

northeast carwasher



**Boston Marathon Bombing Causes
Unexpected Wash Shutdowns**

The Carwash Show Doesn't Disappoint!

**How Does Steam Technology
Fit Into the Wash?**

A Gap Analysis Can Reinvigorate Your Business

What Towels do Other Carwashers Use?

Venus and Mars Talk Minimum Wage

Issue Log Can Serve to be a Handy Tool

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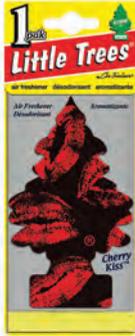


Black Ice
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72 Vend: VS10155

Grape
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72 Vend: VS10363

White Water
24 Card: VS53844
72 Vend: VS13844

Cotton Candy
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72 Vend: VS10282



Woven Whites
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72 Vend: VS10526

Strength
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Summer 2013

Vol. 18 No. 3

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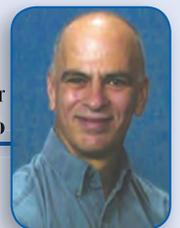
ON THE COVER

On the cover: Randy's Car Wash, Watertown, MA, the site of staging by police and first responders during the capture of the Boston Marathon bombing suspect Dzhokhar Tsarnev in April.

northeast carwasher



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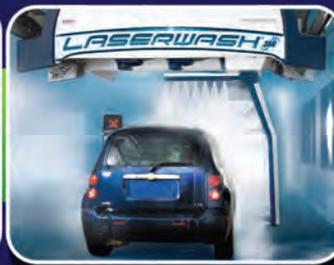


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The *Northeast Carwasher* is produced by Media Solutions, 2214 Budd Terrace, Niskayuna, NY 12309, in conjunction with the design firm Media Magic, 121 Loudon Road, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866, for the New York State Car Wash Association, New England Carwash Association, the Car Wash Operators of New Jersey, Inc., Connecticut Carwash Association, Mid-Atlantic Carwash Association and Carwash Association of Pennsylvania. Neither Media Solutions nor Media Magic assumes any responsibility for claims made in advertisements, classified or otherwise, listed in this magazine. **All contents property of Media Solutions. Reproduction in whole or in part without express written permission is prohibited.**

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There certainly has been a lot of loss in our industry recently. As many of you know we have lost the great Sonny Fazio and his carwash sole mate Mac McElroy, two industry greats who helped pave the way for much innovation and vision. I cannot do their contributions to this industry justice in this short space. Suffice it to say that they both have left a legacy that will not soon be matched.

We also lost tragically an East Coast chemical guy, Steve Ludman. Steve was known up and down the East Coast as a genuine stand-up guy who only sold you what you needed, and did so with a positive attitude and smile on his face. His sudden passing shocked his wide reach of friends and customers to the core.

In New York State circles we lost Elmira operator Leon Husisian. A long-time member of the New York State Car Wash Association (NYSCWA), Leon was an incredibly intelligent man of many talents. Prior to his run in carwashing, he operated a judo studio, painted and was a landlord. He was also an avid chess and backgammon player, and he loved to play the tables! He ran his washes with passion and dedication until his last days.

This last individual we recently lost has lived in Florida for many years now, but at one time was a key player at Sherman in Palmyra, NJ, active in the Penn del Carwash Association and a writer for this magazine. He was one of the first carwashers I met some 25 years ago when I first dipped my toes in the waters of this industry. John H. Hansen was a true carwasher. What I mean by this is that he lived, breathed and ate it 24/7/365, as did the three men I just mentioned. There are many of you like him out there. But for me, I knew him well and the lasting impression he will leave on me is one I will hold dear forever.

I got a call from John in early February. He left a message on my answering machine stating matter-of-factly that he was on Hospice and only had a few months to live, and could he provide me with any carwash industry background for the magazine; a history of sorts spanning his 40 years in the industry? I listened to the message several times in disbelief that someone in his last days of life would think to reach out and offer up this incredible gift.

How could I even consider accepting it? But then I thought about why he was giving it to me, and I knew that it was his way of coming to peace with his legacy and imminent death.

Being the complete basket case that I am, I called him and started crying the minute I heard his voice, which only proved to make him feel terrible for "burdening" me with his situation. After composing myself, I promised that I'd send him a list of questions. I emailed them a few days later. I didn't want to further impose so I waited without following up. He said he had a few months more, after all. Not even two weeks later, I received an email from one of his children, Katie, sharing the sad news of his passing on February 20.

*After John told me he was dying I sent him an email thanking him for his friendship and the knowledge he so openly shared with me over the years. I thanked him for contributing to the *Northeast Carwasher* and for his enormous contributions to this industry. He replied in an email thanking me and asking, "Why do we always tell the 'world' about a person after they have passed on instead of when they and their loved ones can hear it here on earth?" He went on to say some very kind things to me so that I would know, before I pass on, that he thought the world of me too.*

It's so true. How often do you just tell someone that they are impacting your life in a positive way? When is the last time you told someone that your life would not be as rich if they were not a part of it? Such seemingly small gestures really matter to people. I

Continued on page 39...

New!

Improve Your Profit Picture... with CarPics™ Vehicle Manager



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The CarPics Vehicle Manager displays pictures of each queued car on a color video screen at your conveyor entrance to increase production, reduce errors, improve controls and enhance your customer's experience.



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By providing a picture of each car on a screen at your conveyor entrance, your loader can visually confirm that the queue is correct and make changes quickly if it is not. CarPics empowers your loader to immediately fix a queue problem before vehicles go through the tunnel with the wrong services.

Bring Back the Rewash Guarantee!

A popular promotion of the 1990s was the rewash guarantee. Offered as bad weather protection, the guarantee provided some comfort that the consumer's wash won't be wasted if it rains tomorrow. Because CarPics takes a photo of every vehicle, the customer can be asked to confirm the vehicle they are driving. They can be shown the picture from their last visit if a discrepancy occurs. This control allows you to re-introduce a terrific promotion that will further hedge you against poor weather forecasts.

