

# northeast carwasher

## 25 Years: An NRCC Perspective

An Interview with AIG's  
Bob Benmosche

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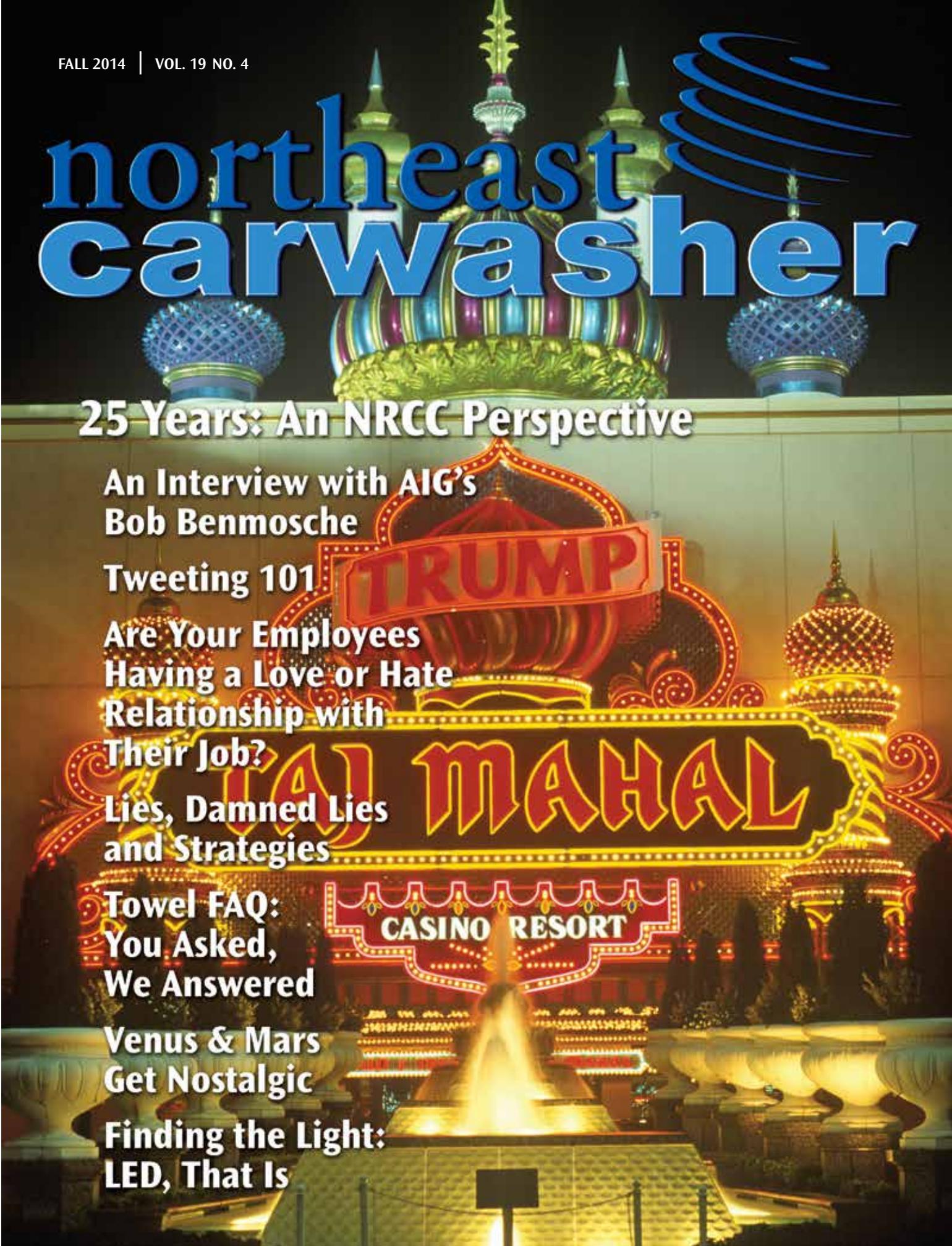
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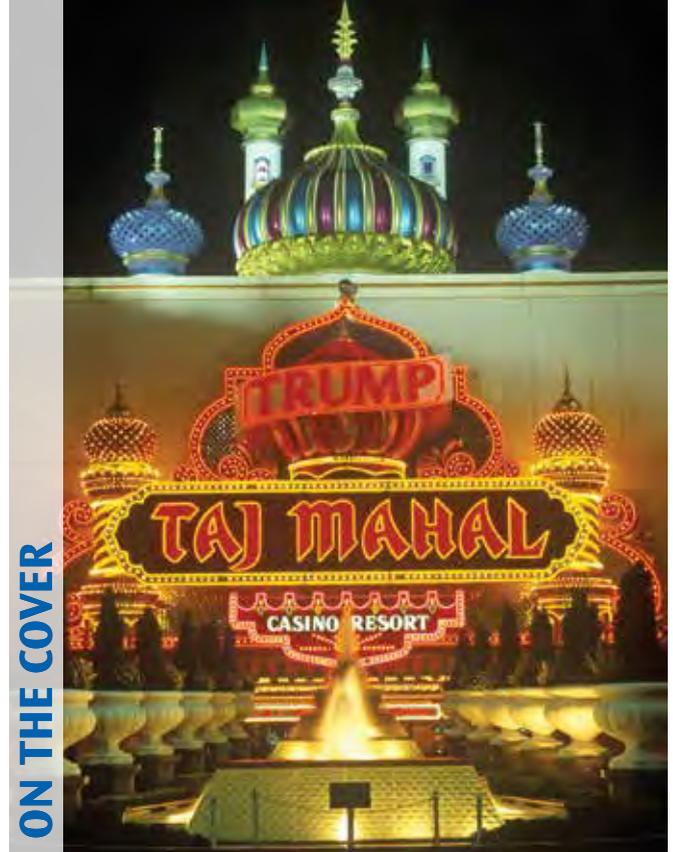
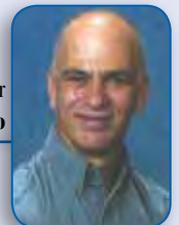


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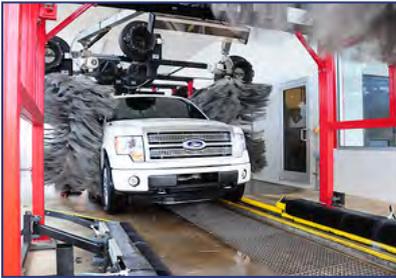
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*As you read the cover story on page 12, "An NRCC Perspective," I hope you walk away with a sense of how important relationships are to running a successful business. The gentlemen who shared their thoughts on the history and significance of the Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC) know firsthand that the relationships they have nurtured over the last quarter century have contributed greatly to the success of their operations. To a man, they can probably tell you exactly when they met each other and what was discussed. Over the span of 25 years their friendships have grown, as has the depth of their conversations. Such relationships are a gift and should be treasured, nurtured and valued.*

*Twenty-five years. It's hard to believe.*

*I remember my first NRCC like it was yesterday. I was working for Professional Carwashing & Detailing and was covering the first Northeast Regional in Newport, RI. In addition to education and extensive table top exhibits, that show included an amazing lobster/clam bake at one of the mansions and the perfect opportunity for me to mix and mingle with carwashers from around the region. I took full advantage and forged some significant relationships that have lasted 25 years.*

*A couple years later, I was asked to represent the New York State Car Wash Association (NYSCWA) on the NRCC board as I was an NYSCWA board member at the time. What an honor. What a responsibility. (I'll never forget a few of the senior board members who told Tom Hoffman, Jr. and myself when we chaired the show in Saratoga that we were young and would learn from our mistakes... Yikes!)*

*To this day, I am active in the workings of the show. I feel like it's a third child of mine, and I'm very protective. But I'm not alone. The board is a compilation of dedicated entrepreneurs who take the NRCC seriously and put their hearts and souls into its success. This show is for the betterment of carwash operators and suppliers on the East Coast, and its revenue helps each of the five associations sustain themselves. The board works tirelessly to put on the best trade show and educational programming within our means. We might not always get it right, but we always try our best. We'd welcome your feedback and thoughts on this year's 25th NRCC. Every year we work hard to raise the bar, so let us know where we can improve. You can grab one of the board members on the show floor; we'll have on a board ribbon.*

*There's a list of activities, seminars and trade show hours on page 15. I am personally looking forward to the 25th Anniversary Celebration at the Hard Rock Café on Tuesday, September 16. I will relish the opportunity to rekindle my relationships and forge some new ones. I also can't wait to hear Keynote Speaker Robert Benmosche, President & CEO of AIG. It will be hard to top him next year, but I'm sure the Mid-Atlantic Carwash Association (MCA), the 2015 host, will give it their best shot because that is what each association does to continue to provide you with the best show possible.*

*Hats off to all those who have worked so hard and so selflessly over the last 25 years to make the NRCC what it is today!*



*Suzanne Stansbury*

Suzanne Stansbury  
Editor/Publisher





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Check out the reinvigoration of this wash on page 82.



## WASH VOLUME INDEX

We have taken the pulse of four East Coast operators to see where their volumes are compared to last year (YTD). For June 2013 to June 2014 the numbers are similar to those in the last quarter with our southern states showing a high of +23 percent and upstate New York with a decline of -9 percent.



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. ■

### Do you have an opinion or view you want to share with our readers?

Send your thoughts to:

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Celebrate 20 years of publishing with us in our January issue!!!!

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### Site on the Mind

Clean. Very clean is my first reaction to the look of Coastal Carwash's website. The white background with a pop of color scattered throughout the site make it eye-catching and easy to read.

On the home page you can learn about how the wash stands out from the crowd, its history, how to get in touch with the new owners, hours of operation and directions. You can also learn about how to care for your car, about their unlimited plan and the wash's special cleaning process.

Simple and information packed. That's what you see when you visit this website. ■

To learn more visit them at [www.coastal-carwash.com](http://www.coastal-carwash.com)



Summer may be over but your summer reading list doesn't have to be. Here are the 10 top picks from *Business Insider*.

- ❖ "Think Like a Freak" by Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner
- ❖ "The Obstacle Is the Way" by Ryan Holiday
- ❖ "Thrive: The Third Metric to Redefining Success and Creating a Life of Well-Being, Widsom, and Wonder" by Arianna Huffington
- ❖ "Flash Boys: A Wall Street Revolt" by Michael Lewis
- ❖ "Essentialism: The Disciplines Pursuit of Less" by Greg McKeown
- ❖ "Stress Test: Reflections on Financial Crisis" by Timothy F. Geithne
- ❖ "Capital in the Twenty-First Century" by Thomas Piketty
- ❖ "Things a Little Bird Told Me: Confessional of the Creative Mind" by Biz Stone
- ❖ "The Alliance: Managing Talent in the Networked Age" by Reid Hoffman
- ❖ "#GIRLBOSS" by Sophia Amoruso

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The Ryko/NCS combination, said Steven L'Heureux, CEO of Ryko Solutions, allows the company to improve its collective operator base experience in four ways through an enhanced service footprint, expanded focus on the delivery of improved uptime, the ability to more thoroughly support competitive carwash systems and the opportunity to adopt the NCS '360 Degree Partnership' approach to the customer's business. "I'm excited about the shared mission we have with Ryko around partnering with customers to build more profitable carwashes," said NCS CEO Hank Richard, in a company press release. "Both Ryko's and NCS' shared strong customer-centric commitment and keen interest in providing the industry's premier consulting services

is what makes the difference in being able to earn the trust of and build long-time relations with customers." ■

For more information visit [www.ryko.com](http://www.ryko.com)

**SONNY'S ADDS WASHTECH TO SSO NETWORK**



Sonny's The CarWash Factory, Tamarac, FL, has added Washtech, Inc. to its Select Service Organization (SSO) network. Washtech, Inc. will distribute, install and service Sonny's Tunnel Equipment and AutoPilot Carwash Control Systems in the Maryland and Virginia markets, according to a company press release. "Washtech is a top-notch organization with all the capabilities to service and support customers in a way that will continue to build the Sonny's brand," said Robert Andre, VP of Outside Sales. "Craig Hanson and his team represent unparalleled experience

helping carwash operators succeed. They have the expertise and integrity to support our clients before, during and after their decision to choose Sonny's."

Sonny's has also added Sunbelt CarWash Services Inc., Mobile, AL, and Carwash Services of the Southeast, Inc., Lawrenceville, GA, to its SSO network. ■

For more information visit [www.SonnysDirect.com](http://www.SonnysDirect.com)

**POWELL RELAUNCHES WASHIDEAS.COM**

Industry signage and neuromarketing expert Perry Powell has relaunched WashIdeas.com to reflect his vision and expertise within the carwash industry, according to WashIdeas Founder Ryan Carlson.

"Years ago I created a podcast and a blog all about the carwash industry, customer loyalty and marketing and brought together each week a panel of experts from within the wash industry to discuss news, events and best practices that owners and operators could benefit from," Carlson said in a press release. "I am pleased to announce the transfer of the WashIdeas site into the knowledgeable hands (and brain) of Perry Powell.

Powell, who uses neuromarketing to create menu signs that influence human behavior and buying habits, is eager to take this site and run with it. "The reception to what WashIdeas.com is doing, has been amazing," said Powell. "I think the natural flow that results from open dialog allows the interviewee to give pearls of wisdom that otherwise might not come to light," he said.

Honoring industry pioneers is very important to Powell.

"I am very happy about the 'Legends of Car Washing' page. We are getting the opportunity to hear from those people who were here 40 and 50 years ago. This allows the modern operator to connect with the industry-wide operation logic that helped the industry reach the success it enjoys today.

WashIdeas.com relaunched in June. ■

For more information visit [www.washideas.com](http://www.washideas.com)



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# An NRCC Perspective...

*We have asked some of the founders and constants in the evolution of the Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC) to share their insight and memories of the show, celebrating its 25th year this fall at the Taj Mahal in Atlantic City, NJ, September 15-17.*

I was fortunate to be the Connecticut Carwash Association (CCA) President when the Northeast Regional idea became a reality. The New England Carwash Association (NECA) led by the great Fran Downey from Portland, ME, and the Paisners (Marshall, Bobby and then Dan) from the ScrubaDub chain, Bob Katseff of Turnpike Car Wash and Ron Bousquet from Randy's (forgive me if I forget someone) had the idea and to their credit were willing to launch this endeavor solo, if necessary.

The CCA, however, took the lead and invited representatives from the following regional associations: New England Carwash Association, New York State Car Wash Association, Car Wash Operators of New Jersey, and of course the Connecticut Carwash Association, to a meeting in New Haven at historic Mory's on the Yale campus.

Past CCA President and Board Member, the late Bruce Sands, was a Yale grad and thus we were able to meet at the "Tables Down At Mory's." In fact, the CCA had been conducting board meetings at Mory's for quite some time.

This was the start of a regional gathering of operators and vendors that began to fill a very real need at the time, and obviously still has relevance in 2014.

The early 1990's was a time of recession, not as bad as 2008 perhaps, but tough times for many and the idea of attending the International Carwash Association (ICA) Convention was stretching the budgets of many. Yet, we all wished to stay current and knew how important professional growth was to our businesses.

The idea forged by the group was to have a venue that one could perhaps drive to and would rotate across the region. Further, it was thought that by "keeping it local," there would be a greater variety of vendors which would be a "good thing." The national show was dominated by major vendors and to a large degree by major operators. Although always interesting, there was a sense that the ICA was going through the motions somewhat, and quite frankly, attending that show was becoming expensive for many.



*Bobby and Dan Paisner*

The timing for a regional show could not have been better! However, this took real courage as the regional associations did not have the financial resources that the ICA had, nor any real experience in running a two- or three-day gathering.

Further, there was real push back by the ICA. In fact, in the early years the ICA made no mention of this regional show. This was competition and I am certain there was the hope that this idea would fizzle out. When the CCA was the Host Association ICA Executive Director Gus Trantham attended a regional show for the first time.

In some ways that was a turning point. The ICA was of a different mindset. Let us become partners and help each other. This was important for the Northeast show as it helped establish a degree of credibility so important in those early days.

Yes, some of the early leaders had varied experiences and being independent businessmen they were used to taking risks, yet the leaders of each Association were committing resources to this idea that could be costly and could be a failure. I know that looking back at 25 years of success and growth, the idea that anyone would have been apprehensive seems ludicrous, but there was real concern and many were not on board. However, leaders like the fellows from the New England Association, Dick Zodikoff from the Car Wash Operators of New Jersey, Tom Hoffman, Jr. from the New York State Carwash Association and thanks to the CCA's Bruce Sands, the late Ken Gustafson, our first CCA President, my good buddy and former CCA President, JJ.Listro, and yours truly, the idea became an annual event.

In the early years, each association took a very active involvement in the planning and implementation of the show. It was truly "hands on!" From the start we had help and still do to this day. In fact, we've got a great management team in New Jersey who have brought a whole new level of expertise to the show.

Also, for many years, the regional associations had representatives that met on a quarterly basis to plan the event

*Continued on page 14...*



# An Interview with AIG's Bob Benmosche

**NECW:** Your accomplishments with AIG are well noted and monumental. When facing challenges on a much smaller scale at the carwash, what advice can you give our operators?

**Benmosche:** I believe that companies of all sizes – whether you're looking at a carwash or a two-person startup or one of the world's largest insurance organizations like AIG – face the same challenges when it comes down to it. No matter the size of the company, it is never one person that makes a company great; it's each person, an entire business made up of talented, driven people, who together deliver value and promises.

One of the things I say a lot – and this is because I truly believe it – is that employees are your best asset. And they are; your employees are your best brand ambassadors and your best resources. But you have to empower them. So what I would say to all of you is to empower your employees. Put your faith in them because they are capable of doing amazing things.

I've said this before, but I think the people of AIG proved that if you give people the freedom to act, and they act responsibly, there are enormous possibilities for change to occur. And that's what the people of AIG did, and I am so proud of them.

**NECW:** What was the most difficult challenge you faced during your tenure at AIG, and how did you overcome it?

**Benmosche:** One of the things that struck me the most when I got to AIG was how terribly the media and the public were treating the employees, the vast majority of whom had done nothing wrong, and who just wanted to come to work and do their jobs. We had people who had their children beat up in school because their parents worked for AIG. We had people who were afraid to go home because of the way they were characterized publicly on television.

So one of the first things I did when I was elected CEO of AIG was I held a town meeting, after I met with the people up in our Financial Products group in Connecticut, on my very first day. I held a town meeting, and I went there, and I said 'tell me what the issues are.' Because that was the epicenter of it all, so I thought it was important to really get a sense, for myself, of what was going on there. And as I said, I thanked them during that town hall. I became their advocate internally, and in the public, and I think that's an important part of leading a company – standing up for your employees.

So that's what my first initiative was, to just get out, rebuild the morale, get people to understand that we're going to succeed and here's how we're going to succeed with a vision. And once I gave them a vision, then they, really everyone, began doing the work to execute on that vision – finding our core business in property casualty and life and retirement, selling off our non-core assets, repaying the government, and creating a company that truly works together as one AIG.

**NECW:** Was the AIG challenge your biggest one, or were there others equally as tough at other times in your life?

**Benmosche:** I think it's more important to focus on what opportunities you've been given and how you can make them work for you. I've had the great fortune to speak to a lot of college graduates.

I gave a commencement address at my Alma Mater at Alfred University, and I'll tell you what I told them. And that is, "You've got to play the hand you're dealt."

I've faced a lot of challenges in my life, but I've always chosen to move forward in order to figure out a solution. You can give up if you want, but you're giving up your own life and your own future.

**NECW:** You are an extremely successful businessman, but your life wasn't always easy. What is your key to staying strong and focused?

**Benmosche:** As I said earlier, the most important thing you have to do is to play the hand you're dealt. Whatever that is, you have to be willing to commit and give it all of your effort.

Along with that, I also think that adaptability and circumstance really have a lot to do with being a successful leader. I do think that action, and not being afraid to take action and make decisions, even if they might be unpopular at the time, are important in any leader. As the man in charge, you are responsible for your people, your employees, and so you have to be willing to stand up and do what's right for them, even if not everyone agrees.

I have a military background, and in the military people looked to me for leadership, because it's about their lives – it's about their families. It's about their ability to make a living and to be able to take care of their families and provide for them. So, that's what I got from the military is you, as a leader, have now signed on ownership of the lives you're responsible for. And that's how I treated my job at AIG when I joined back in 2009.

