAssociationAdvantage.net

And then there is Sherri Oken. She is the Executive Director of NECA and without her coordination, dedication, and plain hard work, all would be lost. NECA is very dependent on her and she never disappoints. Sherri makes sure that all of us volunteers get our jobs done, and she makes it a lot easier for us with her structure and experience. She has helped me tremendously, and I thank her too.

There are a group of Past Presidents who remain active with the Board, providing wisdom and invaluable experience. They also are important volunteers for some of our larger activities. Ron Bousquet continues to be a key leader in the NRCC and just completed a very successful show in New Jersey. Patti Kaplan continues to deliver as coordinator of our annual golf outing and fundraiser. Danny Paisner drove our holiday gift card campaign last year and Bob Katseff recently volunteered to lead a team implementing a portion of the new strategic plan. Paul Vercollone is a great free safety and helps out wherever needed, most recently assisting Patti with the golf outing. I thank all of you and I apologize for anyone that I missed.

I have enjoyed my time with the Board and I know we have made progress in making NECA a stronger organization. I'm looking forward to my continued participation with this great team and organization.

David Ellard
NECA President

NECA Scholarship Eligibility
Deadline to apply: April 28, 2017

$1,000 scholarships are awarded annually to eligible applicants from New England Carwash Association (NECA) member companies.

To be eligible, an applicant must:

- Be an employee, full or part time for at least 1 year, or direct family member of an employee, of any NECA member company
- Have graduated high school or the equivalent
- Be enrolled, or plan to enroll, at an accredited post-secondary educational institution full or part time (not limited to traditional academic programs – can be a trade school, a community college, etc.)
- Not have won a scholarship from NECA in the last year.

Recipients are evaluated by a panel of NECA members who carefully consider the following: high school/academic standing, leadership capabilities, community involvement, strength of character, personal achievement, plan of study and future goals. Financial need also may be considered. ■

Contact the NECA office at 781/245-7400 for an application and if you have questions.

NECA Scholarships

$1, 000 each!
Deadline to apply: April 28, 2017

This special member benefit is for those from NECA member companies and their immediate family members.
Full eligibility details and an application are available on the members-only page and from the NECA office.

NECA Golf Outing Brings Community Together To Support Charity

By Patti Kaplan

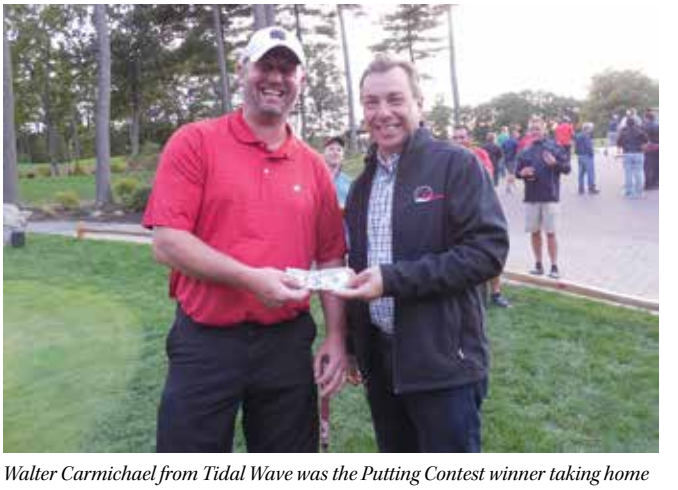
On a bright, sunny Monday in October, the New England Carwash Association (NECA) operators and suppliers, representing 30 different companies, gathered for a great day of golf, networking and laughter. Allston Car Wash, comprised of team members Mike, Matt and Mark Delaney and Josh Rodriguez, retained the coveted trophy with the top score of 57. Team Simoniz USA led by Barry Smith and friends Del Hodkins, Dennis Smith and T-Bone Dion finished with an impressive 62 capturing second place. AutoShine of New England, one of the event sponsors, took third place with a score of 66. Congrats to Frank Carpino, Jim Porter, Bob Rossini and Jake Downey.