Speed Up Your Tunnel

Each car picture also shows any messages you want to attach to the purchase. For instance, if the service purchased includes wheel cleaning, a "badge" can be applied to that car's picture, allowing the loader to easily recognize what work needs done. No more reading receipts and slowing down production!

A New Productivity Measurement

The CarPics Vehicle Manager introduces a new statistic called "Prep Time." This stat is calculated based on the amount of time it takes to prep and send each car. On busy days, you may ask your loader to spend only 30 seconds prepping each car. CarPics calculates this stat and makes it available for the loader, the manager and the owner.

Double-Check Automatic Recharge Customers

When monthly pass customers return, CarPics shows the current picture beside a picture from that customer's last visit. You will immediately see if the cars don't match and can take action or press a "needs attention" button. This will prevent abuse of the monthly pass plan.

View Customer Names at the Tunnel Entrance

Any customer that you have recorded in the database and most credit card users will have their name displayed with their car photo on the CarPics screen. What a handy tool to greet your monthly pass users or your VIP club members personally, allowing you to cement the relationship with your best customers.

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READER'S VOICE

Dear Editor,

I just got home from vacation and went through my pile of mail and picked your magazine out of it first and read through it. I really liked the article on Mike and Rhoda Mountz. When I was told about their heart attacks I was saddened, but so glad to hear they are doing better.

Thanks for all you do for the associations and carwash operators.

Gary Baright

Foam & Wash, Wappingers Falls, NY

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

Send your thoughts to:

Editor, *Northeast Carwasher*

2214 Budd Terrace, Niskayuna, NY 12309

OR mediasolutions@nycap.rr.com

Caught In the Act!

A few weeks ago, a customer came into one of our locations, paid for his full-service wash and left his wallet on the counter. The next customer came in and paid for his wash as well and he left to retrieve his vehicle. The cashier then realized that the wallet was left on the counter, and she went outside to find the owner. Seeing the last customer she rang up, she asked him if he forgot his wallet. He answered, "Yes," and happily took the wallet from her. Luckily, through my customer tracking system, and surveillance system, we were able to identify the customer who took the wallet under false pretenses. The actual owner of the wallet filed a complaint and we provided the perpetrator's license plate number and photo to the authorities. The perp was found and justice will be served. I urge all operators to incorporate customer tracking, as well as a surveillance system, into their wash. This gives you the advantage to protect and keep your customers happy.

Stuart Markowitz, *Posh Carwash, South Amboy, NJ*

WASH VOLUME INDEX

We have taken the pulse of five East Coast operators to see where their volumes are compared to last year (YTD). For April 2012 to April 2013 we're happy to report that all but one operator was up with a high of +22 in the Poconos and a low of -4 in the Mid-Atlantic.

-4%



+22%

Thanks to Dennis O'Shaughnessy, Jr. in upstate New York; Doug Rieck on the Jersey shore; Dave DuGoff in the Mid-Atlantic; Ron Bousquet in Boston and Kevin Detrick in the Poconos.

A good team is a great place to be, exciting, stimulating, supportive, successful. A bad team is horrible, a sort of human prison.

-Charles Handy



Periodically, we will recommend books our staff and readers believe have value for our readership. You might want to check out these great motivational books.

"The Signal and the Noise: Why So Many Predictions Fail – but Some Don't" by Nate Silver.

"Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead" by Brene Brown.

"The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business" by Charles Duhigg.

If you have read anything notable, please share it with us at mediasolutions@nycap.rr.com!

Site on the Mind

When you click onto www.fredscarwash.com you are instantly hit with a crisp, bright website that features its red, black and white "Fred's Car Wash" logo. Centered on the home page are rotating ads featuring different locations and services offered at the washes. A large black arrow also draws your eye to "Join our club," enticing you to learn more about Fred's unlimited wash club.

The site also clearly outlines the wash's "Specials," "Detail," "Unlimited Program" and its "Headlights Restoration" service. Hum, headlight restoration. We'll need to learn more!

Other menu options on Fred's home page include "services," "locations," "specials," "programs," "detail appointment," "employment" and "contact us."

We love the clean look and feel of this user-friendly site. Great job, Fred!

Check out what makes this wash and detail center unique at www.fredscarwash.com

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**SONNY'S LOSES ITS FOUNDER,
SONNY FAZIO**

Sonny Fazio, 87, passed away with his family by his side on April 18. A car-washer since 1949, Fazio discovered his passion and spent each day of his career pushing himself, and inspiring everyone he encountered, to do more, and to try harder, said a company release. "We are saddened at the loss of our founder, grateful for the lessons he imparted, and glad that he is once again able to be with his beloved wife Gloria. Mr. Sonny inspired all of us to become someone better and his legacy will live on in everything we do," continued the release. "His energy, enthusiasm, and love so freely given will be deeply missed."

A private memorial service and funeral was held for immediate family members. Donations can be made in Sonny's name to the St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital at www.stjude.org. ■

**RYKO ENTERS INTO PURCHASE
AGREEMENT TO ACQUIRE MACNEIL**

Ryko Solutions, Inc., Grimes, IA, the largest provider of managed carwash systems in North America, has entered into a purchase agreement whereby Ryko will acquire MacNeil Wash Systems, Ltd. of Barrie, Ontario, Canada, a leading supplier to the tunnel carwash segment of the industry. Details of the transaction, which closed April 1, and establish Ryko as the second largest carwash equipment manufacturer in the world, were not disclosed.

The MacNeil brand name will remain intact, as will the company's manufacturing facilities in Canada. MacNeil will operate as a subsidiary of Ryko Solutions, retaining the staff expertise and operating flexibility that has made MacNeil a market leader for the past 30 years. Vince MacNeil, former CEO of MacNeil Wash Systems, will join the Board of Directors at Ryko, a move heralded by Steve L'Heureux, CEO of Ryko Solutions, as instrumen-

tal to the joint company continuing to build on its success in the conveyor segment of the carwash industry.