**NECW:** Tell me something about business that you learned from someone else along the way.

**Benmosche:** I'll quote my mother on this one, because she was truly an unbelievable and inspirational woman. My mom taught me in life, don't take yourself too seriously. And, I don't. What she said was, in life, people will kiss your buns on the way up, and they'll step on your throat on the way down. Don't forget who you are. Don't forget who you are at the core. Think about what you're all about, what makes you tick, what's important to all of you. Because when you think about what's important to all of you, that will be your guidepost. ■



*Robert H. Benmosche*

**An NRCC Perspective ...** *continued from page 12.*

and to discuss common concerns. There was a great deal of involvement that continues to this day. Remember, this convention started before the Internet, E-Mail, or cell phone, etc.

As I mentioned earlier, one of the major ideas was to move the show around. The first venue was Newport, RI, Next the NRCC headed to the Concord Resort Hotel in the Catskills, then, Saratoga Springs, NY. From there the show has been in Ledyard, CT, at Foxwoods a number of times, in Boston, Providence and most recently in Atlantic City.

You get the idea. It was fun and most attendees liked this variety. Attendance at each of these locations was about 500. Maybe a little better some years, but that was what we came to expect. Then it was the Car Wash Operators of New Jersey's turn and they chose Atlantic City and the rest as they say is history! The first time the NRCC was held at a gaming venue the attendance more than doubled. Some of us kept pushing to stay with the original mission and move the show around, but numbers do not lie. Plus, the vendors were very happy and without happy vendor you don't have a trade show.

In this day and age what happened yesterday, or last week, may be ancient history and for many irrelevant, yet for those of us who have been around for some time and were there at the beginning it is fun to look back.

In closing, my apologies to any in the original group who were at "The tables down at Mory's" that I did not mention. That meeting was where this great event started, and the fact that it continues to this day validates the need for this regional gathering. Correct me if I am wrong, but I think the Northeast Regional is the most successful of all regional conventions year in and year out.

So, to all the young operators, vendors and investors out there, let's keep it going and think young!

*Alan Tracy, Magic Minit Car Wash,  
Enfield, CT*



The Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC) has successfully organized and conducted a stellar trade show for as many years as I can remember. This has been a fantastic venue for operators in the region to meet with vendors, attend great educational seminars, and network with their fellow carwash operators from Maine to Virginia. We always get so much out of every show we attend so we bring a number of our team down each year! It's a great reward for them, but with what they learn, the benefit is to our company.

*Mark Curtis, Splash Car Washes,  
Greenwich, CT*



This annual event has been much more than a show over the years. It's like family. The relationships forged during the NRCC cannot be measured in words. They will live with me a lifetime, and I am proud to have been a small part of that!

*Mike Benmosch, McNeil & Company, Inc.,  
Menands, NY*

The NRCC has allowed me to grow from a one-man show to a competitive player in a territory from Maine to Florida. I've had the inside scoop on the latest and greatest technology in our industry. More importantly, I have been privileged to become friends with hundreds of fellow carwashers, enabling me to give and receive valuable information concerning my business.

It has been an honor belonging to the NRCC.

*Dennis O'Shaughnessy, Glenmont Car Wash, Glenmont, NY*



From the inception, the NRCC has tried to be the convention that services the local carwasher and vendor. I believe over the years we have achieved that goal. I am very proud that what started with a meeting at Mory's in New Haven is celebrating such a milestone.

*Dick Zodikoff, Tamarec Realty,  
formerly Robinhood Car Wash,  
Bloomfield, NJ*



Attending and participating in the NRCC has been one of the highpoints of my professional life. I have learned so much from so many others by attending. While it is nice to learn what other carwashers are doing in California, it is critical to learn what my peers in the Northeast are doing, whether it be Boston, Albany or DC.

*Doug Rieck, Magic Wash, Manahawkin, NJ*



## Planning on joining us on the convention floor?

### Why not attend one of our great programs or speakers this year?

## Here's the lineup!

### MONDAY

Carwash College (2 offerings): A "Labor" of Love presented by Robert Andre & Self-Service Reinvigoration presented by Dale Reynolds [4:00 - 6:00 pm]

### TUESDAY

Early Bird Panel & Breakfast, with panel moderator Bob Katseff [7:00 - 9:00 am]

No Exit Plan? No Financial Future? No Problem!, presented by Lou Rendemonti & John Rendemonti [9:15 - 10:30 am]

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Robert 'Bob' Benmosche, President & CEO of AIG [10:45 - 12:15 pm]

Awards Presentation & ICA Address / Luncheon [12:15 - 1:15 pm]

Exhibits Open [1:30 - 6:30 pm]

25th Anniversary Celebration, Hard Rock Cafe: includes photo booth, caricature artist, cake & commemorative giveaway [7:00 - 9:00 pm]

### WEDNESDAY

Early Bird Round Table & Breakfast, with moderator Paul Ferruolo [7:00 - 9:00 am]

Obamacare: What Every Operator Needs to Know!, presented by Tim Dodge [9:15 - 10:30 am]

Exhibits Open [10:30 - 2:30 pm]

As one of the founding members of the NRCC and the Chairman of the first convention held in Newport, RI, in 1990, I am thrilled to see the show 25 years later grow to be one of the best in the country! The NRCC fills an important space in the Northeast by bringing together the regions suppliers, carwash owners, operators and prospective owners for a few days of learning, networking and fun. It also allows for an open exchange of ideas and communication between the five regional associations that did not exist 25 years ago. Bob Paisner, ScrubaDub Auto Wash Centers, Natick, MA

The NRCC has always been an extremely worthwhile convention to attend. Not only have the educational seminars and show floor been very informative, but the networking and the sharing of ideas with other carwash professionals being together and under one roof cannot be valued, it is invaluable! Most of whom are from the Northeast, therefore we are share many of the ups and downs that that we all experience.

I am compelled to encourage others to attend this show and bring some of your staff. I am sure that you, too, will find it to be one of the best investments that you can make.

*Bob Katseff, Turnpike Car Wash, Peabody, MA*



Being involved in the NRCC has been an outstanding opportunity. Our show is professional, it's helpful to both new members and old and it gets better every year. I've spent the last 10 years really enjoying being a board member. I've got to work with some of the brightest minds in the industry and I've learned a lot. This has certainly been an experience that I'll never forget.

*Dan Petrelle, Splash Car Washes, Greenwich, CT*



The NRCC is a dream come true! It's a place that operators, suppliers and manufacture can come and share dreams and ideas to help our great industry!

*Ron Bousquet, Randy's Car Wash, Medford, MA*



# Tweeting 101

By Heather Ashley

**Y**ou have heard it all before! The best way to learn anything new is to try it yourself and practice, practice, practice! Case in point, Twitter.

Twitter came on the social media scene in 2006. It is an online social networking and microblogging service that enables users to send and read short 140-character text messages called "Tweets." Registered users can read and post tweets, but unregistered users can only read them. In 2012, Twitter had 500 million registered users posting 340 million tweets a day. During the World Cup 2014 final game between Argentina and Germany Twitter recorded 618,725 tweets a minute during the game. Four years ago, they recorded 2,000 Tweets a minute. In other words, it's a powerful tool you might want to consider using to market your business.

I have had so much fun following the cupcake vendors in the DC area that I hardly realized I have never bought a cupcake from them! Through Twitter, I know the flavors of the day and where each little pink trailer is located. I can even follow them as they move and send out Tweets with their new loca-

tion. Imagine if I knew about your carwash sale or freebies!

Twitter allows you to broadcast one short 140-character message to thousands of people at once. You no longer have to create a "group" in your e-mail system, and you don't have to spend minutes writing an email that never gets fully read.

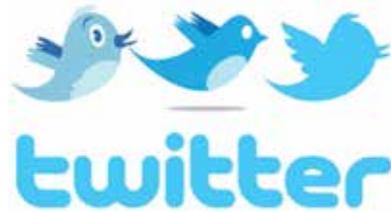
Short and to the point, that is the way Twitter likes it. But why should you like it? Increased sales, a personal connection with your customers and greater viability to the younger crowd are just a few reasons to love Twitter.

And, Twitter is free. Signing up is easy. And practice makes perfect, so you have to use it in order to understand it. For some it may be a little hard to follow, but stick with it! You will be glad you did and others will look to you for advice. It is like a very plain Facebook and perfect for those who are Facebook-opposed.

## Your First Assignment

Try creating a personal Twitter account at [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com). Your username/handle/Twitter name looks like this @hrashley. If you are following along, try composing your first

*Continued on page 18...*



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“tweet” now (Left side of the Twitter window and 140 characters or less) and put @hrashley in there somewhere and it will go to me.

Keep in mind that Twitter is never private. The main part of the Twitter game is to put it out there for all to see. A good thing to remember is you can never “take back” or erase what you put out there. This is not such a big deal to most of us, but if you were to lose your temper and say a few words about the competition, it will reach a lot of people and continue to circle around in Cyberspace for a few years.

You can Tweet pictures by uploading through your own smartphone or Instagram account. You can still add 140 characters (spaces included) to explain the photo.

Tweeting pictures might be a little too advanced for a beginner, but just know that it is an option.

Twitter is great for not only connecting to the public, as anyone can “follow you” even without your permission, but it is wonderful connecting to others in the industry.

Next time you are reading a magazine article, check out the bottom byline or credit line and see if you can connect via Twitter to the author. When you collect your next businesscard, check to see if there is not only an email address but a Twitter handle/username.

## Your Second Assignment

Add friends to follow. On the left side of the Twitter window you will see a “Find People You Know” section that will help you find friends. You can search for some of us in the search box at the top of the window, but just make sure it is really us as so many people share the same name. Or simply hand pick your friends by asking if they Tweet and their Twitter name.

Hashtags have to be my first favorite thing about Twitter (you know, a pound sign #). Basically, it is the number symbol followed by any words with no spaces used to collect and categorize items of the same topic.

I enjoy hashtags that say #nor’easter and #snow, for example. At conferences and shows I like to find the hashtag of the convention (see the conference materials) or make up one as I go. I get a lot of backchat about what seminars are great and what events are the best so I know exactly where to focus my time. Some that I might use are #NRCC-Show, #ACTrump or #workingatthecarwash. You can basically turn anything into a clever hashtag. Hashtagging has become so popular you now see it on Facebook and LinkedIn! #somuchfun.

*Continued on page 20...*

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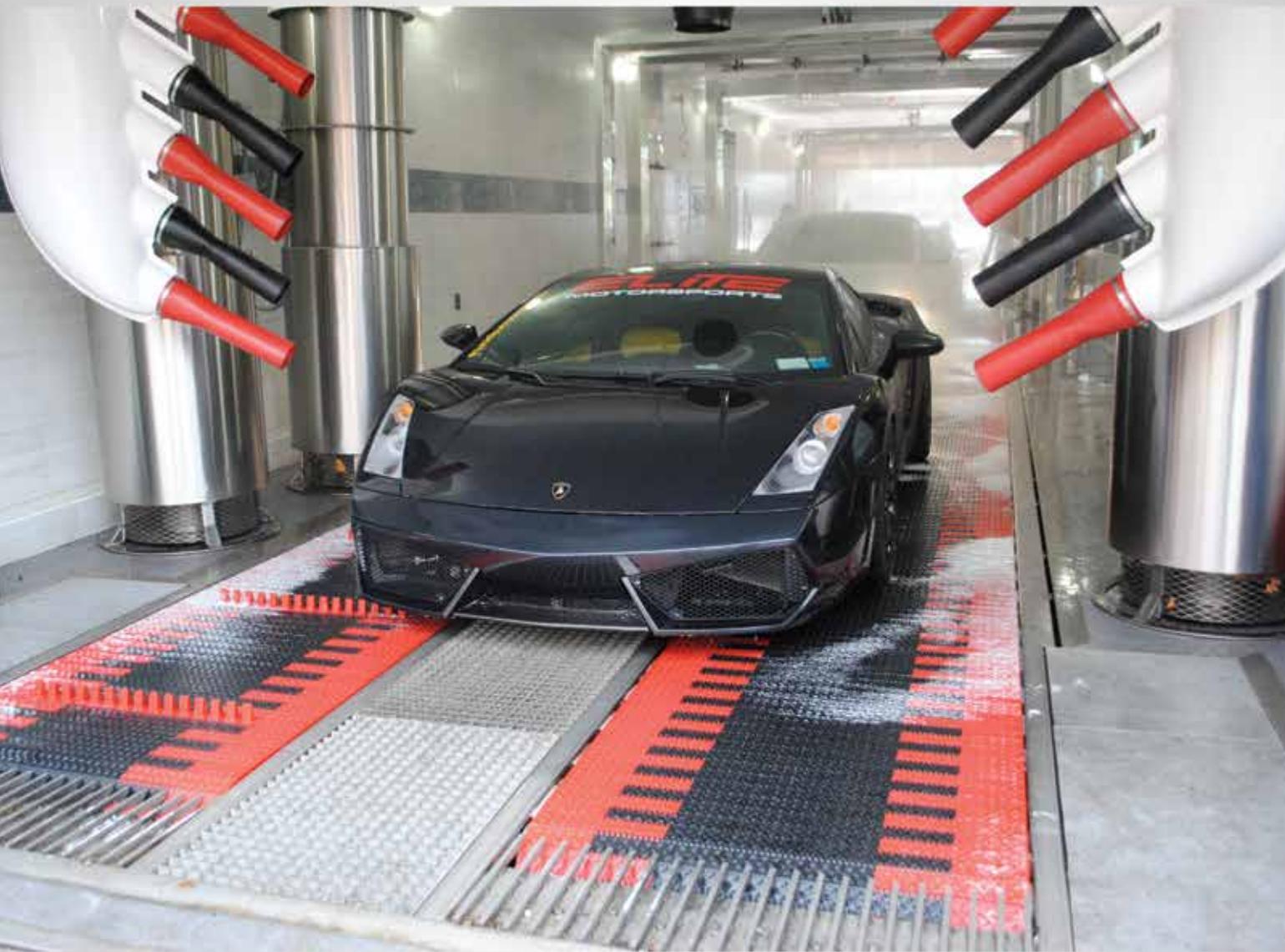
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### Your Third Assignment

Tweet out a message that includes #NRCCShow and let us know if we will see you there September 15-17 in Atlantic City at the Trump Taj Mahal.

If you have completed all of the assignments, as well as practiced sending Tweets several times then you are ready for the exam!

### The Final Exam

Create a Twitter account for your carwash business, successfully add or follow “friends,” and Tweet me about your success. I will send you a special “shout out” on Twitter as a leading carwash industry Twitter expert. I am looking for a few good graduates to help during the NRCC. ■

*Heather Ashley is the owner and operator of Virginia Car Wash Industries in Toms Brook, VA, and the President of the Mid-Atlantic Carwash Association. She has three rural carwash locations as well as two Laundromats. She is also a Technology Instructor and Freelance Writer. You can reach Heather at mhashley@gmail.com.*

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# Are Your Employees Having A Love or Hate Relationship With Their Job?

By JoAnna Brandi

When I saw the business section of the Sunday *New York Times* recently I got that crazy kind of excited I get when I see an article, book or blog that supports all the yak-yak-yakking I do about creating happier workplaces and happier customers. The first line of the article called "Why You Hate Work" began with the sentence "The way we're working isn't working."

Amen. I settled in with my coffee to read.

It's an article about burnout, engagement and sustainable performance. It concludes sadly that for most (based on Gallup's survey that says 70 percent of America's workforce is not feeling engaged at work), work is a depleting, dispiriting experience that seems to be getting worse, not better. (Not if I can help it!)

A recent survey, a partnership of the *Harvard Business Review* and one of the co-authors of the article, Tony Schwartz's company, The Energy Project, shows that employees are vastly more satisfied and productive when

four of their core needs are being met.

Both in the article and in Tony's book, "The Power of Full Engagement," which is well used in my office, he and his partner, Jim Loehr, address four separate, but related, sources of energy in work and life: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. All four need to be working together in order to perform at our best. The better a leader can support employees in drawing from all these sources, the better their performance and their engagement will be.

The authors preach what you've been hearing me say over and over. "Put simply, the way people feel at work profoundly influences how they perform." In a 2012 meta-analysis of 263 research studies throughout 192 companies, Gallup found that those in the top quartile for engaged employees had 22 percent higher profitability, 10 percent higher customer ratings, 28 percent less theft and 48 percent fewer safety incidents (as compared to the bottom quartile).

*Continued on page 24...*

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Other studies I've seen contribute even higher customer results. That's pretty intuitive. When your employees are engaged in their job and come to work with purpose and passion for your mission, they are more likely to engage your customers.

The rest is not quite so intuitive, since we have decades of history where leadership made employees feel as if they were "lucky to have a job" and "ought to be grateful." Today, people want more than just a job; they want a place where they can feel important, where they can use their strengths and talents, where they can be challenged to improve without feeling embarrassed or humiliated.

Let's take a look at a few of the systems here.

### Physical Energy

Of course we want to work in a safe environment, one that is pleasant to be in and we want to get paid what the work is worth, that's a given. This dimension though also calls for the opportunity to renew and recharge at work. Tal Ben Shahar, who taught Positive Psychology (Happiness 101) at Harvard, says that we live in a world that is hostile to rest. There is no place that demonstrates that more than the workplace.

I know it seems to be a badge of courage to work long

hours (trust me, I know), but the more hours people work past those 40, the worse they feel and the less engaged they become. It may make the boss feel good to see people work late – but is it really getting you the high performance you seek?

Renewal in the form of a breather every 90 minutes works more naturally with the body's rhythm. The ability to get up and walk around, or sit down for those on their feet all day like your line workers, goes a long way in helping people stay healthy. I've been teaching my clients mindfulness exercises and even meditation when they will let me. There is much evidence that meditation and mindfulness can lead to more happiness and well-being. Even taking a few moments to breathe deeply helps the body and brain recover from stress.

To meet the increased demand in our lives we must open ourselves to techniques that help the body and brain renew. It's a long established fact that positive emotion actually creates new cells while negative emotion kills off brain cells. Positive emotions are a resource. Focus on increasing the amount of them you generate.

Overtired, overworked and stressed employees simply can't do the best job that your customers deserve.

*Continued on page 26 ...*

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### Emotional Energy

When employees feel valued and appreciated they are more apt to deliver that discretionary go-the-extra-mile behavior all employers seek. Feeling cared for by a boss has a significant impact on an employee's sense of trust and safety. According to the article, employees who feel that are 67 percent more engaged. (And imagine how your customers feel when dealing with employees that really feel good about their work!)

The customer's experience is emotional. It's the sum total of all the feelings that take place at each and every place they touch your company.

When I recently asked a group of participants in a Positive Leadership Workshop I was conducting what inspired them to do a great job they listed: respect, recognition, accomplishment, confidence, great leadership, loving what you do, gratitude, reward, praise, smile, opportunity, positive environment, the people you work with and a cause.

*Continued on page 28...*

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# Finding the Light: LED, That Is!

By Gary Sokoloski

Have you made the switch to LED (light-emitting diodes) lighting yet? LEDs are semiconductor devices that produce visible light when an electrical current is passed through them. They are a type of Solid State Lighting (SSL). And whether you are considering new construction or rehabilitating an existing location, LED lighting is an important part of the decision you should be making regarding your project.

A couple of the more difficult decisions are what type of lighting to choose and where to purchase those lights. Most states, counties, and power companies have different and potentially cost-savings programs for the purchase and use of more efficient lighting and power consumption devices.

## You Get What You Pay For

As it is said, perception is reality. This is very true when deciding what type of lighting to choose for your location. In conversations with many operators, their best intentions are turned to the reality of a budget decision they have made for the initial purchase of lighting. Make the smart, long-term determination to choose the best product available, not just the one with the best purchase price. While this is a hard decision to make, it will pay off with dividends in the long run. Don't make the mistake of replacing all of your fixtures or purchasing fixtures for a new location that you have to point out to people they are "New" L.E.D. fixtures. If you are making the investment in improved lighting and future energy savings, make the right decision and use a top-rated and highly recommended fixture, not just what your electrician or energy company is discounting or rebating.

## Consider the Wash Environment

Using a fixture that is not intended specifically for the carwash environment will most likely end up looking like a fixture that was not intended for the carwash environment. Within a few years, as it fades, the paint peels off, and it rusts away and needs to be replaced you will wish you used a fixture intended for the carwash environment.

While many styles of LED lighting are available, there is one style in particular that stands above the rest. Instead of a traditional-looking light fixture that is adapted with an LED light, it is instead a new and transformative-looking fixture. They have far more expansive lighting coverage and more durability that is needed for the carwash environment. This light was designed and made for and by carwash operators. The light fixture themselves resemble a traditional-looking fluorescent light bulb. They are actually very durable PVC and Lexan fixtures and are versatile LED strip lights that provide easy installation and incred-

ible lighting. If you are planning on replacing your existing lighting or adding new lights, do some homework and find the light that is right. These fixtures should be available through your local carwash distributor or popular carwash catalog/online companies. Please note that in all of these articles I intentionally never mention or endorse a specific product or manufacturer. It hard not to, but it is the right thing to do.