It was comedy central at the putting contest qualifier hole. Golfers had to sink a putt in one attempt to gain entry into the $1,000 Contest. A team photo also was taken to be recorded for posterity. Paul Vercollone orchestrated hilarious poses with Trump and Hillary. Some of the comments I cannot repeat as you might imagine. Thanks to Chuck Delaney and Dave Ellard, who manned the hole with Paul and me, for their assistance with this process. Visit www.newenglandcarwash.org to see your team!

NECA President Dave Ellard presents Scholarship Award Winner Colin Milch with his honor.

Kayla Mosesso, whose father Patrick is also the RoJo Car Wash manager, accepted his daughter's scholarship check on her behalf.

The annual event was the perfect opportunity to lighten up the recent election with a little Donald and Hillary love!



Walter Carmichael from Tidal Wave was the Putting Contest winner taking home $1,000 in cash from NECA President Dave Ellard.

The $1,000 Putting Contest at day's end always draws a crowd. Walter Carmichael from Tidal Wave Car Wash showed off his putting skills erasing all competition and winning the cash! Thanks to Autowash Maintenance for sponsoring this exciting contest.

Following a delicious buffet dinner, Dave Ellard welcomed all and congratulated our 2016 scholarship winners, Kayla Mosesso, whose Dad manages RoJo Car Wash, and Colin Milch whose Dad manages Quincy Car Wash. Colin, an amazing young man, attended our dinner with his Mom, Liz, and Patrick Mosesso, from Rojo, accepted on behalf of his daughter, Kayla. Our third winner, Heather Hoopes, whose dad Brad works for Kleen-Rite, could not attend.

Tony DeBarros of Balise Car Wash gratefully acknowledged last year's contribution and shared how we helped the children of Cape Verde who were ravaged by an earthquake. Tamara Beland, representing NEADS, this year's charity recipient, spoke about their program, how the dogs are trained along with the comfort and service they provide to their owners. We were also very fortunate to have two dogs, June and Ally, and their owners, Ed McHarg and Annie O'Connell, present at the outing during the cocktail hour and dinner. It was a treat to talk with them hearing firsthand how much these animals help them cope with everyday living.

The fun continued as Donato DePinto did a fabulous job as chief auctioneer encouraging high bids for Boston Pops tickets, a racetrack experience with Dave Ellard, and Red Sox and Bruins Tickets. The night concluded with our raffle where winners enjoyed a variety of prizes all for the benefit of NEADS.

So yes – it was a success! We raised $2,000 for the NECA Scholarship Fund and donated $5,400 to NEADS. We will be naming a puppy and will keep you informed throughout our puppy's socialization and training over the next year.

Thank you so very much to our generous sponsors. Thank you to our golfers and all participants who so graciously supported this event and very deserving charities. A very special thank you to Donato DePinto and Paul Vercollone who helped put this golf outing together from beginning to end.

See you all soon! ■

Patti Kaplan owns Starlite Car Wash & Detail Center in North Reading, MA. She is a former NECA President.

NECA's 2016 featured charity is NEADS. Two representative were on hand with dogs June and Ally. NEADS (National Education for Assistance Dog Services) is also known as Dogs for Deaf and Disabled Americans, based in Princeton, MA.

Fun with the candidates compliments of Paul Vercollone.

The winning foursome from Team Allston Car Wash - Mike, Matt and Mark Delaney and Josh Rodriguez.

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"Tony" Previte Dies at 79

Anthony Domenic "Tony" Previte, 79, passed away on September 1, in Boca Raton, FL. Born in Stoneham, MA, on April 4, 1937, he was raised in Belmont. He is survived by his wife, Nance (McLucas) Previte, brothers Joseph and wife Joanne, Domenic and wife Ann Marie, his children Domenic (DA) and wife Patty, Terri, Cara and husband Steve, stepchildren Eric and wife Suzette, Kristine, Dana and husband Joe and several grandchildren, nieces, nephews, great nieces and nephews and extended family.

Tony served in the Army and later was a graduate of Burdette Business School. He was a successful businessman and co-founder of Lechmere Car Wash in Cambridge and Somerville, MA, as well as other business ventures. He was also a member of the New England Carwash Association.

Donations in his memory can be made to St. Jude Children's Hospital (donors@stjude.org or P.O. Box 1000, Dept. 142, Memphis, TN 38148-0142.