The union of these two well-respected companies, combining more than 70 years of industry experience, innovations and resources, ushers in an exciting new era for the carwash industry, according to a company press release. For Ryko, it presents an opportunity to more than double the company's addressable market through the addition of complementary product lines. It also provides Ryko an entry into the tunnel market segment for its technical service programs, cleaning products and marketing support systems that have proven to increase carwash counts and ticket prices for Ryko carwash operators. "This is an important event in our industry," explained Steven L'Heureux, CEO of Ryko. "While there have been previously announced consolidations among industry suppliers, this is the first that involves two independently strong industry players who are enjoying healthy growth.

"MacNeil has a well established reputation within the industry for delivering the best performing and most highly engineered conveyor systems and innovative profit enhancing accessories. By leveraging Ryko's larger R & D and marketing organizations, we see a tremendous opportunity to dramatically expand MacNeil's market share," said L'Heureux.

Ryko's customers will enjoy new equipment options through direct access to MacNeil products. Traditional MacNeil customers will have expanded choices through their MacNeil distributors supported by Ryko's end-to-end solutions, including the carwash industry's largest technical service network, and local parts warehoused throughout the United States. Customers will also benefit from a larger choice of industry accessories and support systems including water recovery programs and state-of-the-art activation and payment devices along with a new line of tunnel-specific cleaning products.

"This alignment of our business with Ryko allows us to continue our vi-

sion of delivering well-engineered carwash solutions that will bring sustainable profit to our customers," stated Vince MacNeil. "What is important to me in this relationship are the many synergies and commonalities in how we approach the carwash business. These will be advantageous to our distributors and customers, including a dedicated engineering team and significant investments in R & D, a joint desire to build on our heritage – a legacy of accelerated innovation – and a single shared culture centered around building one team focused on customer success." ■

For more information visit www.rykomacneilmerger.com

**PROTO-VEST LOSES ITS FOUNDER
LUCIAN GRANT "MAC" MCELROY**

Lucian Grant "Mac" McElroy, the founder and CEO of Proto-Vest, Inc., of Glendale, AZ, died in a car accident on May 8. He was 86. According to a press release from the company, "Even at the age of 86, Mac was a vivacious leader with a passion for life. He celebrated innovation and worked with an ethic that very few can achieve."

"Proto-Vest will strive to uphold the dedication and reliability that Mac was known for, so that we can honor him by continuing to deliver superior products that customers can depend on. Here's to a life well lived. Mac, you were one of a kind."

Those sentiments were echoed by Paul Fazio of Sonny's in Tamarac, FL. Paul's father, who passed away in April, was a long-time friend of McElroy. "Mac was one of those old school guys whose handshake was all you needed to seal a deal," said Fazio. "Personally, that is exactly how I routinely did business with Mac. He was a true inventor having a multitude of patents credited to him for things he had designed over the years. He and my father have a running joke in that Mac was eight days older than dad so he demanded that Sonny respect him as his elder. They routinely sent each other birthday cards each year

Continued on page 12...



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Newsworthy ... continued from page 10.

– some humorous, some serious, and some that touched on some deeply personal topics that only guys from their generation and with so much history could discuss. I am so fortunate to have gotten a chance to see Mac at the show in Las Vegas and tell him I love him and get another hug from him. I never would have believed it would be my last.” ■

For more information visit www.provest.com

ZEP TEAMS UP WITH CAR CARE STATION

Car Care Station, a vending machine manufacturer in Atlanta, GA, has entered into a license agreement with ZEP's Vehicle Care division, according to a company press release. The release stated that Car Care Station will vend products such as RainX, ArmorAll, Blue Coral and Black Magic in its machines. ■

For more information visit www.zep.com

RYKO SOLUTIONS MAKES FACTORY IMPROVEMENTS TO MATCH ESCALATING CUSTOMER DEMAND



Ryko Solutions, Inc., Grimes, IA, North America's largest manufacturer of carwash equipment, has made more than \$3 million in factory improvements to their parts fabrication department to meet unprecedented growth, according to a company press release. After enjoying 22 percent revenue growth in 2012, Ryko has continued the upswing with first quarter sales up 17 percent and carwash machine orders up 21 percent year-to-date through April. These figures do not include sales from MacNeil Car Wash Systems which was acquired by Ryko in April. "Our priority in adopting new technology is to rapidly scale

our production facilities to accommodate the increased demand we are seeing for our Ryko products, as well as the related parts required for Ryko rollover and MacNeil conveyor systems," stated Steven A. L'Heureux, Chief Executive Officer, Ryko Solutions, Inc. "A key benefit of our investment has been the opportunity to support MacNeil's production facility in Barrie, CAN, by manufacturing parts for their line of conveyor products thus improving product quality and providing faster delivery of spare parts to our MacNeil distributors and customers," said L'Heureux.

By stocking MacNeil parts in Ryko's 250,000 square foot factory in Iowa, customers will experience significantly improved uptime and enhanced profitability because of faster parts delivery, according to L'Heureux. "We are very excited about the future of the carwash industry and are committed to investing to ensure the Ryko/MacNeil brands continue to deliver on their promise of 'solutions engineered for customer profitability.'" ■

For more information visit www.ryko.com

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Industry Loses a True Carwasher In John Hansen

John H. Hansen, 76, died February 20, at Treasure Coast Hospice in Stuart, FL, after a courageous battle with cancer. He was a long-time employee of Sherman Industries before its merger with Hanna. He also operated his own business for many years, Advanced Carwash Systems. You will have read his articles in this magazine as he wrote for the *Northeast Carwasher* regularly, and then on occasion, for the past 18 years. His last article appeared in the Fall 2012 issue.



John Hansen

Born in Philadelphia, PA, he later served on the Zoning Board as an elected School Board member in his hometown of Palmyra, NJ. He served six years in the Air Force, and was an active member of VFW Post 10132 in Hobe Sound.

His career in carwashing spanned 40+ years, rising from a minimum wage factory employee to retirement as vice president of customer service.

His insight and passion for this industry is unparalleled, recalls *Northeast Carwasher* Editor/Publisher Suzanne Stans-

bury. "John was a carwasher through and through. It was in his blood," said Stansbury. "John was one of the first people I met when I got into this industry and his knowledge and insight was invaluable to my carwash education.