Thank you for the taking the time to read this article, supporting your local carwash association, and the *Northeast Carwasher* magazine. ■

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



Gary Sokoloski

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*As I write this, my 40<sup>th</sup> or so article in the last 10 years, I would like to take the time to thank Suzanne Stansbury for her leadership, encouragement, patience (waiting for my overdue article) and dedication to the Northeast Carwasher magazine, and all of the other carwash related organizations she has helped in her many years of dedicated service to our industry.*

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## JoAnna's Gems ... continued from page 26.

And yes, they also mentioned money/budget and new equipment as well.

E-motion stands for Energy-in-Motion in my book – these things will get the energy in motion and moving in the direction of your goals when you pay attention to what people really need.

What are you as a leader doing to create a great physical and emotional experience for those who work with and for you?

In our next Customer Care Tip, we'll cover the remaining two systems: Mental and Spiritual. ■



JoAnna Brandi

*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@customercarecoach.com](mailto:Joanna@customercarecoach.com) or visit [www.ReturnOnHappiness.com](http://www.ReturnOnHappiness.com).*

# Towel FAQ: You Asked, We Answered

By Valerie Sweeney

We deal with hundreds of carwashes each year, and many of you have similar questions/concerns about your towels. After speaking with our sales reps, here are some of the most frequently asked questions that we encounter.

## Which Towel Works Best on Windows?

This is still a very popular question, especially with the newer carwash owners. While some washes use terry on the windows, Microfiber and Huck towels are still the most popular options. Carwashers love microfibers on the windows because they are lint free, absorbent, lightweight and streak free. The most popular style is often referred to as “terry microfiber.”

Huck towels are also loved since they are also lint free, 100 percent cotton, and can easily fit in the corners of windows. They are also super durable, can be washed many times, and can either go in the extractor or the dryer. Hucks used to be the number one choice for windows, but microfiber has probably surpassed them.

## How Long Should Microfibers Last?

There is a large variance on the quality of Microfiber towels. Nice quality commercial-grade Microfiber towels can last up to 500 washings if treated properly.

Various factors can shorten the life of a Microfiber towel, however. The most common way that Microfibers are ruined are by being dried in a hot dryer. Heat will melt the fibers of the towel, and render it useless. It might not appear damaged, but you will notice streaks when you clean the windows.

Another way to tell the fibers have been damaged is to run your hand over the cloth. If it feels like it's pulling your skin (like you have dry skin), then it's good. If it doesn't, then you might need to replace them.

Another way to damage a microfiber is to clog the fibers with wax, fabric softener, etc. You should always wash microfibers with detergent so the soap can lift, trap, and carry the dirt away from the cloth.

## How Do Glass Microfibers Work?

Glass microfibers work the same way as regular microfibers. They scoop, lift, and trap the dirt or liquid. The only difference is the finish of the cloth. There are several different styles of microfiber available.

Glass microfibers generally have a flat, non-lofty finish. Some styles are even a bit shiny. These are extremely versatile and can be used on the glass, or anywhere else you want on the car.

Carwashers also like waffle-style Microfiber on glass, which looks exactly like it sounds. It really is a personal preference as each style of Microfiber offers something a little bit

different to everyone.

## Wheel Wells /Door Jamb Suggestions?

Many carwash owners cut up their old towels to use for the dirtier jobs. Others are concerned that the good towels will still get mixed up with the rags especially if they are the same color. We often suggest using a lower cost small towel in the style of your preference. Usually a dark color bar towel (approximately 16" x 19") works well. They are durable enough to rewash many times, but are low cost enough to throw away if you should ruin it.

## What Color Towel is Most Popular?

Without a doubt, the most popular colors are white, blue, green and red. That's not to say carwashers don't use any other colors, but these colors are the most commonly purchased. Some carwashers like white since the lighter colors tend to break in the quickest. Many prefer blue since they hide the dirt better and don't look as worn over time.

*Continued on page 31...*

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# Why CarwashIdeas.com?

By Perry Powell

New ideas and innovation happen while we are solving problems. Listening to owners discuss how they go about the everyday business of life yields nuggets of how they have solved various issues, which they have faced. These ideas and challenges are worthy of thought and discussion.

Long after leaving the carwash

industry Ryan Carlson, founder of WashIdeas.com, (a podcast to help owners discuss problems they face), kept the archives of the show online for all to see. He had recently taken it off line and suggested that I consider bringing it back.

Meditating on what could be done with the format, it was decided that

taking on this new challenge was the right thing to do. In thinking about the show, specifically, it became clear that there were some new directions which could be taken, in which the industry could greatly benefit.

Four of these ideas are to be found on the front page of the new WashIdeas.com home page.

## ✓ Get Inspired

It is easy as a business owner to lose sight of the excitement and energy that accompanied the run up to opening the wash for business. Hearing others talk about how they got started and what they endured on their way to success can help us be inspired to keep going. Hearing that it was not simply "build it and they will come" and the message that endurance generally pays off, may help us all to persevere.

## ✓ Get Motivated

Life, day after day, can become mundane. Hearing others talk about their business experiences can be informative, entertaining and uplifting. Many funny stories emerge which are worth the listening and may lighten your day.

## ✓ Get Knowledge

None of us know it all. Our industry is a compendium of all of our ideas, solutions, and trials and errors. Sharing those ideas gives us an opportunity to grow collectively and individually. This is what motivates the forming of trade associations. The interviews conducted by WashIdeas.com are candid and open, and all can benefit from the discussions.

## ✓ Get New Wash Ideas

The Issues & Ideas page of the website gives those listening updates on topics which owners face individually and could be experienced by others. Our first interview discussed the City of Dallas' attempt to take an owner's wash from him and his aging father.

Interviews with vendors, on the new Product Introduction page, will tell the reasoning behind their new innovation offerings to the industry.

There are two additional thoughts that highlight the need for WashIdeas.com.

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## Preserving the Voice Of Aging Icons

In the last few years, some of the pioneers of the industry have begun passing away. The 100 Years of Car Washing effort by the International Carwash Association (ICA) has brought attention to the chasm that exist between the beginnings of carwashing and the state of the industry today.

The site's Legends of Car Washing page was initiated to get those elder statesmen's thoughts and memories of the industry recorded for posterity, while there is time.

## Bring a Component of Reality to the New Investor Discussion

Competition changes the financial landscape abruptly for many carwash owners. At recent meetings, the outcry against over building has become loud and consistent. Current owners are rightly concerned about the health and ongoing viability of their livelihoods.

Hearing owners talk about the

effects of such competition may help new investors rethink where they place their washes.

In conclusion, all can benefit from these very real and frank discussions. If you think that you don't have time to listen, you can listen in your car through your cell phone or tablet. The interviews are a great way to start the week and can be heard on the go. And remember.... The best and brightest of the carwash industry are talking... ARE YOU LISTENING? ■

*Perry Powell is a car washing consultant. He specializes in Neuro-marketing and consumer behavioral marketing. He also provides science-based signage and sign designs for his clients. He can be found at [www.perry-powell.com](http://www.perry-powell.com) or [www.washideas.com](http://www.washideas.com).*



Perry Powell

## Towel Tips ...

*continued from page 29.*

## I Am Opening a New Wash. What Do I Need for Towels?

It depends on the services offered at your facility, but on the conservative side, we always suggest five to 10 dozen body towels, 10 dozen window towels, and one to two packs of Microfiber towels (purchase a different color than your window towels). If it's a larger wash, you can always order more once you get up and running.

If you have a specific question or topic about towels that you would like us to address in a future *Towel Tip*, please email us at [erc@erc-wipe.com](mailto:erc@erc-wipe.com). ■

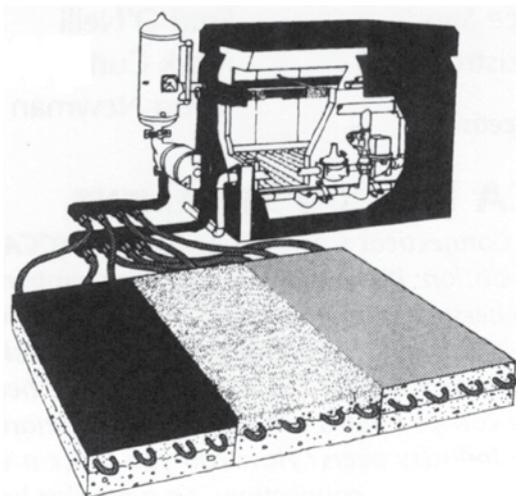
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# Lies, Damned Lies and Statistics

By Doug Rieck

There is an old saying popularized by Mark Twain many years ago that goes, "Lies, damned lies and statistics." This fits so well. We are told so many things by so many different sources. First, there was global cooling, now there is global warming. Now some serious scientists say there really is global cooling. Saturated fat is bad for you, now with the release of a new book "The Big Fat Surprise," we are told that really saturated fat, butter and eggs, are good additions to your diet. The author in that book methodically demolishes supposedly flawed studies from the '50s and '60s in which much of our nutritional science is based. What to do? Who do you believe? All I can suggest is to verify and remember the Latin phrase, "Cui bono," translation, "to whose benefit?" The truth usually lays somewhere in the middle.

Our industry is filled with its own versions of incorrect data. Which is more important; dollars per car or numbers of cars washed? All of us can agree that a \$3 or \$5 carwash will invite much more business. On the converse, overpricing a carwash can greatly reduce volume but provide very nice per car revenue. Unfortunately, since you cut volume, you actually lose money. I have had a very sharp and experienced carwash friend argue convincingly that the price point is \$5 for an outside carwash. Unfortunately, as a realistic price point, it does not work with our expenses. Not in 2014 anyway. There is a lot of hidden inflation, taxes and expenses eating away at our margins. Every time I hit McDonalds and buy a meal and soda, I'm ending up spending more than \$7. I believe in a rational world a clean car is worth as much as a burger meal.

Please don't get me wrong, price points are essential, but sometimes we need to try moving our consumers' expectation or value up. Sometimes, though, we are our own worst enemies. A case in point being my own wash club. Originally I set it up over five years ago using an RFID system. A judgment I made way back then was to price it too high, despite some other advice. We had solid growth, but it never went anywhere until about a year ago when it started declining. Why did it start declining? I suspect that with the tightening economy my customers did not find it a value. My choice was simple: fix the club or suffer increasing declines. Patience is not one of my virtues so last September I made two changes. I dropped the price by \$3 a month, and I made the necessary computer upgrades and started selling it on screen through my entry tellers. I took a several month hit on revenue with the reduced pricing, but with the winter volume, my wash club revenue started turning around. Today, my wash club has three times the membership at the low point of last September and more than double my best ever prior numbers. Even this summer, I still added two to three new members a week. Yes, selling it on screen helps, but the price point is

key. Wash clubs are an important tool in our box of tricks as carwashers. My goal is to smooth out cash flow valleys. Our big enemy in the Northeast is weather-caused volatility.

## It's the Weather, Stupid!

Look at this past winter. Wow, we actually had one. Snow, ice, cold and road salt. I had the best first quarter I have had in five years. The pollen season was good and this summer it was raining at night.

Look at the last quarter of 2013. The year was sort of "ok" then the fall happened. In business dealings recently, with some experienced non-carwash people, they were astounded at our ups and downs. The idea that your revenue every year can wander all over just because of the weather, while you are doing the right things? Yes, after some convincing they finally believed me. And that is why I fervently believe in the concept that a rising tide floats all boats. The more knowledge we have in our daily operations and long-term business decisions, the better we will do individually. Our professionalism will add a shine to our industry. Success breeds success. All of us know sub-par operations or poorly sited locations. Just think of how stupid it is when we have carwashes built too close to each other. Or, when someone builds a super facility at the wrong location. A lot of good businesspeople do not have the awareness that carwashes are not fast food establishments or car dealerships. There are only so many days of sun and so many cars to wash, and like it or not we are a luxury. Is a family's first budget choice a clean car? No, food and living expenses come first.

In addition, smartphones with five-day forecasts have hurt our industry. Today's clearcoat paints have reduced the need for frequent washing just the way they have reduced the need, or at least the desire, for car waxing. We must get smarter and better as operators and deliver shiny, clean, dry cars with a great customer experience — consistently. We must find ways to bring in more customers and better educate them.

## NRCC in September!!!

This fall we have a very early Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC) in Atlantic City, September 15-17. The big Jersey Shore advertising pitch is, "it is better in September." This year's show will certainly prove that point with our Keynote Speaker being the President/CEO of AIG and a special show commemorating our 25th show! Plus, the boardwalk weather will be at its best in September so take full advantage!

Atlantic City has been very much in the news this past summer with several Casino closings. So far it has been the Atlantic Club, the Showboat, then Trump Plaza and possi-



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bly the new \$2.4 billion Revel resort. Living a half hour north of Atlantic City I would like to reassure all that Atlantic City is very much alive. The lights are still on and the town is better on a number of levels than it was even 10 years ago. Suddenly in the past year with a new mayor and closing casinos, the city has said it can't rely on the casinos — it needs tourists. Atlantic City is a much better place, cleaner, safer than at the Casino peak. This fall we are even getting a Bass Pro Shop. The simple truth is that the gaming companies are just right sizing the number of casinos. It really stinks if it's your job, but just as in carwashing sometimes there can be too much competition.

Make your plans, if you haven't already, to attend this year's show, September 15-17. You can easily register online at [www.nrccshow.com](http://www.nrccshow.com). It will be the best money you spend this quarter and maybe all year!



Doug Rieck

*Doug Rieck operates Magic Wash in Manahawkin, NJ, and is a past president of the Car Wash Operators of New Jersey. He also sits on the CWONJ and NRCC boards of directors. You can reach him at 609/597-SUDS or [dougrieck@gmail.com](mailto:dougrieck@gmail.com).*

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*Dear Venus and Mars,  
The NRCC is celebrating its 25th year with this fall's show. You have both attended nearly all of them. Can you share your thoughts on the premier regional trade show with our readers, and what you hope it will evolve into moving forward.*



Linda Feriod

**Venus Says**

I am sure this year will be a very exciting show celebrating the 25th anniversary. When I think back on all the good times I had, wonderful friends I have met throughout the years and most importantly all of the great ideas to help my business it makes me realize that attending these shows have been priceless.

I remember the first time I went to an International Carwash Association (ICA) convention with my father about a year after I went to work in the family business. I was so impressed by the number of successful carwash operators attending the show and how nice everyone was to us. I remember Tom Hoffman, Sr., specifically, who at the time was the ICA President. He invited my father and me to visit him in Albany, NY, to see his washes. That day as he was driving us to visit his locations I kept thinking how nice this guy is taking a day out of his busy life to help us.

What I didn't know at that time is that just about every successful carwash operator is very willing help other operators become successful. We left that visit to Albany with pages and pages of notes to bring back to our locations on marketing, handling labor costs and equipment, just to name a few.

Since then my father and I never missed a convention. Needless to say, when the idea of a Northeast-based show came to life, I was honored to serve on the board and was excited to bring a true trade show closer to home. I knew it would be a success as some owners can't leave their business for four to five days to fly across the country to attend the national show. Even if they can only get away for 24 hours, what

*Continued on page 35 ...*



Paul Vallario

**Mars Says**

As fall arrives it is time to start thinking about the annual NRCC September 15-17 at the Trump Taj Mahal. This year the NRCC is celebrating its 25th year. I can remember years ago attending the conference when it was just a small gathering up in Rhode Island (the site of the first show). Now it has evolved into the largest regional carwash show in the country.

I always look forward to this time of the year because that show is what gets me charged up again for the year to come. The most beneficial aspect of attending the NRCC is being able to get together with my fellow operators from all over the region. I find out more and more every year that we all share similar challenges and are able to help one another out through our personal experiences. Whether it is equipment issues, dealing with customers, marketing or just about anything pertaining to the carwash business there will be someone there who has been through it already.

Since I was 12 years old I have been working in a carwash in some capacity. Still to this day I get excited when I see the moving parts of carwash machinery and the bright lights and colors walking the convention floor and looking at all of the new innovations from full tunnels to towels. There is always something you can do to better your business and make an improvement, and if you can't find it on this floor it probably doesn't exist.

If you're looking to gain perspective and hear about the experiences of some of the most seasoned carwashers on the East Coast then attending some of the educational seminars is a must. Every year the seminar topics change. Typically,

*Continued on page 35 ...*

*Venus and Mars, aka Linda Feriod and Paul Vallario, are carwash industry veterans. Linda has worked in her family's carwashing business for 18 years. She has also been the President of the Penn/Del Carwash Association and has managed the Car Wash Operators of New Jersey. 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.*

**If you have a question for Venus & Mars please send it to:**

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**Venus ...** *continued from page 34.*

valuable information they can bring back to their business is priceless by attending the NRCC.

I am proud that I was part of bringing one of the best regional shows to the Northeast. The operators who volunteer their time and talents to sit on panels and share their knowledge are the best in the industry. I do believe that carwashing is a very challenging business to be successful in so having somebody share how they solve problems at their wash will generally work at your location too.

This industry has changed so much in the past 29 years since I have been in it, and has changed even more since my dad opened his first location 45 years. I can remember when our good friends at Innovative Control Systems (ICS), Kevin and Brian, showed my dad their first tunnel controller and he thought computers in carwashing would never work. My dad was wrong. We put controllers in both of our tunnels and today everything is controlled by computers even some of our attendants are computers. Where the industry will be in another 25 years nobody will know, however, if you never take the time to learn and go to a show the industry will surely pass you by. I hope to see you on the show floor celebrating the best of the East Coast and the best regional trade show in the country! ■

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**Mars ...** *continued from page 34.*

there is something pertaining to a current issue within the industry and always there will be great presentations on marketing, maintenance and an open floor discussion in the ever-popular Early Birds.

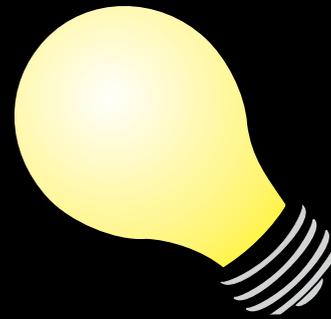
As the convention moves forward, I would like to see the location change from time to time. As someone who goes every year I wouldn't mind a change of scenery every so often, but I do understand that for the vendors we get the largest turnout in Atlantic City. All in all, this is an exceptional convention. It is a must for any operator in the Northeast and getting together with so many of your fellow operators should not be missed. See you there! ■

---

*Twenty years from now  
you will be more disappointed by  
the things you didn't do  
than by the ones you did.*

*Mark Twain*

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*WashIdeas.com*  
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**Keith Lutz**

**PRESIDENT'S COLUMN**

*We are already charging through the second half of 2014 at the time of this writing; it's hard to believe! I want to thank all of our members and supporters for another great Annual Dinner and Table Top event at the Hollywood Casino at Penn National Race Course this past May. This is such an enjoyable venue with a bird's-eye view of the track and live horse races throughout the evening.*

*We were honored to have Chairman Kerry A. Benninghoff as our Keynote Speaker at this year's dinner. Rep. Benninghoff is the Majority Chairman of Pennsylvania House Finance Committee. We worked closely with the Center County Legislator in 2013 on tax reform legislation and, although we were not successful, the chairman served as a formidable ally for the Carwash Association of Pennsylvania (CAP). It would come as no surprise if we saw Rep. Benninghoff in a Majority Leadership role in the House of Representatives in the 2015/2016 legislative session.*

*Rep. Benninghoff gave some detailed insight on legislative process and the path we forged in 2013. While we truly believed that the odds were in our favor for a successful outcome in our tax reform efforts; he explained the schematics involved in the derailment, (including budgetary agendas and efforts outside of our control.) "Association leaders and members might want to wash their hands of the process and walk away, but you truly can't afford to do that – it is that mentality that has given you the over-reaching government you have today," said Benninghoff.*

*He further emphasized the importance of maintaining the relationships we developed and continuing the work we began, stating, "Your approach can't be a 'once and done' in Harrisburg or you'll never be effective for your industry.*

*"It's going to take a consistent and collective effort by your entire membership, working locally with legislators, to get the results you want from Harrisburg," said Rep. Benninghoff. It is my hope that his words resonated with our members.*

*Carwash owners work hard, no one disputes this, but they don't always work smart. This industry is chalked full of owners entrenched with the day-to-day operations of their carwash business who fail to dedicate time and effort to a business strategy. We all know the value of relationships. We use them daily when we reach out to a business colleague for equipment failures, staffing issues or technology breakdowns. Relationships need to be part of our formal business plans, and they must be expansive and genuine - a mere contact will not do.*

*You must broaden your scope of relationships. Think about every aspect of your business and then identify the expert in that area upon which you rely. If you receive a local mandate to decrease your business' water consumption whom can you call? Do you have a relationship with someone in the city, borough or township?*

*The EPA is currently imposing expansive new greenhouse gas regulations that will inevitably force new costs on businesses of all sizes. Do you know how PA is going to comply? Do you have a relationship with your state Senator or Representative to voice your concerns and actually be heard?*

*How about road construction around your business? Do you have the relationships established that you would be contacted in advance with details, or*

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## Be Conscious of the Noise At Your Wash

Noise surrounds us all day, from the transportation we take to work, to the music in the we listen to on our iPods, to the clicking and humming and buzzing of computers and of course all the moving machinery at the wash. In a carwash environment, the level of noise from blowers, for example, can be extreme.