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KCM Auto Wash, LLC
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Dracut, MA
Contacts: Tina and Peter Niarhos
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Contacts: Larry and Anthony Ciampi
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Rhode Island Chemical Corporation
Providence, MA
Contact: John Tapis
401/714-2184 • surfactantsgroup@aol.com
Manufacturer and supplier of car care products such as detergents, waxes, tire cleaners

TREASURER'S REPORT

New England Carwash Association, Inc.

January - Sept 2016

Income	
Interest Income	$13.25
Meetings	$35,520.00
Member Services	$6,191.04
Membership	$17,550.00
NRCC	$27,653.78
Scholarship	$460.00
Total Income	**$87,388.07**
Expenses	
Advertising and Promotions	$-
Board Expenses	$3,253.76
Charitable Contribution	** $5,600.00
Insurance	$1,804.00
Management Services	$28,710.87
Meetings	$29,057.99
Member Services	** $41,178.81
Membership	$546.43
Office Expense	$2,436.30
Professional Expense	$1,825.00
Scholarship	$3,002.31
Tax	$-
Total Expenses	** **$117,415.47**
Net Income	**$(30,027.40)**
OTHER Wash for a Cause	
distributions to car washes	$32.20
Wash for a Cause - other exp	
Wash for a Cause Income	$70.00
Website	[269.91]
Total Wash for a Cause	**[232.11]**
Cash Balances	
Citizen's Bank Savings	$88,326.25
Citizens Checking	$44,199.09
Citizens Bank Reserve Fund	$86,000.92
Total Checking / Savings	**$218,526.26**

**2015 expenditures reflected here since invoices were received and paid in 2016: $40,375 radio campaign, $5,600 charitable contribution.

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Website: eriebrush.com E-mail: sales@eriebrush.com

It's Membership Renewal Time!

It's that time of year when we remind our members that their 2017 membership renewals were due on January 1. Membership is an excellent value. Throughout the year, the New England Carwash Association (NECA) offers significant member benefits and every employee of a member company enjoys membership privileges.

NECA's leadership is in the midst of a major strategic

If you have not already renewed...

You can renew your membership 24/7 on the secure NECA website: www.newenglandcarwash.org/category/3450/join-neca.htm

Or, mail a dues check with the invoice we mailed to you, with additions and corrections, to the NECA office.

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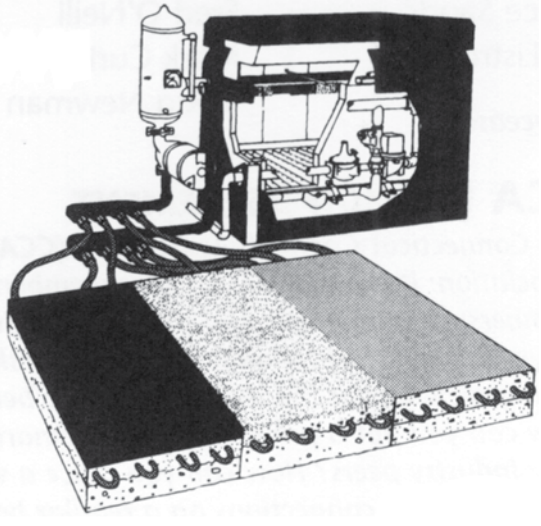

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planning initiative. Our entire vision and focus has shifted to benefiting our members.

The Year in Review

Arguably, NECA's greatest strength is the collective knowledge and experience of its members. To help our members connect and learn together, we presented four major events in 2016 plus conducted strategic planning, presented three $1,000 scholarships, sent out numerous publications, monitored legislative and regulatory activity, and more.

On January 26, Attorney Joel Sowalsky, a seasoned business and employment lawyer, educated and entertained us with a lively and interactive program, "Traps for the Unwary." Joel presented a fictional case study which was followed by a boisterous "team-table" competition. Attendees learned how to avoid costly legal mistakes that can result in expensive litigation, government investigations, mandatory payments of back wages, penalties of double or treble damages, government fines and lawyers fees.

On May 24, we had a Table Top Show at Lombardo's in Randolph, preceded by a tour of carwashes in Southeastern, MA. This is probably the most anticipated event of the year, and plans are underway for our 2017 tour and show with a northern focus.