"Over the years, he became a close friend and contributor to this magazine. For those who knew John, and many did, I can dare say we are all the better for it. He will be sorely missed."

His survivors include his wife, Dorothy of Hobe Sound, daughters, Kathryn of Woburn, MA, Christina of Philadelphia; stepson, David of Niles, OH; stepdaughters, Dorothy of Dania, and Darla and Debra of Hobe Sound; six grandchildren, and five step-grandchildren. ■

Memorial contributions may be made to the Hospice Foundation, c/o Treasure Coast Hospice, 1201 S.E. Indian St., Stuart, FL 34997.

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Boston Marathon Bombing Causes Unexpected Wash Shutdowns

By Alan M. Petrillo

There are times in a carwash operator's life when circumstances dictate what happens on any given business day. One of these circumstances is the weather, but another was recently experienced by Ron Bousquet of Randy's Car Wash in Massachusetts soon after the Boston Marathon bombing.

Bousquet, the owner of four exterior Randy's Car Wash locations in Watertown, Waltham, Medford and Melrose, MA, was trying to get to his Watertown facility when one of the Marathon bombing suspects holed up and was cornered in that town, causing Watertown and surrounding towns to be locked down by law enforcement agencies.

"I was headed to my Watertown carwash early on Friday morning, around 4 am, and stopped at a Dunkin' Donuts to get some coffee," Bousquet said. "The door was locked, but they opened up and I got my coffee, and then drove down the road toward my carwash when I saw the police barricade."

Bousquet said he took a side street and drove through a couple of neighborhoods to try to skirt the police barricade (at the time he wasn't aware of the Marathon manhunt). "Finally, I was stopped by two Boston police motorcycle officers who told me to go home, that no one was allowed into the area," Bousquet noted.

Bousquet turned around, went home and turned on the news to see what had happened – the towns of Watertown, Waltham, Cambridge, Belmont, Allston and Brighton all had been locked down around 6 am to search for the bombing suspect, and within two hours, the city of Boston was locked down as well.

Law enforcement had shut down not only the towns surrounding the area where the alleged bombing suspect had been last seen, but also shut down all public transport – buses, taxis, Amtrak from Boston to New York City, and instituted a ban on driving.

"The police were going from house to house in the immediate area where they thought the suspect was located to determine if people were okay and to try to locate him," Bousquet said. "They wanted to find out where the fugitive was hiding and keep people safe at the same time. I think law enforcement at the time was first thinking of the safety of the people in the area."

One of the two individuals believed to have carried out the Boston Marathon bombing, Tamerlan Tsarnev, was killed in a shootout with police the night of the bombing, while his Chechen brother, Dzhokhar Tsarnev, escaped from police and hid in a winterized boat in a Watertown back yard, where he was captured by police the next day.

"The area was locked down for the whole day," Bousquet said. "It wasn't until about 6:15 pm that the police opened the streets up again. Two of my carwashes, in Waltham and Watertown, were closed all day. We were able to open up the next day, but the street where the guy was found in the boat was blocked off



Randy's Car Wash in Watertown, a Boston suburb, was the site of police and first responder staging during the hunt for Boston Marathon bomber, Dzhokhar Tsarnev.

for three days so the forensics teams could gather evidence. The property around the boat was locked down for eight or nine days."

Bousquet said his Watertown carwash location ended up being a staging area for law enforcement vehicles and personnel during the search for the second alleged bomber.

"Police cruisers and tactical assault vehicles were staging in our ramp area at the Watertown wash," he said. "We had a number of units from several different police jurisdictions. We saw vehicles from Boston, surrounding towns, as far away as the Nashua (NH) Police Department, state police, the National Guard and SWAT (special weapons and tactics) units."

Gary MacKenzie, owner of Quick & Clean Car Wash in Belmont, said his carwash was closed down on the Friday after the bombing, during the manhunt for the second suspect.

"We were shut down and lost a day's worth of business," MacKenzie said. "But we looked at it as if it were a rainy day that we couldn't do anything about."

Quick & Clean Car Wash is a full-service wash with one in-bay automatic, five self-service bays and a detailing bay.

"Randy's Car Wash in Watertown was the closest one to the action," MacKenzie said. "They were right down the road from where the search was going on."

MacKenzie said he contacted his staff early Friday morning to alert them not to try to make it into the carwash to work that day.

Bousquet noted that when the law enforcement agencies left his Watertown carwash after staging there for several hours, it was as if they had never been present.

"There was no damage to the wash or our outside area," he said, "and they actually left it cleaner than when they had arrived. We really appreciate the fact they put their lives on the line to protect us from harm." ■

Alan M. Petrillo is a Tucson, AZ, freelance journalist 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.



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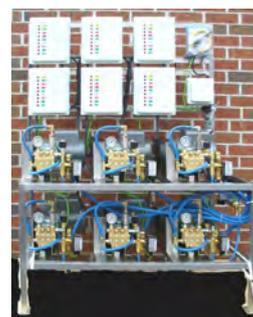


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The Carwash Show Doesn't Disappoint!

More than 5,900 industry professionals attended The Car Wash Show™ at the Sands Expo and Convention Center in Las Vegas in early May representing 9,000 carwash locations, nearly 2,000 more than in 2012, according to International Carwash Association President Mark Curtis of Splash Car Washes in Stamford, CT. “It is really buying power that is critical to any association,” said Curtis. “The vendors need buyers and because of consolidation you will always see that number shrink, but the number of locations will grow. As they did at this year’s show.”

In addition to encouraging wash location numbers, this year’s show saw a 12 percent increase in attendance at the educational programs.

But the highlight of this year’s convention had to be the keynote by NBA legend and entrepreneur Earvin “Magic” Johnson. “I tell you, he was the most unassuming guy you’d ever want to meet,” said Curtis. “He couldn’t have been more gracious from the moment I met him backstage until his handlers pulled him away to another event.”