It's not something to ignore or shrug off, however. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 22 million employees in the U.S. are exposed to potentially damaging levels of noise at work every year. In addition to hearing loss, exposure to excessive noise can cause other health problems, such as hypertension and ulcers. Here are some steps to protect your employee's ears and overall safety.

- ❖ **Assess the situation.** Measure the noise in your wash – both the average daily exposure, and the maximum or peak levels your employees experience. For an eight-hour work shift, OSHA's permissible limit for noise exposure is 90 decibels.
- ❖ **Invest in quieter equipment, if possible.** Compare workplace tools and equipment, and choose those that minimize noise and vibration.
- ❖ **Break up the pathway.** Enclose noisy areas: shut doors, erect sound-dampening barriers, and buy sound-absorbing wall coverings to reduce noise
- ❖ **Provide ear protection!** Expandable foam earplugs and other protective gear should be available to all employees who are exposed to high levels of noise.
- ❖ **Limit exposure.** Don't expect employees to work in excessively noisy conditions endlessly. Provide frequent breaks, and schedule them in shifts so they're not constantly exposed to noise hazards. ■

---

## Better Not To Retaliate

Abraham Lincoln, according to one of the many stories told about him, was once asked about a member of his Cabinet who had sharply criticized him.

"What do you have to say about that?" demanded the questioner, hoping to spark a conflict.

Lincoln replied, "I have great respect for that man. If he has concerns about me, there must be some truth to it."

Not only did Lincoln effectively deflect the criticism, he won the greater respect of his friends and foes for being willing to consider other viewpoints.

In other words, sometimes you win by not fighting back. ■

*a relationship with someone with whom you could voice a concern? Relationships have a tangible impact on your bottom line. Understanding that, it is foolish to think we can pick up the phone and talk to someone for the first time only to request something from them.*

*Looking forward, CAP is working on a grassroots plan to help members establish relationships with their local and state officials in an effort to create the most effective voice for the industry. Most members are good at sharing best practices outside of a formal venue, but when faced with bureaucratic obstacles members freeze, unnecessarily comply out of frustration, or resort to an abrasive defense that often results in additional issues. We want to help members develop and foster these relationships so they can use them for the betterment of the industry.*

*Representative Benninghoff's message and timing were perfect for CAP. I appreciate everyone's challenge when it comes to time – there's never enough of it! This is why it is critical that you incorporate time to develop relationships into your business schedule. Attend that legislative meet and greet, invite a local official to tour your facility, (elaborating on your role in the local economy or how your reclamation system is saving water, your employment numbers, your role in local fundraisers, etc.,) or host a small reception at your carwash, inviting the entire business development office or the water authority. This really is another arm of marketing and the relationship will serve you in the future if you continue to nurture it, and not discontinue communication at the conclusion of a meeting or event. As I mentioned before, it is an effort you simply must place on your business schedule.*

*Your next opportunity to develop and foster relationships with industry operators and vendors throughout Pennsylvania is on Thursday, September 25 at the CAP Picnic & Golf Outing at the Cumberland Golf Club in Carlisle. As always, non-golfing members are encouraged to join us for the picnic in the afternoon. This is always a lot of fun for all participants, regardless of skill, ability or lack thereof. I look forward to seeing everyone later this month.*



Keith Lutz, CAP President

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## Cell Phones Don't Provide The Whole Story

"Can you hear me now?" may be more than a cell phone company slogan. Research by the acoustical Society of America indicates that one reason cell phone chats can be so frustrating is that our phones cut out the voice's higher frequencies.

The energy of the human voice is measured in hertz. Most of the information in our voices is transmitted as frequencies below 5,000 hertz, leading scientists to believe that high frequencies aren't really necessary to understanding. Most cell phones transmit sound at 3,500 hertz and below, but tests of recording that filtered out any sonic information below 5,000 hertz found that people pick up a significant amount of sound in that higher range. Thus, our brains have to work harder to understand information that doesn't include higher-pitched sound. Time for an upgrade?

---

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that scares you.*

*Eleanor Roosevelt*

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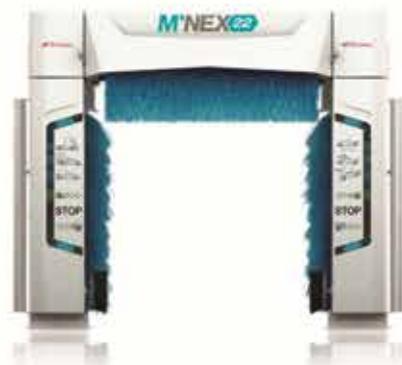

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- Anthony Setaro
- \*Deceased Joe Tracy

**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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**PRESIDENT'S COLUMN**

*I'd like to thank the Connecticut Carwash Association's (CCA) Vice President, Bob Rossini, for stepping up and taking care of CCA business while I was infirmed recently, especially writing the last President's Column.*

*Pollen has been "berry, berry" good to me this past season. Spring and summer in Connecticut has blessed us with furry coats of pollen and mats of flattened bugs across car grilles. If you can clean the bug remains off the vehicles out there, customers will beat a path to your wash. If your regular soap can't handle the buggy mess, however, ask your helpful chemical vendor for their suggestions on how to be prepared for next year's pollen season. They all have products specifically designed to address this problem. New cleaning and shining formulations come on the market all the time. Don't get set in your ways. Try a new product, experiment. Most good chemical vendors will set you up with a sample of a new product if you show some interest.*

*If you visit our CCA website, [www.wewashctcars.com](http://www.wewashctcars.com), you'll find that we have a few events on the horizon. The annual CCA Golf Invitational happens on Tuesday, September 23, at Fairview Farm Golf Course in Harwinton, CT. Follow the link to an informative video overview of the course's amenities on the website. The outing includes 18 holes of golf, lunch, hors d'oeuvres and dinner for only \$150. If you're not a golfer, join us for dinner for only \$50. There's a putting contest with a \$1,000 prize, award for the longest drive and closest-to-the-pin and a hole in one car giveaway sponsored by Mitchell Auto Group of Simsbury. An extensive raffle follows dinner.*

*CCA members and non-members are welcome to attend this event. Even people who never heard of carwashing can join in on the fun. Get your foursome together and meet us on the links. You can conveniently register online at [www.wewashctcars.com](http://www.wewashctcars.com).*

*The Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC) comes EARLY this year. On September 15-17 the 25th NRCC will return to the Trump Taj Mahal Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City, NJ, for what is shaping up to be our greatest convention to date.*

*This year's Keynote speaker on September 16 will be Robert H. "Bob" Benmoche, president and CEO of AIG. His message is impactful and will hit home to single location operators as well as the big guys. His message will touch us all.*

*Don't miss this once-a-year opportunity to see, touch, and learn about the latest ideas, products and equipment the car care industry has to offer. You can easily register online at [www.nrccshow.com](http://www.nrccshow.com) or call 800/868-8590, but don't delay so you can take advantage of discounted Early Bird pricing!*

*Since you are a member of the Connecticut Carwash Association (CCA) you know the benefit of having an organization specifically looking out for your concerns as a Connecticut operator. Every legislative session we fight against efforts to add sales tax to our services. We keep you informed on changes in environmental regulations, labor laws, or other statues that affect our businesses. Do you know even one operator out there who has yet to join the professional ranks of the CCA? If you do, please ask him or her to check out our website at [www.wewashctcars.com](http://www.wewashctcars.com) for a full description of our mission and benefits. They can easily join on-line, right now, and take advantage of everything the CCA has to offer.*



Noah Levine, CCA President



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# Crossroads Car Wash Proves Value of Personal Touch in Business



By Alan M. Petrillo

If there's such a thing as a one-man band in carwashing, then Doug Lutz is the bandmaster.

Lutz owns Crossroads Car Wash at 51 Grassy Plain St. in Bethel, CT, with his father, Donald, and while his dad handles the financial side of the business, Doug is the operations guy – the only person who's hands-on at the carwash.

Crossroads Car Wash consists of three 45-foot bays enclosing two touchless and one soft touch automatic washes. The facility sits at the top of a "T" intersection on a two-lane road at Grassy Plain Street (Route 53) and Route 302.

"People have to stop at the intersection and I'm at the gateway to the town of Bethel," Lutz said. "We're on a major thoroughfare to lower Fairfield County or to get to Route 84. The last time I checked with the state Department of Transportation, the traffic count was more than 20,000 vehicles a day."

While automatic carwashes don't need a lot of attention, Lutz said he spends time talking with customers if they're waiting in line, and also handles any detailing chores at the exit end of the carwashes.

Neither Lutz had any experience in carwashing before building Crossroads Car Wash in 2004. Doug Lutz was a real estate appraiser and his father was a banker and appraiser.

"I first looked at carwashing when I lived on Long Island more than 16 years ago," Doug Lutz said. But it was very expensive to put in a carwash on Long Island so he put the idea on the back burner. After he moved to Connecticut, he started looking for an investment to complement his appraisal business and again settled on carwashing. With help from Connecticut carwash industry veterans like Mark DiTommasco, Lutz got started, found an architect, located a piece of property and got a builder. "I was blessed with finding all the right people," he said.

"Mark recommended a three-bay carwash so the revenue would be close to what a full-service tunnel in Fairfield County would do," Lutz pointed out. "Our real estate taxes

are very high here, so we have to maximize our income."

Lutz built Crossroads Car Wash in 2003 and opened the next year with three touchless bays.

"After two years in business, I was dealing with issues of some cars not coming out clean enough to satisfy me because I'm a perfectionist," Lutz said. "I built this business as a giant vending machine and didn't want to deal with labor, so I put in a detailing canopy in 2006 and used the detailing to correct any issues on the spot. I also offered what any high-end detailing shop does at a very fair price and do all the work myself. That's the perfectionist in me."

Lutz praised the value of being a member in the Connecticut Carwash Association (CCA). He is their treasurer.

"I was able to make close friends in the industry through the CCA," he said, "which is important because an operator often needs to have people to turn to who can advise them or help them out."

Lutz said that he has mostly full-service carwashes around his location as competition.

"The greater Danbury area has 17 carwashes of all types," he pointed out. "With the detailing, we're into a niche market that isn't being served by the nearby express washes."

Lutz also spent time with his carwash customers, educating them on why their car might not have come out squeaky clean from a touchless wash.

"I'd suggest to them they wash their vehicle once a week instead of monthly and put a coat of wax on it occasionally," he said. "I would explain how a wash, polish and wax would benefit their car's finish and longevity."

Lutz also is a perfectionist in his marketing and promotion of Crossroads Car Wash.

"Print marketing has failed miserably for me and direct mail hasn't worked that well either," he said.

However, Lutz recently signed on with Mobivity, a texting and mobile marketing service, and he thinks it's great.

## Join us for the Annual CCA Holiday Gathering

December 4

More details to follow on

[www.wewashctcars.com](http://www.wewashctcars.com)



“A person has to sign into the program to get a text from us, so I try to sign up as many members as I can while they are waiting in line or for me to finish detailing,” Lutz noted. “I know almost all of my customers, and if they don’t know me, they know my face because I’m here all the time.”

For the first several years after Crossroads Car Wash opened, Lutz ran the business 24/7, but after condominiums were built nearby, he reluctantly reduced his hours to 7 am to 9 pm weekdays and Saturday, and from 8 am to 8 pm on Sunday.

“Before reducing our hours, we once set a record of 540 cars washed in a 24-hour period on a winter’s day,” Lutz said. “Those numbers are long gone with our more limited hours, but we had a really good winter and things are rebounding in Connecticut.” ■

*Alan M. Petrillo is a Tucson-AZ-based journalist, a former upstate New Yorker, and contributing editor of Northeast Carwasher. He is the author of the historical mystery, Full Moon, several books on historical military firearms, and the nonfiction work, Ice Hockey in the Desert, all available on www.amazon.com.*



*Three inbays and a huge dose of hands-on attention make Crossroads Car Wash in Bethel a winner! The wash, owned by Doug Lutz, was built in 2003.*



## CCA 2014 CALENDAR

**SEPTEMBER 15-17**

**25th NRCC**  
**Trump Taj Mahal, Atlantic City, NJ**  
[www.nrccshow.com](http://www.nrccshow.com)  
**609/989-8676 or 800/868-8590**

**SEPTEMBER 23**

**17th Annual Golf Classic**  
**Fairview Farm**  
**Harwinton, CT**

**DECEMBER 4**

**CCA Holiday Gathering, TBD**  
**?'s [www.wewashctcars.com](http://www.wewashctcars.com)**





# End of Session Signals Start of Campaigns

By P.J. Cimini

On May 7, the General Assembly finished its 13-week 2014 session with momentum, passing more bills on the final day – most in the final hours – than it had the entire session. There were many issues that confronted the carwash industry and the general business community in Connecticut during the session, and many that will be researched, worked on and discussed during the interim.

All Constitutional Officers and all State Senators and State Representatives are up for election this fall and will be out in their Districts campaigning and meeting with voters. This summer, various study groups and task forces will be mapping out how to implement bills that were passed and exploring what future legislation will look like on some key issues.

A number of important measures that the Connecticut Carwash Association (CCA) was working on were taken up, and many issues will continue to require our attention and focus moving forward.

## Gap Strains Budget, Deeper Deficit Looms

Confronted with a sharp decline in state revenues that threaten a deficit for fiscal year 2015, lawmakers approved a revised, \$19 billion state budget in the last week of the session that technically is in balance.

The budget (HB 5596) increases spending by about 2.5 percent and relies on myriad fixes to erase the budget gap, including funds shifted from various state accounts into the General Fund, optimistic estimates of new revenue and state agency efficiencies, and the delay or avoidance of other spending obligations.

These one-time maneuvers ensure greater difficulty in crafting the next two-year state budget when lawmakers return in January, especially with projections indicating a \$1.4 billion deficit ahead in fiscal year 2016 – a funding gap of more than 7 percent.

Lawmakers also increased state borrowing for a variety of projects and initiatives by approving a \$953 million bonding package.

## Priorities

Among other things, the revised budget for fiscal year 2015 addresses such priorities as transportation, higher education, job training, manufacturing, and aid for municipalities. The budget also puts \$38 million into the state's Rainy Day Fund, which raises it to \$309 million.

If Connecticut's economy picks up steam, jobs rebound, and a solid housing recovery emerges, then the budget gap likely closes. If the state's economy continues to struggle, however, so will the budget.

## State Taxes

This year no major tax legislation was acted upon because

the legislature decided early on that a comprehensive review of the state and municipal tax structure needed to take place and in the meantime little else would be done. In the end they stuck to their original plan passing a measure that set up the framework for the tax study, as well as adopting a few other changes to the tax credit and gift and estate tax statutes.

## Tax Study

Especially in view of what some competitor states – including New York – have accomplished in changing their tax structures to boost economic development, policymakers agreed that the time has come for Connecticut to do the same. In response, HB 5597 mandates a comprehensive look at our state and local tax structures. The chairs and ranking members of the legislature's Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee will convene a panel of experts to conduct the study, which must be completed by January 1, 2016. The state has appropriated \$500,000 for costs associated with this study. We will be working with this Panel on issues impacting the carwash industry including a possible reimplemention of the sales tax and other general business taxes.

## Estate and Gift Tax

Double taxation in Connecticut's estate and gift tax laws has been a problem for some time. Lawmakers took steps to stop that by requiring the Department of Revenue Services to grant credit for gift taxes paid when the gifts are drawn back into the estate. This will be a positive for Connecticut's small and family-owned businesses because they usually have a great deal of their assets committed to the operation of the business, yet not sufficient liquid assets to pay the estate tax.

## Employers: Special UI Assessment

On Aug. 1, the state sent out "special assessment" bills to employers for interest due on \$810 million in federal funds that the state borrowed to pay unemployment insurance benefits during the recession.

This year's special assessment will be \$7.50 per full-time employee – half the \$15 that was assessed last year. However, Connecticut still owes Uncle Sam \$600 million.

Federal law does not allow the interest to be paid from funds employers pay into the state's UI Trust Fund, so state law provides for a separate billing to collect the funds needed to pay interest charges. Employers from Connecticut and many other states have been paying this assessment since 2011.

The notices were dated Aug. 1, and employers will have 30 days from that date to make payment in order to avoid an interest charge. Those who do not make full payment within 60 days will be subject to a fine.

*Continued on page 48 ...*



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## Connecticut Drops to #46 in CNBC's 'Top States for Business'

Connecticut dropped one place to #46 in CNBC's latest "America's Top States for Business" study, with the state's persistently slow economy and high costs of doing business mainly to blame. Georgia was named the top state for doing business and Rhode Island the worst.

The cable financial network said Connecticut has the fourth-highest cost of doing business, third-highest cost of living, and the nation's second-worst economy, putting Connecticut in the bottom five.

Connecticut must also keep leveraging and investing in strengths such as education and talent, a skilled and productive workforce, technology and innovation, and access to capital. According to CNBC, while Connecticut offers "world-class education and strong access to capital," it is also "one of the most expensive states in the U.S., and this has hampered the economy."

Connecticut actually improved in four of CNBC's Top States subcategories but fell sharply (from #39 in 2013 to #49 in 2014) in the study's economy subcategory – which is based on economic growth, job creation, the state's fiscal health, and other factors, says the media network.

Another costly drop for Connecticut (from #43 to #47) was in the Cost of Doing Business category. Based on state and local tax burdens, utility costs, wages, and rental costs for office, commercial and industrial space, among other things.

The problem is, those two categories – economy and cost of doing business – are weighted most heavily by CNBC in its ratings, so they combined to hurt Connecticut's overall ranking. However, the CNBC study was prepared earlier this year, using data that did not reflect the state's progress in several areas including recent job growth, initiatives to reduce energy costs and regulatory reforms.

This year, the Nutmeg State improved in these CNBC Top States categories:

- ❖ Infrastructure and Transportation (from #49 to #42)
- ❖ Workforce (from #37 to #32)
- ❖ Quality of Life (from #17 to #14)
- ❖ Business Friendliness (from #26 to #24)

Connecticut also remained at #5 for education, #21 for technology and innovation, and #48 for cost of living. CNBC's Top States, along with *Forbes'* "Best States for Business" and other national studies, are barometers for how Connecticut is doing compared with our competitor states. They're also benchmarks for a new campaign called CT20x17 that aims to improve Connecticut's economy and put the state into the Top 20 of all major competitive rankings by 2017.

While the drop in the CNBC rankings is disappointing, Connecticut is in fact still one of the slowest-growing state economies in the nation and has regained only 60 percent of the jobs lost during the Great Recession.

The state has also grappled with fiscal problems over the

past several years and faces steep deficits in the next biennial budget. And businesses in the state have some of the highest energy, healthcare, regulatory and employment and benefit costs in the nation – on top of state and local taxes.

The states that made dramatic improvements in the latest CNBC rankings did so as a result of policymakers' decisions to improve their business climates. Statewide polls have shown that Connecticut's economy and job growth are the top priorities for the state's voters in the upcoming elections.

## Paid Family Leave

A state task force is due to present a report to the legislature's Labor Committee this fall on the feasibility of a program to compensate employees who are out of work because of an illness or injury, pregnancy or the birth of a child, or to care for an ill family member.

Created by the legislature in 2013, the Task Force on Family Medical Leave Insurance will give the committee its report in October, with legislation expected to be prepared for the 2015 General Assembly. Details of the task force's eventual proposal are still being hammered out, but the business community continues to oppose the idea.