On July 26, a group of NECA leaders gathered for a full day of strategic planning to set the future direction of the association. We followed up early on the morning of Sept. 26 to refine the plan and assign responsibilities. We have developed a more concise mission statement (We connect car wash professionals to promote and protect our industry) and have shifted the focus of our vision to provide optimum value for our members (Drive more consumers to use professional car washes). We set three goals and are developing strategies to realize this ambitious vision.

From September 19-21, NECA was the NRCC's host association for the annual regional trade show in Atlantic City. The work of planning the NRCC begins at the conclusion of the prior show and goes on all year long. This event is the largest regional trade show featuring education and networking for all. The 2017 NRCC is October 2-4 and is hosted by the Connecticut Carwash Association (nrcchow.com).

On Sept. 26, we had a golf outing that was not only fun but resulted in a $5,000+ donation to NEADS and an added $2,000 to the Scholarship Program fund.

On Nov. 1, we assembled a panel of industry partners to share their many years of experience ensuring that your washes are in optimum condition for the busy season to come and remain that way throughout the season. Details and photos from "Winter Maintenance Best Practices" are featured on the NECA website.

There are many membership benefits, whether you're able to attend one of our signature events or not. We do hope to see you in person soon! ■

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

I recently had a conversation with a friend about life. We both have kids in college, I have one graduating and one who has just started and our youngest is getting ready to enter high school. It occurred to me that they were each entering different phases in their lives with new challenges and new experiences. Once we thought a bit more about it, we realized we are moving into new chapters in our lives as well, and our lives might be a little quieter and houses a little less chaotic, maybe.

As I look back over my time in this industry I think about the changes I have seen and issues I been a part of. I keep coming back to the idea that even though things change the important things remain the same. The constants that I have come to rely on are the willingness of people in this industry to lend a helping hand. There are countless stories of operators, suppliers, vendors and manufacturers coming together to lend a helping hand to others whether it's helping to resolve a mechanical problem, a marketing idea, a different way of looking at process or a host of other things.

The strong commitment to do the right thing, to treat customers and employees with respect and deliver a quality experience to our customers and the people we work with ring true. The people in this industry recognize the idea that in working together we all become stronger and better at what we do. We need to remember to keep an open mind and ask questions. The regional meetings, the Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC) and International Carwash Association (ICA) conferences are incredible opportunities to create business and personal relationships that have proven to be extremely valuable and rewarding. I can honestly say that some of my closest friends are carwashing people.

One of the things that I truly appreciate is the new operator or vendor who looks at our industry through the lens of their own experiences. I have been privileged to meet new operators who have taken an opportunity to change career paths or the sons and daughters of current or former operators who have decided to join the family business and join our industry, as they bring with them their experiences and perspectives which help shape their take on the business and how they want to run their operations. Just like championship sports franchises or political parties that work to recruit new players or candidates, the NYSCWA is constantly looking for new members with a variety of experiences and backgrounds to help continue our work to improve the professional carwashing industry in New York state. If you haven't considered becoming a part of the NYSCWA, you should. I have been involved in this industry for more than 25 years and I enjoy it as much today as I did when I first started. I would urge you to take advantage of the opportunity to become a part of a group of likeminded businesspeople whose counsel, advice and friendship is a rewarding experience and one I consider myself lucky to experience.

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NYSCWA President

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"Oh, the healthy things you can do!"

Dr. Seuss

By Ray Justice

If you read the previous seven issues, I had been asked by Editor Suzanne Stansbury to "Push the Envelope" and write about general health issues that everyone encounters.

In the first issue we started out with an over view and zeroed in on "Nutrition." In second issue we covered motion, movement and stretching. Third was on sleep, rest and recreation. Fourth was about health-focused reminders. Fifth was on personal habits, including movement and then the importance of water. Sixth, was focused on general health and longevity

With tips from my mother who lived to be a very healthy 100 years old. Seventh, the last issue, was on "Head stuff" – Tying in your mind, thoughts, beliefs, etc.,

Healthy is about feeling good, actually great, when we are free from illness and injury.

Feeling the way we naturally should, being able to adapt and function at high levels of energy.

We will not be directly discussing medicine and its benefits but instead we will be covering what you can do yourself.

Our general theme is to encourage you to get to know yourself by paying better attention.