This year’s Hall of Fame recipient, the association’s highest honor, was bestowed upon former ICA Executive Director Mark O. Thorsby who led a rebirth of the association for 15 years including a reinvention of the association’s governance and management practices. “I think Mark’s contribution to the association is substantial and significant,” said Curtis. “He brought a professionalism to our association and trade show that transcended what had proceeded him. He is a large part of why the show is the success it is today.”

In 2014 the Carwash Show moves to McCormick Place in Chicago, IL, March 31-April 2. It then returns to Las Vegas in 2015.



Earvin “Magic” Johnson keynoted The Carwash Show - 2013.



Activity at the Trans-Mate booth was steady throughout the show.

To learn more visit www.carwash.org



Miguel Gonzalez and Tom Hoffman, Jr. catch up on the show floor.



ICA President Mark Curtis.



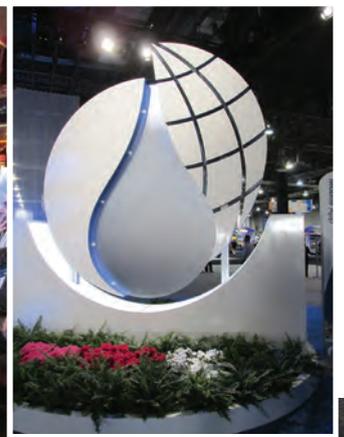
Former ICA Executive Director Mark Thorsby, this year’s Hall of Fame inductee. Thorsby was interviewed on his induction.

More Photos on Pages 20-21!





Team Washtech strategizes on the show floor.



Mike Benmoschè and Dan McNeil of McNeil & Co., Inc. and Squeaky Clean's Gary Sloan.

Some sights and sounds from an energized show floor.



Carwash Show ... continued from page 19.



Washworld's Shane Groff and Marty Andrews and Walt Hartl of Hoffman Car Wash.



CAR Products' John Millerick and FL Robert's "Smitty," Tom Diaz and Ryan Roberts.



Despite their booth being a "no show" for day one of the show, the troopers from McNeil & Company, Inc., Mark Nash and Mark Harrington, stand in front of their fabulous booth that finally arrived for day two! Welcome to the carwashing industry, guys!



The ICS booth is always a buzz with activity.



The CWONJ's Scott Freund and Mario Mendoza.



The Sonny's booth was packed with attendees.



The Blendco booth saw steady activity during the show.



An adorable Terry and Perry Powell.



Sobrite's Leo Zona and Buckman's Jeff Gold take a breather to catch up.



New Jersey's Mike Conte and Stu Markowitz.

**In 2014, The Carwash Show moves
to Chicago, March 31-April 2.**

www.carwash.org

How Does Steam Technology Fit Into the Carwash?

By Prentice St. Clair



During training of detail technicians at a carwash, the author demonstrates proper use of dry vapor steam to clean leather seats.

Whether your carwash offers express or full-service detailing, dry vapor steam can be a great help. A good quality, commercial grade steam machine can increase your detailing effectiveness and efficiency with everyday detailing situations. Moreover, with steam, it is possible to problem-solve special situations that normally take lots of effort and chemicals.

What is it?

First of all, let me explain what I mean by “steam.” The technical terminology is “dry vapor steam,” which refers to the fact that the steam is so hot that it has very little water content. This is in contrast to a hot water extractor, which sprays out water that is just below the boiling point of 212 degrees Fahrenheit. Dry vapor steam is well above the boiling point, often above 300 degrees Fahrenheit.

The advantage of steam for detailing is two-fold.

First, the hot, moist steam is an excellent emulsifier, loosening dirt and grime from the surfaces that it contacts. The soil can then be quickly wiped away with a towel.

Secondly, the high temperature of the steam kills germs on contact. As such, the surface is both cleaned and sanitized in the same treatment. In fact, commercial grade steam machines are increasingly being used in the medical industry for cleaning and sterilizing equipment.

Express Detailing with Steam

Proper application of dry vapor steam can be an effective tool for express mat, carpet and seat cleaning. The traditional method for carpets and mats is to use a hot water extractor. This method is effective but leaves the carpets quite

damp. Many operators put the damp mats into the customer's trunk, thus creating a potentially inconvenient situation.

The customer must lift the heavy mats out of the trunk upon returning home and place them in the sun to dry. Then the customer must re-install the mats. This assumes the customer remembers that the mats are in the trunk because if he or she doesn't, the result is stinky, moldy mats and trunk. This scenario seems awfully inconvenient for the customer when you really think about all that is involved.

Some mat washers will get the mats mostly dry, but such machines cost many times more than a good steam machine, and using them still requires the mats to be placed in the trunk or re-installed with paper shields.

In my opinion, an “express carpet and mat cleaning” service should include delivering virtually dry mats and carpets to the customer. With traditional methods, this is usually impossible. With steam, it is much more possible to deliver virtually dry mats and carpeting, because the steam has very little water content.

Now, there are limitations to what a steam machine can do. Heavily-soiled carpets that have deep, ground-in dirt are more effectively cleaned with a hot water extractor. Nonetheless, I would argue that a vehicle in such condition does not actually qualify for express service anyway, and needs to be properly treated using full-service detailing techniques off-line.



Dry vapor steam can be very effective at quickly cleaning lightly-soiled carpets and mats, often without using chemicals.

In cleaning cloth seats, steam offers similar advantages. The biggest problem with cloth seats is that spills and soil have ground into the foam underneath the fabric covering. Using a hot water extractor can get some of the soil out of the foam, but never all of it. So what you end up with

is the still-soiled foam pushing more of the stain back into the fabric covering.

So, instead of soaking that foam with a hot water extractor, try using steam, which will clean only the visible fabric covering, leaving the underlying foam dry.

No more wicking. If you must use the extractor to pull out a recent coffee spill, for example, and the stain reappears, use steam to clean the stain off of the fabric.

Dry vapor steam is also a great way to clean automotive leather, as it emulsifies grime, body oils, lotions from the leather surface while moisturizing and sanitizing the natural material. You will find that steam cleans leather better than any appropriate "automotive leather cleaner" chemical and brush combination. By "appropriate," I mean a pH-balanced

cleaner that is safe for use on automotive leather as well as a leather-safe scrubbing device.