Most employers work hard to accommodate their employees in times of medical or family crisis, many allowing the use of accumulated paid time off, or offering short-term disability leave. Connecticut is already considered one of the nation's highest business cost states and one of the least friendly to businesses. Adding more burdens and costs on employers would further weaken our economy and competitiveness.

A Connecticut representative from the AFL-CIO recently noted, however, that "paid family leave will be one of our biggest issues next year." Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) helps employees by allowing them to step away from work for extended leaves (up to 16 weeks over a two-year period) to tend to illnesses or injuries in the family, including their own medical issues.

Employers have to protect the jobs of those on leave, and because the benefit is unpaid, it helps to encourage employees to return to work as soon as possible, which is a plus for businesses. While unpaid, FMLA is not "free" for employers. Businesses must continue paying their share of an employee's non-wage benefits (such as health care premiums) on top of the costs for hiring and training replacement workers during an employee's leave.

Requiring businesses to pay employees who are out on FMLA could encourage the workers to stay out longer, regardless of the situation. The task force also hasn't decided who will pay for this new form of leave – whether it will be funded through employee payroll deduction, or, perhaps more likely, employer contributions.

The group has also considered extending this paid form of leave to employees who do not currently qualify for FMLA – including those in businesses with fewer than 50 employees. Advocates for such a program have been providing what they

*Continued on page 50...*



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## Lobbyist Update ... *continued from page 48.*

believe to be the “business perspective” on paid FMLA. In a recent meeting, a group called the Small Business Majority discussed the results of a survey it conducted that purportedly shows businesses favor a paid family medical leave program.

However, the Small Business Majority has no affiliation with any businesses and is financed by groups that support increases to the minimum wage and universal healthcare – policies opposed by the vast majority of businesses.

### DOT Paving Way for Tolls?

What are other states doing to alleviate traffic congestion, and could their strategies work in Connecticut? It’s an important question to answer because Connecticut has some of the highest congestion costs – and worst highway bottlenecks – in the U.S.

According to the American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI), the Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk metro area has the nation’s third-highest congestion costs per mile, at \$717,041. That’s higher than San Francisco-Oakland and Washington, D.C. ATRI also found that Connecticut has six of the 100 worst bottlenecks in the country, with Hartford (I-84 at I-91) ranked 18th-worst, and four other chronic jams on the I-95 corridor also on the top 100 list.

In a recent survey, Connecticut businesses identified traffic congestion as their No. 1 transportation concern and said that improving and expanding the state’s highway system would bring the biggest benefit to businesses. But in two recent forums, state Department of Transportation (DOT) officials signaled that highway expansion to meet capacity needs was off the table. Instead, they focused on using tolls to fill a variety of needs.

They maintained that tolls would not only create a new revenue stream for future transportation projects, but would also reduce congestion by forcing citizens into mass transit resources. Their rationale is that imposing tolls on the state’s highways without adding capacity will make single-passenger commuting too time consuming and cost prohibitive.

The DOT convened local and national transportation experts, along with community and business leaders, to focus on two techniques in particular: electronic tolling and congestion pricing. At the DOT forums, experts from Florida, California and Washington discussed highway-tolling methods that have helped to reduce roadway congestion in their states.

Technology, they said, now allows tolls to be collected without tollbooths, toll personnel, or even a vehicle slowing down – experiences considerably different than what many Connecticut residents are familiar with in New England.

Panelists at the forums also discussed the use of congestion pricing, which allows drivers to choose to pay a toll and use a designated highway lane to avoid traffic jams.

The toll would vary depending on how much traffic was on the highway – in one panelist’s city it varied from \$1.25 per trip during off peak hours to as high as \$9 per trip during peak travel times. The pricing could also be imposed on a miles-traveled basis.

The panelists also suggested that to successfully implement congestion pricing in Connecticut, a marketing pitch should focus on providing more options for consumers.

Those willing to pay more to avoid traffic jams, for example, will be able to, while others could opt to use such mass transit, such as buses and carpooling. Unfortunately, due to the state’s projected deficits in the foreseeable future, public officials may have no choice but to resort to creative alternatives to transportation improvements in order to meet the demands of more cars and trucks on our roadways.

After years of diverting funds away from the state’s Special Transportation Fund to pay for General Fund expenditures, reduced federal funding, and fewer dollars collected from gasoline taxes due to fuel-efficient cars, Connecticut does not have the money it needs to keep its transportation system up to date.

Connecticut, in fact, has a long road ahead to improve transportation, but the state moved up in the most recent CNBC “America’s Top States for Business” study in the transportation and infrastructure category.

That movement – from #49 to #42 – reflects some progress already made, and new efforts underway to address this critical need. Right now, all policy roads seem to be leading to making commuters pay more for efficient travel, or enacting policies that force people off the road and into buses and other mass transit options.

### New Study to Focus on UC System

This past summer and fall a group of employers and labor representatives will be developing a proposal to make Connecticut’s Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund more fiscally sound.

It’s very likely that their work will result in higher unemployment taxes on employers. The Employment Security Advisory Board is charged, in part, with advising the state labor commissioner on policy matters concerning the trust fund, which, after the Great Recession that devastated the fund, boils down to how to keep it afloat.

After the recession caused the state to borrow nearly \$1 billion from the federal government to shore up the trust fund, the board, which is evenly divided between employers and organized labor, decided to take a comprehensive look at the state’s unemployment system.

Members will continue to solicit input from experts on various proposals and methods to return the fund to solvency. Even though that process is just beginning, it’s clear that whatever final proposal is agreed upon it will include modifications to both the benefits paid to unemployment claimants and the taxes paid by employers. ■

*P.J. Cimini, Esq. is the CCA’s Lobbyist and a partner in Capitol Strategies Group, LLC, in Hartford. You can reach him at 860/293-2581 or [pj@csgct.com](mailto:pj@csgct.com).*



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# Graduation and Anniversary Celebrations!

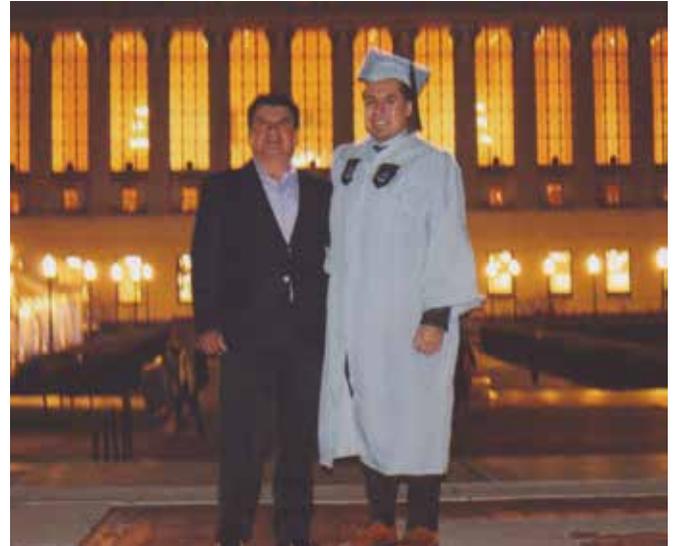
By Cookie Anthony

I once saw a road sign that read, “Our vacs suck.” Now, I wouldn’t have put that up on our sign, but the slogan stuck in my mind for many years.

Years ago, we bought all new vacs because the sales pitch was that the suction is so strong it will pick up a bowling ball. We had 22 vacs at our wash and I would have been content to have the revenue as a salary. So, when I see signs that say “Free Vacs” I have to investigate. The Barn Car Wash in Saugus, MA, is an exterior wash. As you enter the site the greeter gives you a token good for three minutes of “Free” vacuuming.

According to Joe Coppola, the owner, there has been no decline in vac revenues because people put in additional coins. It’s a great idea. You give to your customers and they give back.

Here’s an update on a past article from 2011. Remember Odilon Coria, who’s at US Brushless Car Wash in Port Charles, NY? His son Ricky won a scholarship to Columbia University. Well, Ricky just graduated from The Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science there. He’s moving to Ohio to start working for Honda designing car exteriors.



*Congratulations to Ricky Coria who just graduated from Columbia University. He is pictured here with his dad, Odilon, a 32-year carwashing veteran.*



*Greeters at The Barn Car Wash in Massachusetts give each customer a token for three minutes of FREE vacuuming when they enter the site.*

Ricky has been a guest speaker at Head Start and gives back to his community by encouraging others to stay in school. Odilon, his father, has been in the car-washing industry for 32 years. They are two people who made the American dream come true with their hard work and dedication. Congratulations Odilon and Ricky! PS, Ricky, remember to design car exteriors so they are carwash brush friendly and navigate the carwash envelope with ease!

## Carwash for \$1!!!

Yes, if you are the Belmont Car Wash in Belmont, MA, and celebrating your 50th anniversary in business you are giving away washes for \$1.

Adam and Paul Tocci continue the business their dad founded in 1964. While 50 years young, their wash features the latest in equipment and services. Located at 521 Trapelo Road they are easy to spot by their blue awning and blue-shirted employees.

The customer waiting room has a 60-inch television, Wi-Fi, a playroom for children complete with toys and much, much more. There is even a super soaker squirt gun so children can shoot soap and water on the cars in their tunnel. To



quote customers, "great service – fast and efficient." No wonder the Belmont Carwash wins awards and has such longevity.

Whether it's \$1 or \$10, though, you always get a great wash there. Here's wishing them 50 more years of success.

### Did You Know....?

- ❖ A one-day weather forecast requires about 10 billion mathematical calculations?
- ❖ In 1986, a guard in an armored car was killed when \$50,000 worth of quarters fell on him, so be careful with your money processing.
- ❖ At Breezes Full Service Carwash in Atlantic Beach, FL, if you buy the Ultimate Wash you get a free dash and door dressing.

### Going, Going, Gone

Ride and Shine Car Wash in Charlestown, MA, was very impressive and featured in a 2007 article. The other day riding through the area I looked to see how the wash was doing and couldn't find it.

It's hard to believe, but it was totally torn down to make way for a set of strip malls. It was a huge shock to see such a large investment gone. ■



Cookie Anthony is a former CCA Vice President and carwash owner.

Cookie Anthony

### Cookie's Question To You! ?

In the book "Palace Council" by Stephen L. Carter there is a line that made me think of the Connecticut Carwash Association (CCA). It said, "Every organization of any kind can be reduced to two fundamentals – membership and money."

Here's my question to you, "Have you paid your dues yet? And, have you spoken to another new carwasher to encourage him/her to join as well?" Membership combined with money leads to strength, fun and learning.

Visit [www.wewashctcars.com](http://www.wewashctcars.com)

## IN SYMPATHY

Our deepest sympathy goes out to CCA Vice President Bob Rossini and his children Octavia, Andre and Garret, on the passing of Lynn Rossini, 47, who ended a long battle with cancer on Monday, July 21.



Lynn Rossini

Born in Hartford to the late Rose (Arsego) O'Connor, Lynn grew up in Wethersfield. After graduating from Wethersfield High School, she went on to get an Associate's Degree at Manchester Community College. Her passion for interior design and decorating inspired her to open her own design company, Roselyn Design. Lynn loved her children dearly and was focused on being an active part of their lives and activities. She was always available to help others when the need arose.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Lynn's memory may be made to Helen & Harry Gray Cancer Center, 80 Seymour Street, Hartford CT 06106 or the Educational Fund for Lynn's Children c/o Simsbury Bank, 27 Dale Road, PO Box 819, Avon, CT 06001. ■

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*I hope everyone enjoyed the summer. We had some great weather, and now we're looking at the fall and preparing for the winter. It's time to put our ideas into shape for the busy season to see what works and what doesn't.*

*If you want some really great ideas there are two upcoming opportunities to get them: the 25th Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC), September 15-17 at the Trump Taj Mahal in Atlantic City, and the Car Wash Operators of New Jersey (CWONJ) bus tour on Oct. 22.*

*The NRCC is celebrating its 25 years as a trade show and educational program. The show this year will be the biggest and best to date with a Keynote by AIG President & CEO Robert Benmosche. You won't want to miss it or the packed show floor!*

*In the fall we are going to three great washes in central Jersey you won't want to miss either. These bus tours have something for experienced as well as inexperienced operators. I never walk away from one without an idea I want to implement at my wash. Now, I've been doing this for 50 years so that's saying something! In fact, I came home from a New York State Car Wash Association (NYSCWA) bus tour last spring and implemented an idea I saw that really looked great. It's a terrific opportunity to see something new and remember, none of us know it all!*

*I'd like to thank everyone who participated in The Children's Specialized Hospital Golf Outing, August 4, in Union. Despite being rained out in June, the rescheduled tourney was a huge success. The CWONJ was able to make a nice donation to Children's Specialized Hospital again this year. It's certainly a great cause and if you didn't play this year, try to do so next year. Giving back to the hospital is a great feeling!*

*Our next meeting is November 18 in Clark at the Holiday Inn off the Garden State Parkway. The meeting will feature special guest speaker Anthony Analetto with Sonny's The Carwash Factory. Anthony is probably one of the most informed people in the carwashing industry, and a really great guy. There will be an extensive Q & A at the end of his presentation so come with your questions and concerns. I'm sure he'll save you money and provide you with loads of new ideas to take home to your wash!*

*Mike Conte*  
CWONJ President



# 2014 CWONJ CALENDAR

NOVEMBER 18

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# Asbury Circle Car Wash Opens With Double Tunnel to Entice Customers

By Alan M. Petrillo

Dino Nicoletta, the owner of Asbury Circle Car Wash, had a vision of bringing hand wash services to southern New Jersey where few existed, and made good on his intent by opening Asbury Circle Car Wash in Neptune, with his partner, Lou Squillace.

Nicoletta and Squillace purchased a defunct carwash at 707 Highway 35 and decided to start from scratch on the property.

"The existing location was closed for about two years and there was next to nothing salvageable at the place," Nicoletta said. "In order not to have to go before the town's zoning board if we were to change the design of the place, we decided to keep to the existing footprint of the carwash. We gutted the building to the rafters and rebuilt everything – conveyor, conveyor pit, tunnel pit, everything. We had to because we were putting in two tunnels."

Asbury Circle Car Wash has two 80-foot tunnels with Belanger conveyors and equipment standing side by side.

"One conveyor is a fully-mechanized system and the other is a hand wash," Nicoletta pointed out. "The tunnel width is 35 feet and we operate the two of them at the same

time. There's no divider between them right now, but we have plans to put in a glass divider."

The facility also includes a lube center, two mechanic's bays, one detailing bay and a small convenience store. Nicoletta said construction was completed in April of this year and he was open the same month.

"I'm from New York City – Brooklyn – and saw hand washes popping up in the city," he said. "A lot of people were coming to Jersey from the north who were used to hand washes, which haven't gotten so popular yet down south, but I saw it as another profit station for the carwash."

Nicoletta noted that at Asbury Circle Car Wash customers have a lot of options. They can select from a \$9 exterior wash up to a \$49.95 platinum hand wash.

"The entrance and exit are the same for both tunnels," he pointed out. "But we do all the vacuuming at the front end of the tunnels. Our average ticket for the hand wash is in the \$30s, while the machine wash is in the mid-teens."

Nicoletta said he also takes advantage of compressed air at the facility. "We bought two 15-horsepower Ingersoll Rand rotary compressors, one of which is enough for the whole

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place,” he noted. “We blow out the interior of the vehicle while it’s being vacuumed to get to the hard-to-reach places, and also use compressed air at the end to blow out moldings, door handles and side view mirrors. It’s a little extra step for our customers that puts us at the next level above our competitors.”

In addition to a growing customer base, Asbury Circle Car Wash has fleet accounts with the police departments for the town of Neptune and the town of Asbury, as well as Enterprise Rent-a-Car.

“The fleet business is guaranteed business from Monday through Thursday, which are typically the slowest times,” Nicoletta said. “It’s an important part of our business, as important as any membership plan.”

Nicoletta said he and Squillace will be offering an unlimited monthly carwash program for customers soon.

“Detailing services are getting more important to customers too,” he noted. “That’s the reason we do the vacuuming at the entrance at Asbury Circle. People like to see the attention to detail and all the vacuuming being done before the car goes through the tunnel.”

Asbury Circle offers customers an express detailing service called SuperClean where a vehicle gets a thorough vacuuming, compressed air cleaning, wipe down of all interior surfaces and mat shampooing for \$24.95. If the vehicle is a SUV or minivan, the charge is \$34.95.

“Depending on the severity of the cleaning needed we might upsell them to a full interior detail that runs from \$89.95 to \$150,” Nicoletta pointed out.

Nicoletta has been in the carwash business more than 20 years, first purchasing City Line Car Wash in Jersey City in the mid-1990s. He sold the carwash several years later and then bought a carwash in Shrewsbury, but sold it to repurchase City Line three years ago, which he still owns. City Line Car Wash is an 80-foot full service tunnel, with a quick lube and auto repair facility.

Nicoletta said his experience at Asbury Circle has been positive thus far.

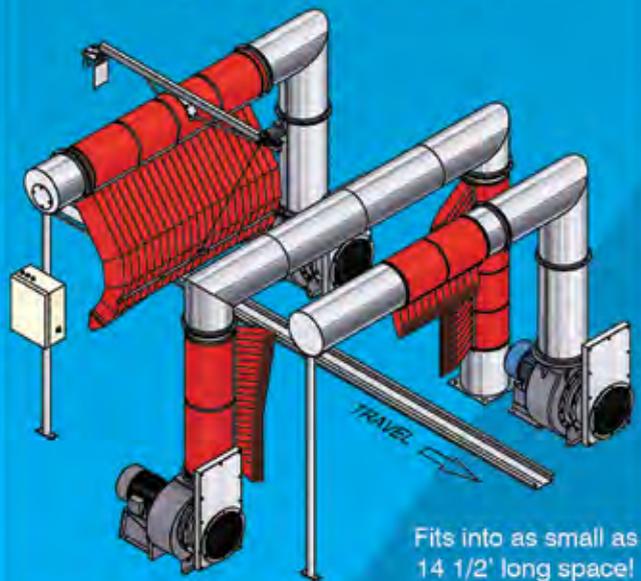
“I’m a firm believer in being on a road with a high-traffic count,” he said. “The state DOT says we have 77,000 cars going by our carwash daily which is a tremendous boost for our business. This location is three times what I’ve done elsewhere, averaging 150 cars a day.” ■

*Alan M. Petrillo is a Tucson-AZ-based journalist, a former upstate New Yorker, and contributing editor of Northeast Carwasher. He is the author of the historical mystery, Full Moon, several books on historical military firearms, and the nonfiction work, Ice Hockey in the Desert, all available on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).*

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# The “Dean of Clean” Leaves a Colorful Legacy



If you have been in the carwashing industry for any length of time you know the name Ira Feinberg. On April 21, the self-proclaimed “Dean of Clean” and creator of “Hot Glass” passed away after a courageous battle with cancer.

Feinberg was a tenacious salesman, documentarian, author and carwash loyalist. He was relentless in his pursuit of a clean window, an adamant supporter of the Car Wash Operators of New Jersey (CWONJ) and the Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC) and a man who lived each day to its fullest.

Feinberg was born in 1930 in Brooklyn, NY, to an ardent Zionist family. The tone of his life always hovered around Israel and its people. Ira was the youngest American volunteer to join the Palmach via the Jewish Underground’s New York Office and demanded his right to join the liberation of Eretz Yisrael. Traveling into Europe, he was smuggled into a DP camp in Marseilles, France, and took his place among the thousands in line for an entry to Palestine.

Ira was a fighter, no doubt about it. After the war and Israel’s defiant victory of Independence and for 50 years thereafter, Ira became a leading speaker for the United Jew-

ish Appeal and Isreal Bonds. He has addressed more than 500 audiences from coast to coast and Canada with his passionate, memorable and inspiring speeches sharing his tale and applying it to the ongoing drama in Isreal’s fight for survival.

In 2008, he produced and directed the award-winning documentary “My Brothers Keeper” as a tribute to the men and woman of the Haganah.

He also authored “Make Your Fortune Washing Cars” and was a frequent contributor to trade magazines.

Ira is survived by his wife, Yaffa, children Juliette and Bryan and four grandchildren. In lieu of flowers the family requests that any donations in his name be made to the American Veterans of Isreal (AVI), 136 East 39th St., New York, NY 10016. ■



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## Thoughts on Ira Feinberg

Ira was a consummate salesman. He could sell anything and often did. Always, though, he had the best interest of the carwashing industry at heart. He loved this industry as is evidenced by his innovative "Car Wash College," his revolutionary concept of "Hot Glass," and bringing washers and dryers to hundreds of carwashers that didn't think they could afford the newest technology until he showed them a way. He wore many hats in this industry and will always be thought of when someone picks up a towel to wipe a car or cleans a window, or simply smiles and says, "How are you doing today?" He was that nice of a man.