Your body will tell you a great deal. How are your energies, your thoughts, what you eat and drink, your movement and exercise habits? Awareness and mindfulness come into play here, which means paying attention.

A few important words that relate to health, fitness and energy: Diet, Nutrition, Water, Stillness, Resting, Sleep, Recreation, Movement, Stretching, Present Moment Awareness, Mindfulness, Focus, Reminders, Purpose, Intention, Mind-Body Connection, Emotional Well Being. Our Thoughts, Fears, Beliefs, Passion, Possibilities, Habits, Appreciation and Gratitude.

"The doctor of the future will give no medicines, but will interest his patients in the care of the human frame, in diet, and in the cause and prevention of disease." –Thomas Edison

Session Eight

More Head Stuff – letting go of fear-based thoughts through the power of self suggestion.

(The last paragraph of this story sums it up)

In my journal, I wrote:

I need to write about almost dying last week.

August 2016

I need to write about the angel that saved my life.

I need to write about deep water, floating and swimming.

I need to write about the wonderful outcome.

I need to write about the unexpected aftermath, the good part, that was the gift from an experience with fear.

This will not be short because it is a story. It is mostly written for me to review, write, absorb and learn. If someone takes the time to read it, and learns something, it's an added bonus.

A Shoulder To Lean On

I was invited by a couple of friends to go swimming in a nearby quarry.

It was a last minute decision that I had turned down a few weeks before.

I gave my usual pat answer of, "Thanks, but I will pass, too busy."

I said OK after they announced, "We will pick you up at 1 pm, you will be back at 4:30 and it is 90 degrees out."

When we arrived at our destination they quickly dove in off a dock platform and I hesitated while I looked over the situation.

I am comfortable swimming in a pool, but besides jumping in ocean waves, that is most of my experience.

At the end of the dock I yelled out "How deep is it?" The reply from Greg was, "I don't know probably 40 or 50 feet." I said I would stay close to the edge also being a person that never learned, or been able, to easily float. He called back to me, from about 60 or 70 yards, or a little longer than half of a football field, that he was now standing on a ledge. The water was no higher than his armpits so it looked workable for me. It would have been if I had known enough to tell him to stay where he was, as a landmark, until I got there.

As I started swimming out to this below water, not visible ledge, he started swimming back toward the dock. I made it out to where the ledge was, or actually where I thought it was, without great difficulty but was ready for a breather.

This is where the problem started; I could not find the ledge.

I was quickly running out of gas and I knew I was close but things look different in the water and no ledge to be found. By now I am struggling to stay above water. I yell out that I am in trouble and Greg yells back the ledge is right there. Another 30 seconds of desperate searching with no luck taking as much of a breath as I can and yell again, "I'm in trouble."

I always thought people drowned by hitting their head or by becoming very tired and gulping water. My body was not tired and I did not swallow any water. My problem was I could not breathe in enough air, only shorts gasps of, maybe, a cup full of air at a time. I even had enough presence to try to take a slow deep breath figuring I could hold it if I went under and swim back up again. I was not able to take that deep breath. I am not a good floater and that there was no reachable bottom, to go down and kick back up from. Knowing that was enough to increase my fear level to some-

thing more than I have ever experienced. I have been in car accidents, a bad fall, for a long ways, on a very steep ski trail and stuck inside large machinery. This was different. There was no possibility of escape from this one, nothing I could do.

Now this is where the good news starts. This is where my angel showed up. I did not have to do this alone. Sandy happened to be swimming around 40 feet from me. She came right over. I, between gasps, announce, "I'm in trouble." She says, "Let's find the ledge, it's right here."

Well, it wasn't. She could not find it either and another precious minute or two went by.

She calmly said "Ok, we head for the dock." She knew I needed help and would keep sinking and fighting to keep my head above water from the panic of it all. She turned her back and told me to put my hands on her shoulders and with that alone I was not sinking. I ended up having just my right hand on her left shoulder as we headed, what seemed like forever, to the dock.

I still could not breath well but realized that I was actually going to make it. When I did, I hung on to the dock a couple minutes before pulling myself up to good old solid ground.