All situations in which the resident detail expert has been able to achieve a cleaner leather seat have always involved the use of chemicals that are not appropriate for use on automotive leather, or the use of a scrubbing device that is too harsh for the leather coating. In either case, the leather may look great, but there is a concern about the long-term impact of such harsh methods.

Finally, steam can help with the "interior super clean" type of service that includes wiping of the dash, center console and door panels. Careful use of the steam vapor will quickly loosen caked-on spills in cup holders. It also allows for chemical-free cleaning of the other panels.

Continued on next page ...



Here, the typical "mom taxi" leather mini-van seats before and after cleaning with steam - no chemicals were used.



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Full-service Detailing with Steam

Steam is a standard part of full-service detailing as well. I actually recommend steam for all of the above applications, even if the car is receiving a multi-hour, bumper-to-bumper, restoration-style detail.

In such a detail job, it is common to encounter specialized cleaning situations in which steam can be a great ally. On the inside of the vehicle, steam is great for quickly removing gum, melted candy, and crayons from carpeting and cup holders. In combination with the correct chemical, steam can also be of great assistance in removing strange carpet stains that don't come out with standard hot water extraction – especially red stains. Steam also provides a relatively safe method for spot-cleaning headliner material.

And for that occasional customer who insists that the interior of the vehicle be cleaned with no chemicals, steam is your answer.

Steam can also be used to remove aftermarket window tint as well as old decals, lettering, and chip protecting film



Dry vapor steam literally melts caked-on tree sap allowing its removal with no harsh chemicals or scratching of the vehicle's paint.

on the front of the car. I have had great success using steam to remove caked-on tree sap – the steam melts the sap and then the remaining residue just wipes off with your favorite tar/sap removing chemical.

What Do I Look For in a Dry Vapor Steam Machine?

The typical steam machine has a main body and inside of which is a boiler chamber that slowly heats up water under pressure. The detail technician fills up the boiler, closes the pressure cap, and allows the machine to heat up. When the water has reached a temperature that can produce steam, a hose and nozzle is connected to the unit. Activating the nozzle releases steam from the boiler, through the heavy-duty hose, and out the end of the nozzle.

Now, let's be clear. When I say, "steam machine for detailing," I am talking about an industrial unit that is designed for commercial use. I am NOT talking about units that are being sold to the consuming public, made popular by endless TV infomercials.

There are four major differences between the commercial unit that we might use and the consumer steam device. They are:

1. **Output temperature:** Commercial units put out steam that is above 300 degrees Fahrenheit. The consumer units typically don't even get close to this temperature.
2. **Capacity:** Smaller portable commercial units typically have a boiler capacity of one to two gallons. This is enough to work on one or two vehicles without having to refill the unit. Compare this to a consumer unit, which typically has capacities less than 2 quarts.
3. **Durability:** The plastic housings and lightweight hoses of the consumer units will not hold up to the day-to-day battering that is likely to happen in a detail operation, which is typically hard on equipment.
4. **Functionality:** The consumer units typically do not come with the types of attachments that are essential for efficient and effective operation in the detail shop.

Most commercial steamers come with a large triangular attachment, perhaps five inches at the base, that has towel-holding clips on the top. This allows the detailing technician to wrap the head with a white terry towel. With the steam turned on, the whole contraption is guided back and forth across the surface to be cleaned. The steam comes through the towel and onto the surface, loosening dirt, debris and grime. As the towel glides across the surface, it takes up all that loosened material.

Dry vapor steam is one of the more recent technologies to enter the detailing arena. More and more professional detail shops are employing the use of steam. The carwash industry is advised to follow suit with this highly effective and efficient technology that can be of great help in both express and full-service detailing centers. ■

Prentice St. Clair, president of Detail in Progress, Inc., has been a consultant and trainer to the automotive detailing industry since 1999. He is a member of the board of directors and a Recognized Trainer for the International Detailing Association. He can be contacted at 619/701-1100 or prentice@detailinprogress.com.



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Daily Dozen Builds Trust with Your Team

By JoAnna Brandi

I talked with an old friend the other day and we got to reminiscing about a job we worked on together years ago. Because of some poorly handled acquisitions where the cultures of the companies were not particularly considered before merging them together, this company had what we called “relationship issues.”

When I think about relationships, I think in terms of the qualities necessary to keep them healthy. After 23 years in this business, I'm able to clearly see that by evaluating and improving five relationship qualities an organization can make great strides toward good health. And, as luck would have it, they form an acronym my clients are familiar with - TRACK. It stands for trust, respect, appreciation, communication and kindness. When all these qualities are practiced well, relationships thrive and prosper.

For a variety of reasons the client we were discussing had lost the trust of its people and trust is the kingpin when it comes to relationships.

There is a high price for distrust. It destroys morale and productivity. It costs in so many ways – poor performance, absenteeism, bad-mouthing to customers, politics and even theft. In low-trust organizations, energy is often diverted from the job at hand to “CYA” activities, gossip, frustration and anger. The worst part, I think, is losing the employee's full engagement in the company's mission. A disengaged employee can't possibly engage and excite customers to come back.

It takes a long time to rebuild trust, it's a slow but cumulative process. It's about deliberately rebuilding an emotional bank account a little at a time.

It's not for the faint of heart since it takes the discipline of scrutinizing your own actions and creating a safe enough environment where you can “call” people on theirs in such a way that they don't become defensive or shut down.

When it comes to rebuilding trust, it's important to let people know what is going on. This means good as well as bad news. This means news that reflects well and not well on the leadership team. It's a time to talk openly and honestly about the health and vitality of the company and the real challenges it faces, and how you feel about it.

As my friend and I were talking, I found myself jotting down some notes about the advice we gave to the leadership team back then. Here are some of the highlights of what we counseled them to do.

- ❖ Know that it's okay not to know all the answers right now. Leadership today is more about good questions than good answers.
- ❖ Communicate frequently about what you are doing as a leadership team to create a vision of the future – the big picture.