*Dick Zodikoff, Former CWONJ Treasurer and recipient of the 2013 NRCC Hall of Fame Award*

I had known Ira for over 20 years and considered him a great friend. I first worked with Ira when he purchased his ICS POS system for his full-service wash in New Jersey back in 1991. I always looked forward to seeing Ira and his wife at carwash shows and other events they attended. He was a wonderful contributor to the carwash industry and he will be sorely missed.

*Brian Bath, Vice President of Sales, ICS*



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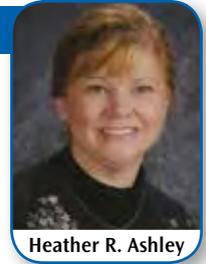


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## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

*Greetings from the MCA! The spring and summer pollen has been great for many of us! That fine coating of orange and yellow powder has done wonders for our wash numbers, even if it seemed harsh on our allergies it was worth it for many of us!*

*The MCA does not have formal meetings over the summer, but we continue strong with events such as "Wash to Save the Bay." Held on Saturday, June 7, throughout the region, we raised money to donate to The Chesapeake Bay Foundation for their water conservation efforts.*

*This was our second year holding this fundraiser. Last year we donated \$7,000 to the foundation and followed up with a great tour of their headquarters during our Spring MCA meeting. This year we not only increased the number of washes participating, but we plan to give another substantial donation.*

*It is my hope that events like these serve a greater purpose than just monetary donations. I hope they will educate the public. We need events and causes to get our customers interested in why washing at a professional carwash is so important. The first 50 people who got their car washed during the event were handed a brochure about the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's efforts and a bumper sticker with a free year's membership to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. A lot of good conversation was generated as we explained the details of the event.*

### Gearing Up For Fall

*While summer is always pretty busy with various projects and for a lucky few, some vacation days, my favorite time of the year is the fall. MCA won't have a chance to meet before the 25th NRCC, September 15-17, but you can bet we will play an active role. (Check out my article on Twitter on page 16.) We will follow the NRCC with our October 15 meeting in Fredericksburg, MD, and then another meeting at National Harbor, also in Maryland, November 19. You are always invited to join our meetings, just RSVP! You can find more information on our web page, [www.mccarwash.org](http://www.mccarwash.org).*

*I hope you can take a moment and connect with me. You see, the greatest part of an association is the connections we make and the friendships that evolve. If you are reading this, we share something in common, and I would love to hear your ideas and just know you are out there.*

Heather Ashley

Twitter @hrashley

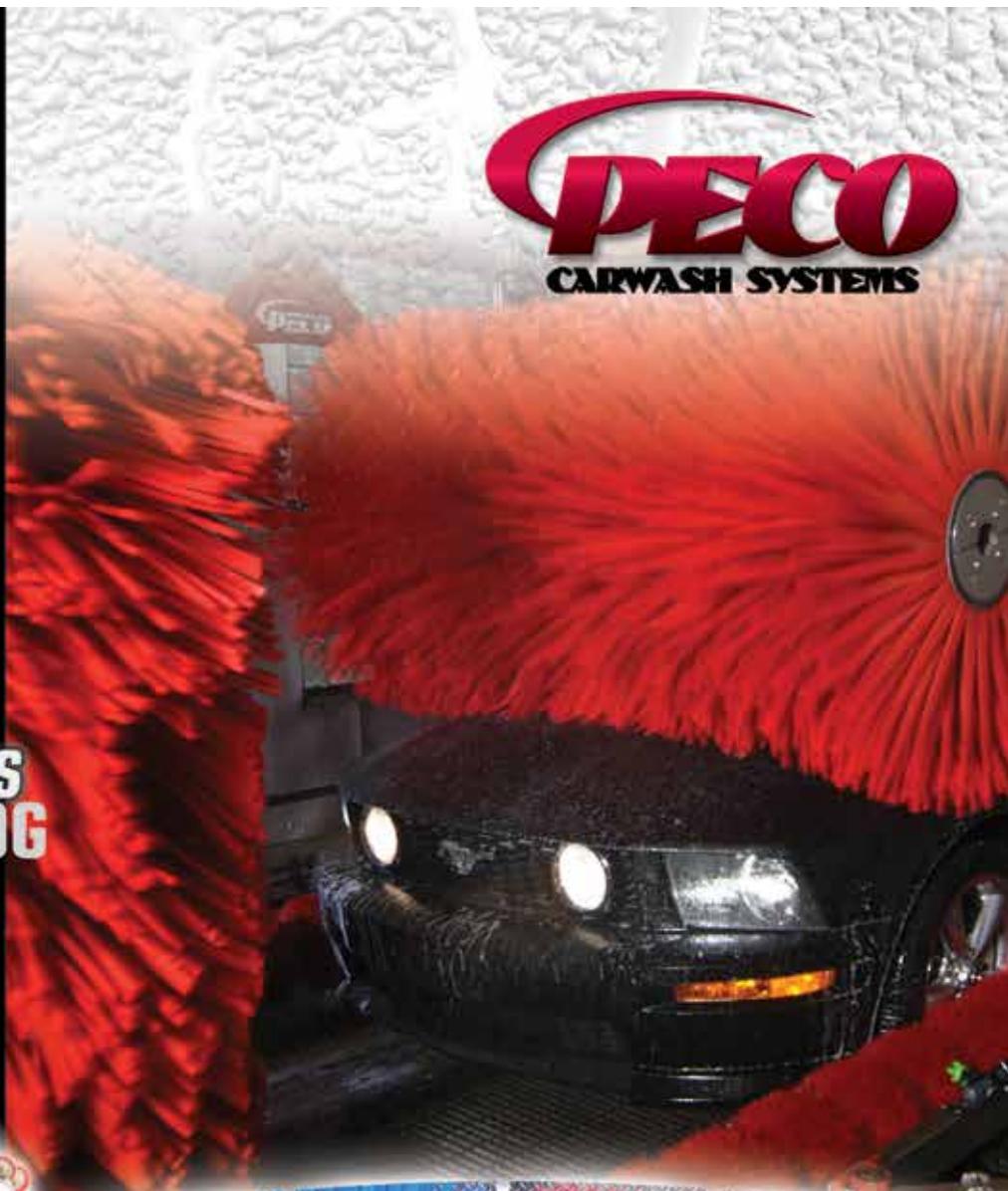
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# Elkton Car Wash: A 24/7/365 Family-Operated Labor of Love



By Alan M. Petrillo

Elkton Car Wash, a 24-hour, seven-day-a week, 365-day-a-year operation, has been family owned and operated since 1964, by a man who has more than 50 years in the carwashing business.

Jim Romanek opened Elkton Car Wash at 501 N. Bridge Street, in Elkton, MD, on Christmas day in that year, a day when the sun was shining brightly and the temperature hit 72 degrees Fahrenheit. Customers were lined up off the property and down the road, Romanek remembered.

“We had two self-service bays and two stalls with outside booms,” he said, “that we charged 25 cents for five minutes back then. And besides, the customer sprayed, and we scrubbed the car at the same time.”

Romanek remodeled Elkton Carwash several times over the ensuing years, first adding two in-bay automatics, then

putting in a small conveyor and finally adding a touch-free wash. Today, Elkton Carwash has one touch-free automatic tunnel, a soft touch automatic tunnel, four self-service wash bays, an outside truck bay, eight vacuums and a vending area, all of which are open 24/7.

At one time, Romanek bought a second wash in Newark, DE, another facility with touch-free automatics and self-service bays, but sold it eight years ago, wanting to concentrate on a single location.

“We’re strictly self service here with our bays and automatics,” Romanek pointed out. “Customer service is our main thing and that’s why the business does so well; we take care of our customers and make them number one. We never question them or give them a difficult time.”

Romanek and his wife, Fran, work as the operating partners of the carwash, while their daughter Cindy Jenkins manages the site, and brother-in-law Bill Keen serves as mechanic.

“This business is a family affair,” Romanek notes. “Once we got rid of the conveyor, our labor problems went away because we were handling things ourselves. It’s really difficult to find enough steady help that’s dependable.”

Elkton Car Wash’s touch-free automatic tunnel offers a basic wash for \$7, wash and wax for \$10, deluxe at \$12 and oversize vehicle for \$14. The soft-touch automatic tunnel runs washes at the same price points.

As far as promotion of the carwash goes, Romanek believes in the power of word of mouth.

“We gave up on paid advertising because we found that it simply was not effective for us,” he said. “We believe we are the number one carwash in our area because we take care of our customers so well.”

Romanek noted that Elkton has a 25-cent tire air machine, “which brings in a lot of people to check their tires. While they are here, they spend money otherwise, either in the washes, the vacuums or the vending area, which is like a mini convenience store,” noted Romanek.



Maryland’s Elkton Car Wash is owned and operated by Jim Romanek who opened the wash in 1964.



Elkton started out with two self-service bays and two stalls with outside booms. Over the years Romanek has added two inbays, a small conveyor and a touch-free unit to the site.



## MCA CALENDAR

OCTOBER 15

Fredericksburg, MD  
TBD

NOVEMBER 19

Membership Meeting  
National Harbor, MD (DC area)  
\*Location tentative

[www.mcacarwash.org](http://www.mcacarwash.org)

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*The wash is open 24 hours a day 365 days a year.*



He added that Elkton Car Wash regularly gives away free carwashes to schools and other groups for fundraising events, allowing the groups to auction off the washes. In addition to schools and their sports teams, Elkton has donated washes to the PTA, church organizations, youth groups and other civic organizations.

Romanek doesn't see retirement on the near horizon for himself either.

"I want to keep on serving customers and cleaning their cars," he said. "When they are pleased with the job we do, then we know we've been successful." ■

*Alan M. Petrillo is a Tucson-AZ-based journalist, a former upstate New Yorker, and contributing editor of Northeast Carwasher. He is the author of the historical mystery, Full Moon, several books on historical military firearms, and the nonfiction work, Ice Hockey in the Desert, all available on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).*

*In addition to strong customer service, the wash has prospered over the years due to the fact that it's a family affair, according to owner Romanek.*



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# Coastal's 20-Something Owners Corner the Flex-Serve Market in Dover

By Alan M. Petrillo



Some carwash pundits lament the fact that a lot of younger folks aren't looking at the carwash industry as a business career, but two new 20-something owners in Delaware not only see it as an excellent career, but also an opportunity

to bring a different kind of carwashing to an area that traditionally has seen only full-service carwashes.

Scott, 26, and Katie, 25, Becker are the owners of Coastal Car Wash at 1117 South DuPont Highway in Dover, DE.

"Coastal Car Wash is a new type of service in lower Delaware," Scott Becker said. "We're a flex serve in an area that customers expect to only see full-service washes. Also, we're the only carwash in the Dover area that has a Sea Foam Bath, offers free self-service vacuums, and has an array of express wash packages with the option to add full service, so the customer can get exactly the kind of wash he wants."

Coastal features a 90-foot tunnel that Becker said "is completely packed with as much equipment as is possible to fit in it."

The carwash has a single auto teller. The property covers about three-quarters of an acre and has room enough to stack about eight vehicles, Becker pointed out. Coastal has eight full-time employees and three part-timers, in addition to himself and his wife "who work about 70 to 80 hours a week, each," Becker said.

Coastal Car Wash sits on the corner of Route 13 and Route 1 where the intersection traffic count runs about 38,000 vehicles daily.

"It's a divided road, but with a light that enables customers to turn into our carwash," Becker said. "It's definitely a good spot on the south side of Dover."

Coastal starts its basic exterior wash, the Express, at \$5, with other exterior washes rising to top out at \$15. A basic full-service wash runs \$15, then \$19 with Rain-X and \$22 with hot wax.

"We were the first one in the state to install hot wax," Becker noted. "We also offer a \$30 mini detail wash that's very popular. On an average sunny day, we'll do a half-dozen of them, taking about 20 to 25 minutes per car."

Becker said that he graduated from college in 2010 when his wife had a nanny position for a couple who owned two carwashes on the eastern shore of Maryland.

"I had just returned from a trip to Africa and they had a manager's position open," Scott Becker said. "I was 22 and had barely any working experience outside of the typical college summer jobs. But they gave me a try on the line and hired me to manage the carwash that did the lesser volume, about half the volume of their other carwash."

Becker said that it was challenging to be 22 years old and to manage employees who ranged from 20 to 40 years old.

"This was the Wet Dog Carwash in Cambridge, MD, a full-service wash where the customers would get out of the vehicle before it went through the tunnel," he said. "I enjoyed the work and had a great time interacting with the employ-

*Continued on page 66 ...*

*The 90-foot tunnel flex serve wash; something the Dover, DE, market has not seen.*



*The clean signage and auto cashier make the wash process simple and easy for Coastal customers.*



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**Coastal ...** continued from page 64.

ees, plus I enjoyed the physical labor as well as my management duties.”

More than a year later, Becker left and went into sales selling food for his uncle, which required a lot of travel. But he didn't like sitting in cars and offices and moved from Maryland to York, PA, where he married Katie in 2013.

“She managed a college bookstore, but was looking for something else to do too,” Becker said. “Her goal was to own her own business and mine was to work in a business outside, so we decided to go into carwashing.”

Becker noted that Katie's parents owned their own business and encouraged the couple in their business endeavor.

“We bought Coastal Car Wash in October of 2013 and made major modifications to it,” he said. “We kept all the tunnel equipment, which was only two years old, but doubled the equipment in there and added nine free vacuums outside.”

Becker pointed out that because Coastal Car Wash is set up with the ICS Auto Sentry system, fleet services are easy to handle.

“We give them a card and the system does the rest,” he said. “We have a couple of police departments who use our carwash, and also auto dealerships as well as smaller companies. They have both exterior and full-service options, and the discount is already programmed into the card.”

Becker noted that no other carwash in the area offers fleet services, so he offers fleet accounts even to companies with only three or four vehicles. Some of his fleet accounts pay with in-trade services, he noted, like one for dumpster services.

Coastal's most popular carwash is its \$8 exterior wash, Becker pointed out.

“This has more to do with our customer base than anything else,” he said. “We're in a blue collar area where there's not a lot of extra money, but just south of us is a more affluent area. So our \$8 wash with a tire shine is a huge value for people in our area. We also find that a lot of folks come in and get our \$5 wash instead of going to area self-service washes.”

Becker said there's a small piece of property behind the wash that he and Katie want to purchase.

“We originally wanted it for our free vacuums, but that didn't happen,” he said. “We'd love to buy it and install a small detail shop there to complement the a la carte detailing we do now.” ■

*Alan M. Petrillo is a Tucson-AZ-based journalist, a former upstate New Yorker, and contributing editor of Northeast Carwasher. He is the author of the historical mystery, Full Moon, several books on historical military firearms, and the nonfiction work, Ice Hockey in the Desert, all available on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).*



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### PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

*My first New England Carwash Association (NECA) board meeting was in the Fall of 2007. I was 25 years old and new to the carwash industry. I knew little about cleaning cars, fixing equipment, managing employees and marketing my wash. Seven years later, I still can't fix equipment, but my carwash has grown to be a successful business with a great reputation. This is primarily because I learned so much about the carwash industry from the advice from other NECA members.*

*In 2006, when I opened my business, an NECA past president drove to my carwash. We spoke for a while about the business and he noticed that my cars were not coming out dry. He gave me some advice on rearranging the place in the tunnel where I apply drying agent. I was amazed that another owner would spend time to help another operator. Eight years later, I have learned that almost all of our members are willing to help a newcomer.*

*One of the first major initiatives I witnessed was the NECA's investment in a study on why consumers are washing their cars less often. We hired a professional marketing firm to conduct a focus group and survey. The results were surprising, price was not a major factor in why consumers do not wash their cars. The NECA distributed the study to our members and had the marketing company speak on the study during one of our meetings.*

*A few years later, we organized a presentation to Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) about the positive impact on the environment of washing a car in a commercial carwash compared to washing the vehicle in a parking lot or driveway.*

*The DEP was already aware of the dangers of nonpoint source pollution that occur when soapsuds enter the storm sewer. They were impressed with our presentation. A few months later, the DEP decided to create a webpage on the dangers of washing a car in a driveway. "There's no problem with washing your car. It's just how and where you do it. The average driveway car wash uses a total of 116 gallons of water! Most commercial car washes use 60 percent less water in the entire washing process than a simple home wash uses just to rinse off a car." - Massachusetts DEP*

*Over the last few years, we have focused on helping our members grow their businesses through the use of the Internet. We have launched two websites over the last four years, [www.washforacause.com](http://www.washforacause.com) and [www.carwashgifts.com](http://www.carwashgifts.com). Washforacause.com is a great way for charities to raise money by selling carwashes online.*

*Carwashgifts.com is a free service to members that allows carwashes to sell carwash books online. Washforacause.com has sold \$6,730 worth of carwashes and carwashgifts.com has sold more than \$40,000 in carwash books online in less than one year.*

*I will miss being president of the NECA, but I am excited about our incoming president, David Ellard of Triple Play Car Wash in Attleboro. If you don't already know Dave, I encourage you to meet him at our upcoming meetings. Dave has some great ideas on how to strengthen the NECA.*

Adam Korngold  
NECA President

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# An Interview with Stan Scott of Abenacke Car Wash

**NECW:** Stan, you have just opened your second self-service location in the charming hamlet of Chester, VT, (population 3,000) on well-traveled Rt. 103. Why this location? What is the background behind site number two?

**SS:** The site was chosen for its proximity to another business owned two driveways down. I was hoping to open a carwash on the land of a self-storage facility I own, but I did not have the room needed, nor did I have adequate frontage on Route 103 for a proper entrance and exit. A local contractor owned the land and wanted to sell – we finally agreed on a price, and a year and half later began building the carwash you see today.

**NECW:** Your first wash in Westminister Station, VT, (population 287) about 25 minutes southeast, was opened in 2002. What have you learned over the last 12 years as an operator that you bring to this new site?

**SS:** Stacking space in the winter months is very important. Routine maintenance and cleanliness is also very important. I have had to become a better listener – not only to the customers, but also to the machinery and equipment.

**NECW:** What are you doing differently with this wash? Its features three self-serve bays and two inbays so it's larger than your last location, but what else is different?

**SS:** The main difference from our Westminister site is that in Chester we are able to access town water. Having consistent water pressure is a big advantage over storing water and having to pump it from storage tanks.

**NECW:** I see that one of your in-bays is a touchless unit. When the other bay is open, will that be touchless as well? When do you anticipate that bay to be up and running?

**SS:** The bay currently not in use will be another touchless wash bay. I would anticipate that bay will be up and running within 24 months.

**NECW:** There is not a lot of competition in this market and there are not a lot of inbays with auto cashiers. Has it taken some time to get the market comfortable with that type of a wash? I remember that with your other location it was slow growing your inbay customers.

**SS:** The Chester area has responded well. When first introduced 12 years ago we had a reclaim problem, and people in this area were not accustomed to this type of wash.

**NECW:** Do you have any tricks for other operators in the same situation?

**SS:** No tricks.

**NECW:** Is your family business still manufacturing the stainless steel piping for your five vac islands?



*Abenacke Car Wash in Chester, VT, boasts three self-service bays and two inbay automatics. The site is owned by Stan Scott and opened in the winter of 2014.*

**SS:** Abenacke Car Wash is a division of Burtco, Inc. – Burtco manufactures stainless and steel island forms and pipe guards for the petroleum industry i.e. gas stations and convenience stores. Burtco did make the stainless vacuum islands, the trash receptacles, and the stainless straight pipes entering and exiting each bay at both carwashes.

**NECW:** Do you manufacture anything else for the wash?

**SS:** We use a heavy gauge material for our products – most uses in the equipment room are out of the realm of cost effectiveness.

**NECW:** Solar panels adorn your roof. What kind of an investment was that and how long until you anticipate a payback?

**SS:** The investment in solar is substantial, but the rewards are worth it tenfold. The estimated payback for the Westminister facility was about five years. I would expect it to be the same for the Chester facility.

**NECW:** I assume that your pricing is the same for both locations... \$8, \$10 and \$12?

**SS:** The pricing in Chester is exactly \$1 more a wash over the inbay automatic pricing in Westminister (the difference being the additional cost of town water). The self-serve cost is the same for both locations.