Ten or 15 minutes later, as we were all relaxing in lawn chairs, I looked over toward my new angel and noticed a big smile on her face. Somehow, in a way I do not know how to describe, her smile seemed different than any I had seen. I asked her what that big smile was for. She replied, "I've never saved anyone's life before and it really feels good. On top of that I didn't know I could swim that good."

Well, I told her, "It felt really good to me too."

Later that night I sent her a text message that said, "Thank you for being a shoulder to lean on and getting me out of a scary scrape." I then followed that with another that said, "And thank you for possibly saving my life." I got back one word "Welcome" and we both know it wasn't possibly saving, it was saving.

I need to learn to float, which seems simple, easy and natural to many others, but not to me. I need to learn to swim better, I am fine in a pool but survival in larger bodies of water is so different. No waves, no current, just water, but also no bottom and no close sides.

Another important aftermath of this experience is the head stuff. Remember the movie titled, "The Best of Times" with Robin Williams? In an important football game, earlier, he had dropped a perfect pass, in the end zone, to lose the game. Through the years he kept rehashing it over and over again by watching the video on a regular basis.

It was stuck in his mind.

Tying that story into mine, instead of rehashing my fear-based experience from my past, as it popped into my thoughts, I used it to think of that smile and "I've never saved anyone's life before."

I changed my thoughts, which changed my feeling from fear to appreciation as it was rehashed in my thoughts.

It took a middle-of-the-night awakening to come up with that and it has worked great.

Long term and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) effects, we will have to wait to see. So far, so good.

If you have read this far, I think the most useful lesson is in the last paragraph.

Remember the smile. When a fear-based story shows up, on it's own, which it will, use it as a trigger to switch to something that happened later on that was good.

The fear thought becomes your trigger, or reminder, to let go of that and switch to something you appreciate. A live example following up on last issues' message about the absolute power of suggestion. It starts with our thoughts.

Letting go of fear-based thoughts through the power of self-suggestion. ■

Ray Justice is an entrepreneur, poet and creativity explorer. He is a former carwash operator and past president of the New York State Car Wash Association. Visit him at Thoughtcompass.com

Ray Justice

Thoughts at Night

"When I wake,
unexpected,
from the middle of sleep,
I am often
uncertain,
more afraid,
less courageous.

The night
seems to change
my thoughts

I often fear
you may not
be,
but only
with my thoughts
in darkness.

The light of dawn
settles me,
calms my illusion,
as I grow again
in confidence
and connection.

The morning has brought me back,
the world is awakening
and I with it.

Oh, how I love the breath of
a new day and
the arrival of first light.

Thank you, thank you,
I have returned.

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Minimum Wage Hike Impacts Industry; Operators May Consider More Automation

By William Y. Crowell, III

The increased minimum wage in New York state has caused increased discussion about transitioning of carwash locations to automated facilities with fewer employees. Some observers have suggested that the increased labor costs will result in carwashes which either sell their locations to other commercial enterprises or convert to more automation. The concern of some carwash operators is that the increased labor costs will result in higher expenses. The increased expenses will drive a significant increase in the price to consumers. There is a price point for a carwash at which the price increase could result in a drop off in the number of washes per customer. Carwashes are considered to be elastic in their demand based on prices. Carwashes are not a necessary consumer service so cost is clearly a significant factor in consumer usage. As the wage increases to $15, it will become clear if the scenario described actually comes to fruition.

Carwash operators are regularly reviewing their business plans and making investments to improve their wash facilities. An overwhelming majority of carwashes in New York state are operated as small businesses. Irrespective of whether increased minimum wages or the introduction of autonomous cars have impacts on their business plans, carwash operators continue to update and make investments to improve their operations and properties.

The carwash industry continues to evolve with new green and waterless technologies, improved equipment and cleaning products. Whatever the reason for a loan, it is important for a carwash operator to investigate all the options to ensure that they make the best financial choice.