- ❖ Ask for input on the vision of the future and allow people to help create it.
- ❖ Connect the big picture to the changes you are making in their every day world. People want to know where they are going and they want to know why they do things and the contribution they make to the whole. (This is even more important today than it was when we gave this advice.)
- ❖ Avoid judgments, blame, cynicism and criticisms. Be really cautious about sarcasm – avoid it unless you really understand the person you are sharing it with – and the context in which it's contained.
- ❖ Listen actively. Be sincere. Learn from and admit your mistakes.
- ❖ Tell the truth, kindly, not “brutally.”
- ❖ Give feedback that is specific and useful.
- ❖ Make good on promises, do what you say you are going to do.
- ❖ Be as consistent as you can be in your behavior.
- ❖ Put aside your self-interest for the good of the group. A person that is always self-serving is difficult to trust.
- ❖ Create an environment where people's feelings count. When a company values people's feelings, health, self-image, ideas and personal values, they feel safe. When people are not afraid of being put down or laughed at in front of others, they are more apt to share their ideas and thoughts. When someone believes his or her input is appreciated they are more apt to participate and contribute. Actively encourage participation and reinforce it positively.

Perhaps the trust level in your company is already high – practicing this “daily dozen” will keep it that way. Perhaps the level of trust in your company is not quite where it needs to be, and in that case, using these ideas as a practice will help you rebuild it over time.

Trust is essential to healthy, happy relationships at home and at work! ■



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 or visit www.ReturnOnHappiness.com



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Bye, Bye Vegas!!!

By Doug Rieck

I am sitting on the plane heading home and have a lot of thoughts, all good, about this year's Carwash Show put on by the International Carwash Association (ICA) in Las Vegas. It has been an intense few days starting early and ending late, but it has been nice to be warm in Las Vegas compared to the frigid rainy Northeast weather I've been experiencing for far too long. Next year, with the show in Chicago starting on March 31, we can all wish for an early, warm spring. Chicago is a nice place for a trade show, but my favorite venue was San Antonio.

The keynote speaker this year was Magic Johnson. Simply put – he was “Magic.” He was a great speaker, sort of motivational, sort of business, and a lot of entertainment. Magic did not just stand up and deliver a talk, he got the audience involved by roaming the theatre and grabbing people for a few minutes of spotlight fame. Yes, of course, he talked about basketball and, of course, he had some fun poking at the Boston Celtics but his presentation flew by and was enjoyed by all.

One of the life truths he spoke of was that your competitor will make you better, and then he went on to mention his fellow legends/competitors Michael Jordan and Larry Bird. A great time was had by all in attendance.

What was overshadowed a bit was the business session prior, where ICA President Mark Curtis awarded former ICA Executive Director Mark Thorsby with the prestigious ICA Hall of Fame Award, the association's highest honor. Mark richly deserved this for his work as Executive Director during the tumultuous years from 1993 through 2008 during which our trade association was reinvigorated and modernized.

Education Strong

I was pleasantly surprised with the educational track of programming this year as well. The presenters were a good mix of outside-the-industry business speakers and carwash industry pros/visionaries. There was a plethora of riches and the issue was that of missing out on a good seminar while you were at another. The only thing missing was the old-fashioned early bird open forum where the audience fires questions at a panel of seasoned operators. (You'll be able to get that at this year's NRCC, Oct. 7-9, in Atlantic City!)

I'd like to comment on two carwash industry specific seminars. Please understand the rest were great, and that I know I missed some good ones due to competing seminars in the same time slot.

The first was done by Kevin Detrick, the founder of Innovative Control Systems (ICS) in Wind Gap, PA. His seminar was titled, “The Future of Carwash Control, Part 2.” This really was the definitive guidebook on building the carwash of today by using complete computer control in the washing process. The days of using a simple 12-channel or even a

24-channel controller are history. There is so much more that can be done. Every nuance of how the machinery interacts with the surface of the car was covered. Washing a car is a process analogous to any industrial process and we are missing out on so much. So many of us are still washing cars in a manner similar to Henry Ford's first Model T production line. Stop and think of the quality revolution with modern vehicle assembly plants using computer-controlled industrial automation. When using this process our quality and throughput goes way up, and costs way down. When Kevin displayed his cost reduction statistics and volume improvement numbers, I was stunned. To further add credibility to what he did, his test location was a 30-year-old sub par location, in an area with competition.

The easy take-away idea from this seminar was that customer experience is all important – especially in a ride-through environment. Getting back to his theme, can his ideas be implemented in all existing carwashes? Probably not, but they can be implemented in the vast majority of the viable carwashes, and certainly when building a new facility they should be used.

My other favorite seminar came at the end of Monday and featured Ryan Essenburg of Tommy's Carwash Systems in Holland, MI. His seminar was titled, “Five Tips for Building the Ultimate Express Wash.” I attended a similar seminar that Ryan gave at last year's show and again this type of washing process makes a tremendous impact on our industry, and it makes a lot of sense in the right setting.

The title was “Five Tips...” but it was way more than that, and every person in our industry building a wash should be required to attend. Yes, Ryan was suggesting that you use his equipment, but what matters is his concept and vision. So many times in our industry I see new carwashes being built in the wrong locations, facing the wrong way, laid out wrong, using old, stale ideas, costing way too money, and then big surprise, never operating profitably.

Ideas, design, planning and details matter. Apple has shown that consistently for years with their runaway growth and profits. We as an industry must learn that and control our destiny. This seminar stimulated me into thinking just what concepts I would use in building a new facility, and what I can transfer back to my existing locations. Again, a common thread running through is “customer experience.” It is possible through the siting, design and build of your carwash to provide a superior customer experience. The big catch is that most of this applies when building a new facility in an undeveloped area. The pictures of the wash he built are awesome and even intimidating. Comparing many of our carwashes to it is like comparing a Boeing 787 with a DC 3. The takeaway from this session is that proper planning and design can pay big dividends.