*Continued on page 72...*



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**Stan Scott of Abenacke Car Wash ...** *continued from page 70.*

**NECW:** I noticed that you identified each wash bay with a sign. Why?

**SS:** Primarily so that customers can identify where they have been if there was a problem. Secondly, so that when we are fixing something or sending a contractor to work on something we can identify which bay they are to be working in.

**NECW:** You have a lot of attractive and eye-catching “warning” signage at your wash. Does it come from having issues, or just wanting to prevent them?

**SS:** Both. In Chester we are just trying to avoid issues that were common at our Westminster site.

**NECW:** I notice a gate at the entrance to your wash. Is the facility closed after a certain hour?

**SS:** We open early and we close between 8-9pm depending on the season and weather. We just do not have the population base to warrant a 24-hour operation.

**NECW:** What was the winter like for you last year? I’ve heard that the road crews were generous with their salt and sand which is always a carwasher’s desire.

**SS:** Not a good winter to be building and trying to open a carwash. We had some extremely cold continuous days last winter. I remember a stretch of being closed for six straight days. When we were able to open we had some very good days.

**NECW:** With two successful and attractive washes under your belt, will there be more?

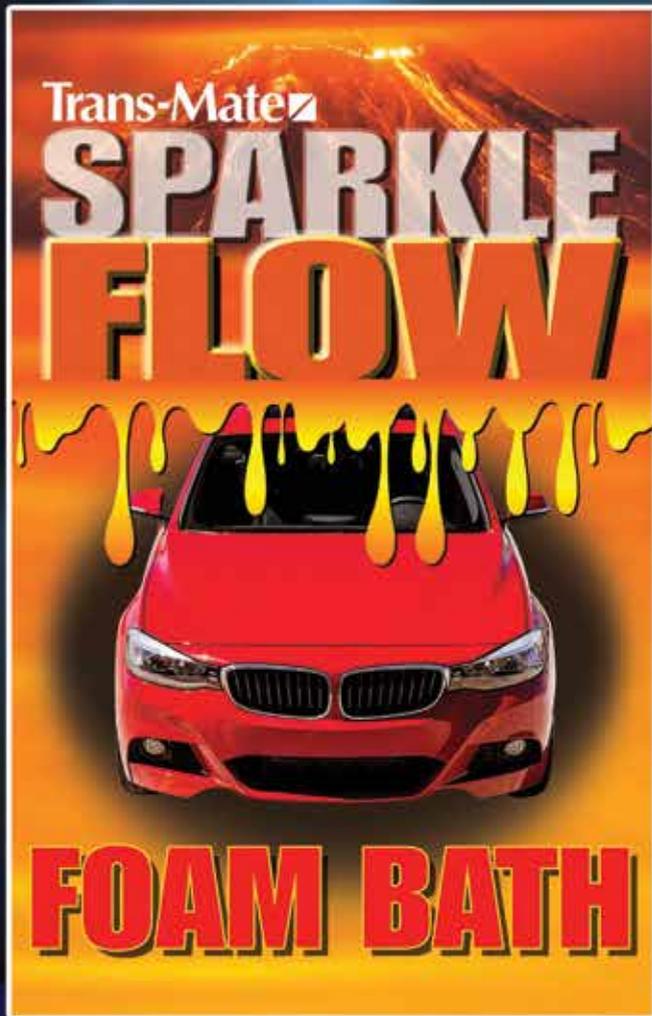
**SS:** Anything is possible. ■



*Attractive “warning” signage abounds at Abenacke both to deter and educate customers.*



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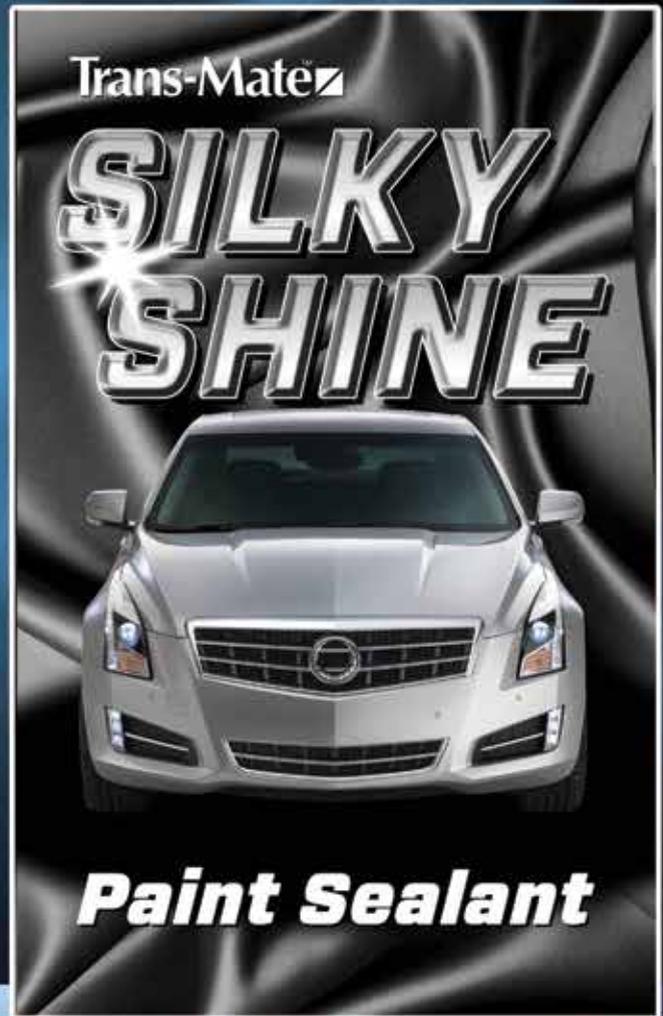


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# NECA Announces 2014 Scholarship Winners!

NECA's Scholarship Selection Committee really had their work cut out for them this year. We received a record number of qualified applicants but Peter Silk of Minute-Man Car Wash, Medford, MA, and Micah Smith of Alliance Energy based in Waltham, MA, are the 2014 recipients. Each of our winners was awarded \$1,000.00.

## And the Winners Are...

Carolyn Milch, daughter of John Milch, manager for Quincy Car Wash, who attends Salem State University and is majoring in psychology



Carolyn Milch

and Octavio De Moraes Neco, son of Jose Roberto de Moraes, who has worked for Bedford Car Wash for 12 years, attends Purdue University and is majoring in computer engineering.



Octavio De Moraes Neco

For more information on the NECA Scholarship visit [www.newenglandcarwash.org](http://www.newenglandcarwash.org)



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## TREASURER'S REPORT New England Carwash Association 2nd Quarter 2014, April 1st - June 30th

### Income

Interest Income.....	\$11.01
Meetings.....	\$11,251.76
Member Services.....	\$277.00
Membership.....	\$2,765.00
NRCC.....	\$4,708.80
Scholarship.....	\$-
Income - Other.....	\$24.26

**Total Income..... \$19,037.83**

### Expenses

Advertising and Promotions.....	\$95.62
Board Expenses.....	\$833.01
Charitable Contribution.....	\$-
Insurance.....	\$726.00
Management Services.....	\$8,813.67
Meetings.....	\$7,874.98
Member Services.....	\$2,904.57
Membership.....	\$14.34
Office Expense.....	\$948.70
Professional Expense.....	\$925.00
Tax.....	\$-
Total Expenses.....	\$23,135.89
Net Income.....	\$(4,098.06)

### Other: Wash for a Cause

<b>Income</b> .....	\$640.00
<b>Expenses</b>	
Distributions to car washes.....	\$284.00
Distributions to participants.....	\$-
Wash for a Cause - other exp.....	\$-
Website.....	\$121.53

**Total Expenses and Distributions..... \$405.53**

**Net Income.....234.47**

### Cash Balances

Citizen's Bank Savings.....	\$88,273.92
Citizens Checking.....	\$46,201.67
Citizens Bank Reserve Fund.....	\$86,000.92

**Total Checking / Savings..... \$220,476.51**



## 2014 New England Carwash Association Golf Classic

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*To Gate or Not to Gate*




## NECA CALENDAR

### TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18

**2014 Annual Fall Dinner Meeting & Program**  
TBD



## SOME NECA MEMBER RESOURCES

You haven't signed up for [carwashgifts.com](http://carwashgifts.com)?? It takes just 10 minutes to start earning.

This special website was custom designed to help NECA members sell

carwash books and special offers on line - at no cost to the member. If you already have e-commerce set up on your website, [carwashgifts.com](http://carwashgifts.com) will help to drive traffic to your site. View a demo on YouTube at this link: [youtube/3EdHCNyeSao](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3EdHCNyeSao)

Would you like to be the subject of a NECA vendor spotlight?

### Complimentary for NECA's Supplier Members

Your company profile and logo could be featured on page 1 of the NECA E-Newsletter as a "vendor spotlight" with hotlinks to your company's web site. Email a profile (50 - 75 words on who you are and what you offer that sets you apart) and your logo (in JPG or EPS format) for an upcoming issue of the E-News to Editor Steve Stockman at [info@newenglandcarwash.org](mailto:info@newenglandcarwash.org) (note: first-come, first-serve)



To learn more about this terrific organization, visit their website: <http://www.bgcprov.org/>

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NORTHEAST CARWASHER  
OR ON OUR WEBSITE AT:  
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# NECA Member Benefits

NECA offers significant benefits to its members whether you are able to attend one of our annual events or not: fall and winter dinners with programs, Golf Outing, Spring Table Top Show and Carwash Tours. Most important, through NECA, your regional, carwash trade association, you have the combined expertise of many on whom you can call, in good times and challenging times, and an association office ready to help you. That is the true power of association.

Here's a sampling of some of our member benefits.

## NEW!

Over the last six months, we have built a website that will allow your carwash to expand its e-commerce offerings. The site is easy to use for you and your customers, will allow you a way to sell gift cards and wash books online immediately, and is completely free for NECA member companies.

Some of the benefits of Carwashgifts.com include:

List your carwash in a directory of carwashes selling wash books online.

Sell any combination of wash books or gift cards online. You can either email a voucher that is valid for the gift cards or mail a physical gift card voucher. You can add a link to carwashgifts.com from your website that will show your wash books online.

Create your own Groupon-type offer, sell gift cards or wash books at a reduced price via email or social media using a unique link that is not made public through your website. Do all of this without paying a middleman.

Send a free coupon for a carwash to a friend, customer, or charity via email.

Curious? Watch our YouTube video: [youtu.be/3EdHCNyeSao](http://youtu.be/3EdHCNyeSao)

## NEW! Group Rates for Credit Card Processing

A program specifically designed for carwashes and administered by TSYS Merchant Solutions has been established for members of the New England Carwash Association.

Why pay high processing rates for small credit card transactions? The New England Carwash group program features true interchange plus great rates. This program waives monthly merchant account fees for all current NECA members who take advantage of this new member benefit.

To get started, or just to find out more... call our program coordinators at TSYS: Mike Cushing 402/574-7024 or Roger Kinney 402/574-7141 or visit <http://www.newenglandcarwash.org/category/9018/credit-card-services-for-members-from-tsys.htm>

## Ongoing: Legislative Monitoring

Do you have the time to regularly research activity in your state legislature for bills and regulations that might affect your business? Of course not. That's why NECA employs an intern to monitor legislative activity in MA, ME, RI, NH, and VT – all of the states we represent. Our legislative intern provides monthly reports on pertinent activity that either you will want to address or that NECA will address on behalf of the industry.

There reports are published in the quarterly NECA E-Newsletter (for members-only); in the NECA News Brief, which is distributed every other month to everyone for whom we've an email address; and archived on the NECA website.

In addition, in each of the states we represent, we've a grassroots monitor, a member who has volunteered to keep us apprised of important issues. We encourage all of you to be our eyes and ears on the ground. We can do so much more together than individually.

Note: We are currently monitoring the progress of a possible minimum wage hike in Massachusetts which could affect neighboring states. ■

## THE POWER OF ASSOCIATION

It's time to renew your NECA membership.

The NECA membership year runs from Jan. 1st – Dec. 31st. If you've not renewed your membership, please do so today. Mail in your renewal form with a check, renew on line or call the NECA office for assistance. We also offer the convenience of automatic, recurring, quarterly dues payments. ■

**“Come Clean with Us” in 2014!**

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# Full House at the June Detailing Workshop

More than 50 New England Carwash Association (NECA) members converged in Littleton, MA, on June 17 for a hands-on detailing workshop. Special thanks to Simoniz USA who provided the expert instruction, and to New England Carwash Equipment who hosted the event.



The June seminar attracted more than 50 and was facilitated by Simoniz USA.





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# Table Top Show and Tour Draw Record Attendance



The New England Carwash Association's (NECA) 2014 Table Top Show and Tour were so well attended, Briteway Car Wash provided its big passenger van to accommodate overflow tour registrants.



The tour offered plenty of variety at its four stops: Big Steve's Plaza Car Wash in Leominster, Quick 'n Clean in Fitchburg, Briteway Car Wash Circle K also in Fitchburg, and Clean & Green Car Wash and Detail Center in Marlboro. Lunch was served, compliments of Sonny's The Carwash Factory, under a big tent while visiting Big Steve's. Check out the photo collages of the tour stops and participants on the NECA website, [www.newenglandcarwash.org](http://www.newenglandcarwash.org).

Upon their return to the Devens Common Center, attendees viewed 35 distinctive displays, and enjoyed an Italian buffet complete with a large assortment of cannoli. Trays of cookies and coffee were served as we announced the best exhibit award winners and conducted the drawing for the exhibitor prizes. Many of the show attendees won prizes offered by our exhibitors, and the winner of NECA's Exhibitor Appreciation Prize, a \$75 gift certificate for Legal Seafood, was Martin Geller of Vehicle Wash Systems.

Without the support of our exhibitors, we would not be able to offer this special annual event. We truly appreciate their ongoing participation. There were quite a few standout exhibits which are featured in photo collages on the NECA website (linked from the home page under "Recent Event Round Up"). Our judges chose the following winners:

❖ Auto Shine of New England, judged the Most Successful in Aligning with our Theme, "Come Clean with Us," was awarded lunch on us, a \$50 restaurant group gift certificate.



❖ Watchfire LED Signs, judged the Most Eye-Catching Display of otherwise "mundane" products, was awarded lunch on us, a \$50 Cheesecake Factory gift certificate.



❖ Autowash Maintenance Corporation, judged Best in Show for its impressive light display, was awarded a \$100 Capital Grille gift certificate.



We offer special thanks to our generous sponsors:

- ❖ Autowash Maintenance Corporation:  
Table Top Tour and Show
- ❖ Trans-Mate Products Inc.:  
Table Top Show
- ❖ Sonny's The Car Wash Factory:  
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**Walt Hartl**

**PRESIDENT'S COLUMN**

*The Mets Win, the Mets Win... !!! The New York State Car Wash Association (NYSCWA) recently ventured to Citi Field for our annual spring "Baseball Meeting." The operators and vendors who attended were treated to a perfect day, crystal clear skies, good food and good friends sharing an evening at the ballpark talking carwashing and baseball, and the best part (for me, a long-time and diehard Mets fan) was watching the Mets take on and beat up on the Oakland A's.*

*The Mets launched four homeruns to take the game 10-1. A special thanks to our sponsors Micrologic, Simoniz USA and Innovative Control Systems who helped make this event possible. I'd also like to thank Mike Benmoschè, who spearheads this annual event, for his hard work. If you haven't attended a game with us, make sure you sign up for next year's outing. I can't guarantee the Mets will win, but I can guarantee a good time.*

**25th NRCC Approaches!**

*We are a few short weeks away from the opening of the 2014 Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC) in Atlantic City, NJ, September 15-17. As co-chair for this event along with Mike Benmoschè, I am extremely excited for the program that we have set up for the 25th Annual NRCC. This historical event will open with two concurrent programs geared toward tunnel and self-service operators. One is put on by Robert Andre of Sonny's Car Wash College titled, A "Labor" of Love. This seminar will focus on the challenges of balancing labor, production, leveraging service writers and increasing profits. Simultaneously, "Self-Service Reinvigoration," facilitated by Carolina Pride's Dale Reynolds, will focus on cost-effective ways to maximize creative marketing to increase self-service revenue and boost profits in an ever-challenging environment.*

*On Tuesday, September 16, come join us for a hearty breakfast and take part in the always-popular Early Bird panel discussion, where rapid-fire questions on all types of topics are answered by our panel of experienced operators and vendors. After that seminar there will be a presentation on exit plans and financial stability hosted by Lou Rendemonti of Rendemonti Wealth Strategies and Lou's brother, John Rendemonti, a lawyer who represents small business. Lou, who grew up in the industry, will speak frankly about the pitfalls of having no plan. It's information you can't afford to miss.*

*Next, Robert H. Benmosche, President and CEO of AIG, the architect of one of the most extraordinary turnarounds in the history of corporate America, will give our Keynote. Benmosche was at the helm of AIG as the company repaid \$182.3 billion of government assistance, plus a profit of more than \$22.7 billion. Don't miss his story and how his principles made this turnaround possible, and how you can apply those lessons to your business.*

*We will then award our Most Distinguished Person and Hall of Fame awards, and get a brief update from Fred O'Neil, an International Carwash Association (ICA) board member, on the activities of that association.*

**OFFICERS**

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**Paul Vallario, vice president**

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**Timm Baldauf, secretary**

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**Mike Benmoschè, treasurer**

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Steve Weekes, Sitterly Road Car Wash LLC  
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**PAST PRESIDENTS**

- |                 |                           |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
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| Ron Burton*     | Don Scordo                |
| Raymond Justice | Ken Knightes*             |
| Steve Voll      | Walt Hartl                |
| Mark Kubarek    | Dennis O'Shaughnessy, Sr. |
| Tom Hoffman Jr. | Steve Knightes            |
|                 | Mark Kubarek              |

\*Deceased

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P.O. Box 230, Rexford, NY 12148

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[WWW.NORTHEASTCARWASHER.COM](http://WWW.NORTHEASTCARWASHER.COM)

### **Massive Show Floor!**

The largest show floor in NRCC history will then open after the Awards and Luncheon, and you are encouraged to search out the latest products, services and innovations in the carwash industry from more than 255 exhibits.

After a few hours on the floor you'll be ready to kick back and relax so come spend some time with your friends at the NRCC's 25th Anniversary Celebration at the Hard Rock Café inside the Taj. Come share some food, drink and laughs with us. Every attendee will receive a special gift to help mark the 25th Anniversary of the NRCC, as well as enjoy some other special things we have up our sleeves.

The last day of the show, September 17, starts off bright and early, so join us again for breakfast and round table discussions on topics ranging from lube operations to digital marketing and safety. There will be a wealth of knowledge there for the taking.

Our final program will focus on the intricacies of the Affordable Care Act. As small business owners we are all affected by this new program and not knowing what our responsibilities are can be costly and daunting. Join expert Tim Dodge from the Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of New York,

Inc. for the most up-to-date information on "Obama Care" and how it affects you.

The final day of the show will conclude with the opening of the trade show floor at 10:30am. As you can see, we are very excited about the 25th NRCC and we should be! This show is the result of the hard work and dedication of the members of the NRCC board of Directors and our trade show management partner PSI (thank you Ali, Laura, Joanne and Karen!). I strongly encourage you to visit [www.nrccshow.com](http://www.nrccshow.com) and register for the show. Online registration is quick and easy. I also invite you to view the A&E network biography on our Keynote speaker. While you are cruising the site take a look at last year's photo gallery, check out the schedule of events, book your hotel and make your reservations for the 25th NRCC. I guarantee you will not be disappointed! See you on the Boardwalk in Atlantic City, September 15-17th. It will be an NRCC for the record books!



Walter Hartl  
NYSCWA President

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# Loudonville Wash Gets Second Major Facelift, New Owners

By Alan M. Petrillo

Hoffman Development Corporation, Albany, NY, has purchased the former Raindancer Car Wash at 496 Albany-Shaker Road in Loudonville, bringing its total number of carwashes in upstate New York and the Hudson Valley to 21 and making the facility its 14th tunnel wash.

Tom Hoffman Jr., chief executive officer of Hoffman carwash, said his company purchased the former Raindancer from his cousin, Stephen Hoffman, in May. The renovated site began washing cars in early July.

“The place had been there forever and my cousin purchased it nearly 30 years ago, but he decided to transition out of the carwash business,” Hoffman Jr. said. “He wanted to concentrate on his real estate business and selling modular homes. The carwash is nearby to our other locations in the area, which makes it easy to work on and manage.”

Hoffman Jr. pointed out that purchasing Raindancer “was a decent opportunity for us. It’s a 100-foot exterior tunnel with four self-service bays.”