In addition to the conventional bank loan, there are federal and state programs which are available to small business owners with carwashes. The federal and state loan programs described work in concert with your local bank. In addition to your bank there is also the New York Business Development Corporation which is a statutorily-created entity designed to complement conventional banking to work with banks to provide loans particularly targeted to small businesses. The New York Business Development Corporation is focused on loans which often don't meet standard underwriting criteria. Their objective is to offer credit opportunities to small businesses to stimulate economic growth. The New York Business Development Corporation has developed a niche in small business lending using Small Business Administration and New York State programs to find loan solutions for small businesses like carwashes.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) has two programs, which carwashes seeking financing should be aware of: an SBA 504 loan or an SBA 7(a) loan. The 504 loan is provided through a Certified Community Development Company, which works with the SBA and private lenders to provide financing at a fixed rate for owner occupied real estate and equipment. 504 loan amounts range from $50,000 to $5.5 million with a project cap of $25 million. The New York Business Development Corporation has a Certified Community Development Company, which makes SBA 504 loans.

The SBA 7(a) program targets small business owners who do not qualify for traditional bank financing. The loans are funded by banks and the SBA acts to guarantee that a specified portion of the loan will be repaid. This guarantee effectively reduces the bank lender's risk. 7(a) loans may be used for working capital, equipment purchases, real estate acquisition and improvements. The loan amounts for the 7(a) program range from $25,000 to $5,000,000. The 7(a) loans are available to small businesses with less than $5,000,000 of net income averaged more than two years and a combined net worth of less than $15 million.

The New York State Empire Development Corporation offers a Linked Deposit Program, which provides banks with linked state deposits. The state deposits are placed with a reduced rate of return when participating banks make below market loans to qualifying small businesses. This program enables banks to provide the small business borrower with savings on their interest rates. The maximum loan amount is $2 million for a four-year period. It is available to service firms with a 100 or fewer full-time employees in New York State, which are

independently owned and operated and not dominant in their field. A carwash may need to be located in a highly distressed area to benefit or be a certified minority or women owned business.

The New York State Capital Access Program, also under the auspices of the Empire State Development Corporation, provides matching funds to financial institutions for loan loss reserves as an inducement to make small business loans. Participating lenders are listed on the Empire State Development website. To qualify the small business must be independently owned and employ fewer than 100 employees. The loans are limited to $500,000 for business or facility expansion, technology upgrade, business startup or working capital.

The New York State Small Business Revolving Loan Fund is targeted to minority and women-owned enterprises and other small businesses which have difficulty accessing the credit markets. This loan program is available through community based lenders and the New York Business Development Corporation. The loans under this program cover working capital, acquisition of machinery and equipment, and acquisition or improvement of property. The loan amount under this program is capped at $25,000.

The loan programs discussed are not exclusive. There are other programs available. The objective is to provide a brief description of some of the most popular programs.

Many small businesses have a reluctance to use either federal or state programs based on paperwork and bureaucratic barriers to participation. These loan programs can, however, provide a financial advantage to carwash operators who persevere through roadblocks. Your bank or the New York Business Development Corporation should be able to provide you with specific guidance as to whether your loan would qualify under any of the programs discussed. In addition, they may be aware of other programs which would be applicable. The current business environment for many carwashes is particularly challenging with the ongoing implementation of minimum wage increases. The programs discussed provide a menu of possibilities, which could potentially assist carwash operators in the market for financing. The state or federally guaranteed or subsidized loan programs provide options to explore. ■

William Y. Crowell, III

William Y. Crowell, III, is a partner with Cozen O'Connor. You can reach him at 212/883-4944.

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Income	
Meetings Income	7,025.00
Membership Dues	16,750.00
Northeast Convention Income	27,653.78
PAC Contributions	75.00
Promotional Fees	159.49
Unapplied Cash Payment Income	850.00
Vendor Sponsorships	4,000.00
Total Income	**$56,513.27**
Gross Profit	**$56,513.27**
Advertising/Promotional	177.33
Director Fees	17,500.00
Insurance Expense	1,456.00
Legislative Expense	50.00
Legislative Fees	9,000.00
Meetings Expenses	11,577.10
Miscellaneous Expense	50.00
Office Expenses	176.27
Postage Expense	277.55
Printing/Graphics	265.00
Professional Services fees	500.00
QuickBooks Payments Fees	1,141.16
Telephone	116.46
Travel	454.14
Website Host	37.99
Website Maintenance	137.50
Total Expenses	**$42,916.50**
Net Operating Income	**$13,596.77**
Net Income	**$13,596.77**
NBT Checking	47,032.39
Money Market	50,445.31
Total	**97,477.70**

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