Stephen Hoffman, in an interview with *Northeast Carwasher* in 2011, said he had purchased the facility in 1985, at

which time he added four self-service bays. He had done a complete renovation of the carwash in 2009 that altered the exterior dramatically to ramp up its curb appeal.

The structure that housed the carwash before Hoffman Development Corporation took it over looked like a barn painted to have a weathered and peeling look common to many old Northeastern barns. Depictions of cars from the 1950s were painted at the roofline over each bay. At the front of the facility was a small pond with three waterfalls, galvanized steel beams and stones placed around planters, while the East side had a 40-foot garden.

Although novel, the retro-scape didn’t fit in with the look of Hoffman Car Wash’s other facilities, so Hoffman Jr. had the entire facade renovated, putting stonework along the bottom of the building, siding along the top and new equipment in the tunnel and the self-service bays.

“We did a complete facelift on the place,” he said. “We poured new concrete, put in new blacktopping, and brought in new landscaping.”

Hoffman Jr. noted while the new location is likely to

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*This site was transformed from a whimsical, retro wash to a state-of-the-art facility complete with a new facade and equipment.*



siphon off regular customers from other Hoffman Car Wash locations nearby, he's not worried about it.

"I'm sure we'll see some of our unlimited customers stopping in to use the new wash," he said, "as well as other regulars who live closer to this new one. But it also will generate new customers for us too, especially after people see the dramatic change we made to it and how the quality and look of the place has improved. We think it will do well for us." ■

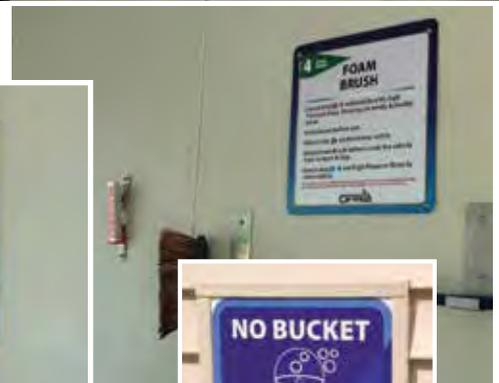
*Alan M. Petrillo is a Tucson-AZ-based journalist, a former upstate New Yorker, and contributing editor of Northeast Carwasher. He is the author of the historical mystery, Full Moon, several books on historical military firearms, and the nonfiction work, Ice Hockey in the Desert, all available on www.amazon.com.*



*Lush landscaping abounds at this refaced facility in Loudonville. A total rehab was completed in a month's time!*



*Clean, specific signage instructs customers on bay options.*



# NYSCWA Hits a Home Run with Mets Event

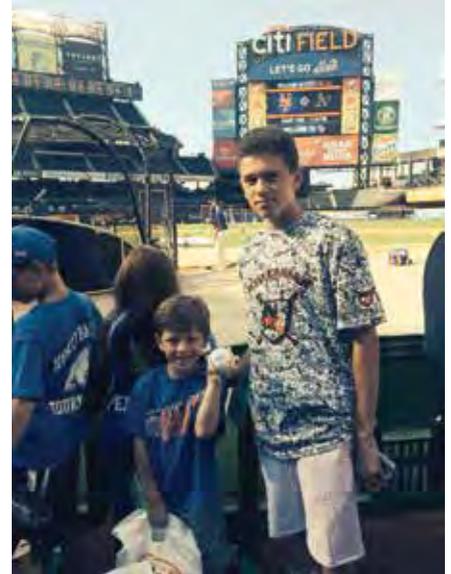
QUEENS, NY – The New York State Car Wash Association (NYSCWA) hit a home run again at its annual baseball event when the New York Mets took on the Oakland Athletics here on June 24 at 7pm. A picture-perfect day was capped off by the Mets' 10-1 victory over the Athletics. "Good food, great company and weather, and the Mets won!" said Mike Benmoschè, event coordinator. "It was a super outing enjoyed by all who attended."

NYSCWA President Walt Hartl echoed Benmoschè's sentiments. "Once again, our trip to Citi Field was a huge success," said Hartl. "A special thanks to our event sponsors, Grand Slam Sponsor Micrologic, Triple Play Sponsor Simonz USA and Ball Park Frank Sponsor Innovative Control Systems, for their support, as always."

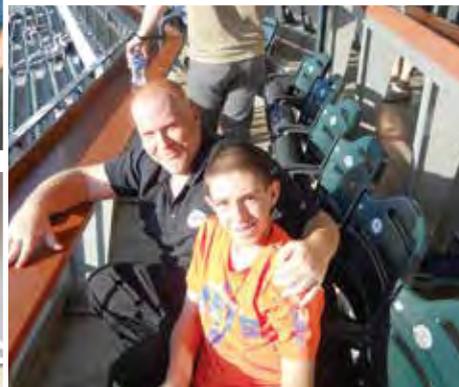
The annual event, initiated by Benmosche in 2006, includes entry to a private Empire Party Suite complete with a birds-eye view of the game, loads of ballpark food and drink and the chance to watch a major league baseball game in a luxury suite with friends, fellow carwashers and family.

The NYSCWA's next event is its Fall Membership Meeting & Carwash Tour that will feature washes in Westchester County, NY, October 14.

To learn more about the association visit [www.nyscwa.com](http://www.nyscwa.com)



*Annual Mets Event 2014*



*A great day was had by all!*



New York State Car Wash Association



# Profit & Loss January - June, 2014

<b>Income</b>	
Meetings Income .....	9,010.00
Membership Dues .....	17,525.00
Northeast Convention Income .....	30,243.32
PAC Contributions .....	299.00
Promotional Fees .....	1,364.73
Unapplied Cash Payment Income .....	500.00
Vendor Sponsorships .....	1,500.00
<b>Total Income .....</b>	<b>\$60,442.05</b>
<b>Gross Profit .....</b>	<b>\$60,442.05</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Advertising/Promotional .....	1,100.40
Board of Directors Expenses .....	52.22
Credit Card Fees .....	277.95
Director Fees .....	8,859.41
Insurance Expense .....	1,395.00
Legislative Expense .....	50.00
Legislative Fees .....	6,000.00
Meetings Expenses .....	8,392.19
Northeast Convention Expenses .....	55.88
NRCC .....	123.90
Office Expenses .....	293.61
Postage Expense .....	260.04
Printing/Graphics .....	176.00
Professional Services fees .....	830.00
QuickBooks Payments Fees .....	137.52
Telephone .....	39.12
Travel .....	413.62
Website Maintenance .....	775.00
<b>Total Expenses .....</b>	<b>\$29,231.86</b>
<b>Net Income .....</b>	<b>\$31,210.19</b>
<b>Cash on Hand</b>	
NBT Checking Account Balance .....	\$31,224.73
NBT Money Market Balance .....	\$45,108.33
<b>Total Cash on Hand .....</b>	<b>\$76,333.06</b>

Mike Benmoschè is with McNeil & Co., Inc. You can reach him at [mabenmosche@mcneilandcompany.com](mailto:mabenmosche@mcneilandcompany.com)

## NYSCWA Fall Membership Meeting & Wash Tour Heads to Westchester County! OCTOBER 14

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# NYSCWA Tour Auto Museum, Washes



The New York State Car Wash Association (NYSCWA) spent a picture perfect day, May 8, exploring the Saratoga Auto Museum, dining on a BBQ lunch and touring four exceptional Upstate New York washes.

The museum, which preserves, interprets and exhibits automobiles and automotive artifacts in Saratoga State Park, kicked off the association's Spring Membership Meeting & Car-

wash Tour that boasted a full motor coach of attendees, according to Walt Hartl, NYSCWA President. "You could not have asked for a better day for our meeting," Hartl said. "From the museum venue to the four exceptional washes we toured it was a really educational day."



*The museum preserves, interprets and exhibits a varied array of automobiles.*



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The tour visited the new Hoffman Car Wash in Amsterdam, a 120-foot express exterior tunnel that features MacNeil and AVW equipment, a Hodge conveyor and a 19-stall Vacutech free vacuum system. The site opened in December.

Next the group visited Rick's Robo Car Wash, also in Amsterdam, and operated by Rick Vertucci. This state-of-the-art touchless and friction wash features five automatics and one self-service bay. Opened in 2004, it is PDQ and Lustra equipped and less than a mile from the new Hoffman wash.

The third wash on the tour was Clean2o in Malta. This site is operated by Christian King and features a wash system that sizes each vehicle to maintain the precise optimum cleaning distance from the front, sides and back of each vehicle. The wash is open 24 hours a day and features PDQ equipment installed in 2011. The wash opened in 2000.

The final tour stop featured was one of Hoffman Development's highest volume washes that boasts either the first or second highest volume Jiffy Lube in the country consistently in Saratoga. The multi-profit center opened in June of 2000 and features a 170-foot flex-serve tunnel, three self-service bays, interior cleaning/express detailing and a six-bay Jiffy Lube ser-

vice center. It features AVW equipment, a Micrologic POS and 10 Coleman/Hanna self-service vacs. "There is no way you could walk away from this meeting and tour without learning something," said Hartl. "Every tour and meeting I attend is more than worth my time and money." ■

**For more information on the NYSCWA visit [www.nyscwa.com](http://www.nyscwa.com)**

*Continued on page 88 ...*



*Clean 20 in Malta boasts a state-of-the-art touchless cleaning system. It is operated by NYSCWA board member Christian King. Pictured are NYSCWA board member Rob Peter, Gary Baright and Dave Menken.*



*While at the newest Hoffman wash in Amsterdam we caught up with visiting dignitaries Victor Thomas and Fred Grauer with Vacatech. Their vacuums are a stand-out feature of this site. (top) The vacs are the backdrop to this candid of friends Doug Kleeschulte and Gary Baright (lower left).*



The Hoffman site in Saratoga is one of the company's most profitable washes.



Rick's Robo in Amsterdam is a diverse self serve that supports local sporting team and causes. Pictured are Long Island operators Alan Fleishner (far left), Paul Vallario and Nick Iorio (third and fourth) and NYSCWA President Walt Hartl.





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# Before It's Too Late, You May Want To Consider The Following...



By Mike Benmoschè

Did you know this?

- ❖ Six out of 10 employers in the U.S. have faced an employment-related lawsuit in the last five years.
- ❖ Legal defense costs can reach tens of thousands of dollars per employment case. The average legal bill for defending a groundless employment case is estimated to be \$20,000.
- ❖ Nationwide, more than 40 percent of employment-related lawsuits are brought against employers with fewer than 100 employees.

Employment discrimination case awards have risen from an average of \$100,000 to more than \$2,000,000 since 1984. At the same time, the number of lawsuits associated with wrongful termination, sexual harassment and employment discrimination has dramatically increased as well.

The employment-at-will rule states, "The employer can terminate an employee for no reason at all... but the employer cannot terminate for an illegal or prohibited reason\*." (\*This can vary by state.) Also, keep in mind that several federal laws, enacted over the past few years, can play a significant role in your company's responsibility and liability to your employees such as:

- ❖ Equal Pay Act of 1963
- ❖ The Civil Rights Act of 1991
- ❖ The Americans With Disabilities Act in 1992
- ❖ The Age Discrimination in Employment Act in 1967
- ❖ Title VII of the Civil Right Act of 1964
- ❖ Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1973
- ❖ Vocational Rehabilitation Act Of 1973

Combine these regulations with the many Local and state laws and you begin to see the major challenge employers have complying with these doctrines.

Many large corporations have Human Resource Departments and the financial means to keep current with these issues. But, most of the carwashers in our industry are smaller companies without access to these resources. However, there are some ideas that can be incorporated at your locations to help minimize this exposure.

First, begin by carefully assessing your hiring practices. Do background checks and look for references that you can verify. Offer a benefit package that attracts the best candidate possible.

Be sure to have written employee manuals that include employment practices policies and be sure the employees read and sign off on them. Make sure to train your employees regularly and post all federal and local laws in a conspicuous area of the wash. Keep and maintain good records that confirm your commitment to have this information available and to record any incidents that may give rise to a complaint. Answer all grievances that are reported to you or to the Managers and Supervisors.

This is by no means an all-inclusive list of proactive measures that should be addressed to avoid potential li-

ability, but it is a start. Ignoring these principals can lead to costly consequences.

Case in point: In an article from Labor Law Reports on July 19, 2006, it was noted that a carwash in Glenview, IL, was ordered to pay \$125,000 to resolve a sexual harassment suit brought by three employees at the wash. The employees alleged that their manager would follow them in to the wash-room and abuse them. The court found that the wash did not comply with mandates including training and posting to inform the employees of their rights.

More recently, I read an article in the June 2014 issue of *Professional Carwashing & Detailing* magazine where an employee was suing for wrongful termination. Apparently, according to the story, the employee was let go due to an epileptic episode at the wash. He is looking for \$150,000 in total compensation.

The next question you may ask is what happens when you do your best to comply with these rules and are brought into a lawsuit? Is there a way to financially protect your business?

The answer is "yes." Several insurance companies offer a policy that protects your wash in the event litigation arises from wrongful termination, discrimination, sexual harassment or other wrongful employment-related suits. It is known as employment practices liability insurance or EPLI. It is available as a stand-alone policy or, now many carriers can include this in your property and liability package. The cost for this has become much more affordable over the past few years. Every carwash owner who has employees should contact their agent and at least get a quote. Be sure to select adequate limits, as some insurers will provide very low limits on their enhancement endorsements when it is part of your package policy. You should also be aware that some of the insurance markets that offer this coverage even have sample employee manuals available and offer a direct phone service for questions regarding your exposures in the employment practices area.

In summary, the employer has a responsibility to protect their employees in complying with a multitude of doctrines enacted over the past several years. Initiating some of the preventive measures outlined in this article can certainly help to minimize the potential exposure. However, even the best plan does not prevent one or more employees from bringing a lawsuit against their employer. This can result in costly court costs even if a judgment is never rendered. Keep in mind the employment practice liability policy will respond to those expenses. Be sure you consider this as an option when you review your insurance plan. ■

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# Practice Everything

By Ray Justice

The word “Practice” jumped out at me from a book I was reading. It was used to explain that we need to “Practice” being happy just as we need to practice anything else we want to be good at.

This made sense to me, but I had never thought of it in this way before. I started wondering what do we need to practice, that we have not thought about before?

First, we have to assume that we practice because we want to improve or get better at something. Let’s discuss a couple of possibilities.

Listening.

Are we really paying attention or waiting to make our own comments?

Listening is a skill that can be improved if we are interested in doing so.

The “Practice” exercise here is to practice not thinking about other things while someone is talking to you and staying present, not thinking about the past or future. Focus on their words, and then ask them a question about what they had just said, most people will be thrilled. We are not used to being listened to.

Another is Speaking - Do others hear you?

Do you articulate clearly without just rapidly rambling on and on?

Does your story have meaning or just words to fill space?

Is brushing up on your speaking skills something to do?

This can be one on one or to a group.

If we are standing, do we need posture practice and image practice?

There is much more, but the idea is to focus on areas that could use improvement and practice imaging and doing it the way you would like to have it be.

Practice makes perfect, or at least improvement.

The more we practice, how we want to be, the more confident we are while we are doing it. That makes it more automatic and leaves attention available

for what is going on at the time.

Practice being how you would like to be known.

In this world of constant busyness, with so many things competing for our attention, it is difficult to be aware and present to the one person, idea, project or task at hand.

Are you thinking about yourself the way you would like others to think of you? Or, is your mind constantly going with criticisms, fault finding and attack thoughts?

Are you treating others the way you would like to be treated?

Everything you see, hear, experience and think mirrors back to who you are.

In a meeting, or get together, putting your attention on the other person, in a kindhearted way, is a wonderful practice for creating new and better habits for yourself.

Being kind to others allows you more leeway to be kind to yourself.

A common word being used in many current personal growth and training concepts is “Intention.” Designing, planning with a purpose and meaning by setting your “Intent” on what will happen, the outcome you expect or desire.

Create an Intention and practice being the best you can be and happy as you do it. ■

*“To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment.”*

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

*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](http://Thoughtcompass.com).*



Ray Justice

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## The Sun and The Rain

By Ray Justice

This morning  
There is rain

This morning  
I realized

I think of you  
when the sun arises

I remember your smile  
the twinkle of your eye

the joy in your voice  
the brightness of who you are.

Then, this morning  
I also realized

I think of you  
when it rains

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Refreshing

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the next growth

In more and more ways  
You are here

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The Sun and The Rain

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# Session Ends, Campaigning Begins

By William Y. Crowell, III

The New York State Legislature's 2014 Session came to a close on June 20. The political campaigns now begin in earnest as all statewide officials – beginning with the Governor and including the Legislature – are up for election in November.

On the day prior to the Legislature's adjournment, both houses passed S.5885-B (Savino) / A.8106-C (Heastie) to amend the Wage Theft Prevention Act (WTPA). The WTPA took effect on April 9, 2011, and was aimed at enabling employees to recover wages, which were unlawfully withheld by employers. Under a provision of the WTPA, employers are required to give written notice of wage rates to each new hire and to all employees by February 1 of each year.

This legislation, which is awaiting action by the Governor, would eliminate the annual notice requirement detailing certain wage payment information from the WTPA. Employers argued that this notice added a recurring burden without any benefit. This reporting requirement created a compliance burden on honest employers while not impacting

dishonest employers intent on evading payment of minimum wages and overtime or skimming of tips.

This positive change for employers came with other changes providing a significant expansion of the WTPA. The Assembly conducted a hearing in late November, 2013, to examine the effectiveness of the WTPA. Testimony indicated that wage theft continued and that there were problems in collecting from employers. Stuart Appelbaum, President of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union testified at the Assembly hearing that, "People are coming to us time and again telling us their wages continue to be stolen. We see it in the carwash industry every day." Unfortunately, this blanket characterization of the New York State carwash industry continues based on the misconduct of some operators.

The other relevant provisions included in this legislation are:

- ❖ Increased damages for failing to provide a new hire with a pay notice – from \$50 per week to \$50 per day, with maximum penalty increase from \$2,500 to \$5,000.

- ❖ Increased damages for failing to provide earnings statements – from \$100 per week to \$200 per week, with maximum penalty increase from \$2,500 to \$5,000.

- ❖ Authorizes the Department of Labor (DOL) to impose increased civil penalties on employers who are repeat offenders and have committed certain violations within the previous six years.

- ❖ Clarifies that a DOL investigation extends across the six-year statute of limitations.

- ❖ Makes it difficult to change ownership structure to avoid wage violation liability where substantially reopening under a different name.

- ❖ Holds the 10 members of an LLC with the largest percentage of ownership liable jointly and severally for all debts, wages and salaries owed to employees.

- ❖ Authorizes the DOL to establish a wage enforcement account from penalty collections to fund enforcement actions.

This legislation would become effective 60 days after signature by the Governor.

## Sales Tax Exemption Holds

The major accomplishment of this legislative session was for the carwash industry to avoid a repeal of the sales tax exemption for coin-operated washes. The issue of sales tax exemptions generally, and the coin-operated carwash exemption specifically, will again be examined in future budget years. To be prepared, the industry needs to gather information to accurately assess the cost of the exemption to New York State and also to provide an accurate industry profile.

On the horizon for the 2015 legislative session is a new push to increase the minimum wage, which was just increased in 2013. The Assembly Democratic majority and the Senate Independent Democratic Caucus, which recently announced a move to align with the Senate Democratic minority to form a new majority coalition, have made further increases to the minimum wage a priority.

As the election season is in full swing in New York State, carwash operators should communicate their position both on the repeal of the sales tax exemption for coin-operated carwashes and the extension of this exemption to credit card transactions to their elected officials. Please don't miss out on any opportunity to educate your elected officials on your business. ■

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*William Y. Crowell, III, is a partner with the Albany-based law firm of Whitman Osterman & Hanna LLC. You can reach him at 518/487-7677.*

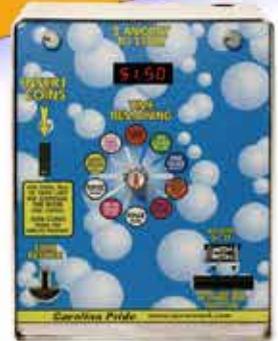


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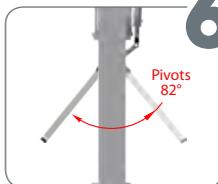
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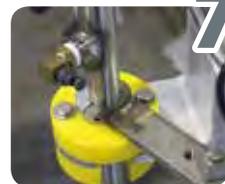
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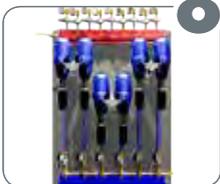
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