Equipment Progression

On to the good stuff – carwash equipment. This was not a show of surprises, but it was a show of progress. The mood on the show floor was mildly upbeat and there were buyers. Perhaps you could describe the show as being one of steady needed improvement of all the basics. I would like to add a disclaimer, however. I am going to be mentioning names of manufacturers and stuff I saw and liked. Regrettably, there was much I missed or will not write about for a variety of reasons, sorry. I really do love all of the equipment and the great vendors we have in this industry. I mean no slight and it was my loss in not seeing your favorite.

It was impossible to walk an aisle without tripping over a working display of the new waterfall color foamers. The carwash industry has spoken and it seems that this is the next big thing. Each supplier has their own take on it. Is it a wax? See the awesome Hot Wax & Shine display at Simoniz and get your picture taken with a Simoniz pin Up Girl, pick up a calendar, and learn more about merchandising your carwash.



Lava arches, like this one from Simoniz USA, were the new "it thing" on the show floor.

Is it a multi-purpose wax/soap/triple foam arch? Then look at one from N/S with their Bubbliizer. Another multi-purpose entry was from Belanger showing off their version right by the main entrance door. Their claim was ultra efficient chemical use and an easy rinse foam. Then, at Sonny's, their LAVA SHINE™ had a stunning, almost holographic image of LAVA SHINE™ being displayed through the foam. By the way, in the last issue I mentioned the LED image projectors, and yes, Sonny's was using one. Is this the next "thing" in carwashing, yes, without a doubt.

The customer "experience" with this type of arch is truly great. I retain my reservations on rinsing and where in the

wash process you place it, but I confess that I plan on adding it. I can imagine my kid's delight in going through the wash with rainbow foam. After all, carwashing is all about the "experience," after you take care of the basics.

On the equipment end, there seems to be two basic schools of thought in the design. The equipment that uses a built-in air blower and others that rely on carwash compressed air. I think that I prefer machines that use on-board air blowers, as it seems like that gives you greater control. I think that during a typical carwash day that would be an incredible amount of compressed air to use.

Sonny's was taking care of the basics very well at their booth. They were showing off all of their upgrades and ideas. Obviously, LAVE SHINE™ and finally the ultimate upgrade for their Tire Shiner, a PLC controller, which drastically cuts Tire Shine chemical use. This unit is available as a low cost retrofit kit, which makes it economical. They were also showing off their rotating tire shine applicator. Much of their equipment was showing LED colored lights to set off foam or cleaning, again, it's all about the "customer experience."

Then hot on the list for every carwasher was a new, easy clean foam generator. Supposedly, it generates a better foam than the traditional scrunchy pads. But its chief virtue being its ease of cleaning. This is much more important than it sounds because one of the more dreaded and delayed tasks in any carwash is to take apart the generators and clean the slime. If they are clogged you are wasting chemical and diminishing the "customer experience."

There were several vendors on the floor showing off new foam generators. Vaughn Industries, the creator of multiple plastic carwash parts ranging from rollers to dispensers, was showing off its new foam generators, which use beads and are self cleaning. Of course, they had a foam waterfall and their usual plastic rollers. Often at the NRCC they have given away plastic drumsticks to measure chemical remaining in drums. At the NRCC my kids got them and I had to steal them back for use at the wash.

ICS was, as usual, showing off its awesome POS computer controls and now they have their new line of tunnel equipment control racks. Their theory is to fully control every wash process. Well thought out, and very complete, right down to an air conditioning pod on the top to cool the VFD's and electronics. Their carwash knowledge shows with this detail, otherwise carwash employees would have to open doors and dust filled and choked electronics.

My favorite new piece of equipment in this booth was an oversized touch screen LED tunnel entrance display in a stainless steel cabinet. It shows the vehicle's driver what to do and the guide-on attendant can just touch it and use it as a Point of Sale. It's nice to dream.

Continued on page 30 ...

Doug's Perspective ... continued from page 29.

MacNeil was showing their latest creation, their newly reengineered and redone conveyor. It looks great, and this is no small thing for this company. They made their carwash engineering reputation on the original conveyor. This is also a big year for MacNeil because the new owner is Ryko Carwash Systems. Prior to this they had been owned by Vince MacNeil. Now this Canadian company will have a stronger foot here in the US. I am sure this should help improve cross border parts availability.

Another area of change was Ecolab's Vehicle Care Division being bought by ZEP. This was my first opportunity to talk with a lot of friends there and I came away with a very positive impression for their future. ZEP may be much smaller than Ecolab, but that is a very good thing for the folks at Ecolab.

The other carwash company that made its name with a conveyor is Hanna. They were showing their newly-reengineered conveyor at the front of their booth. This is one more sign that this is a year of refinement and improvement, great solid basics on the part of all.

LED Lighting

LED lights are now being used on a lot of carwash equipment in varying fashions, but all very positive. There is an endless rainbow of colors and uses but all improve the view from the car riding through. TSS was their usual overwhelming visual candy store of signage, lights and color. They have a lot of LED stick lights and other graphic supplies that we carwashers can use to improve our washes. There is just no excuse for poor signage at a carwash.

While I am talking about LED lights, let's discuss outdoor lighting. It is time. I have been on the fence for the past year or so about using LED area lighting. The prices have been awesomely high, but they seem to be coming down. I believe there is a decided curb appeal improvement. On Long Beach Island, near where I had temporary housing after Hurricane Sandy hit, there was a flooded out Wawa convenience store. It was closed for reconstruction but when they re-opened they had replaced all of their outside lighting and parking lot lights with LED fixtures. That store really stood out at night. The brighter bluer color temperature of LEDs is what makes the difference. When combined with the life cycle and lowered electric costs it is a Win Win!

There were several exhibitors on the show floor ranging from LSI with their Generation 3 parking lot lights, to Kleen-Rite with their LED light tubes for bays. I am in the process of checking out New Jersey State programs and seeing what is out there to help with the upfront financial cost.

While talking about energy efficiency let's not forget about our boilers and floor heat. Huron Valley Sales was showing off their Raypak line of 99 percent efficient condensing boilers and water heaters. The new standard is the ultra efficient condensing technology. We as homeowners have had it for years and finally our carwash technology has caught up. I know this is a tough sell with lowering natural gas prices, but at some point we all will need to change out our 25-year-old machines.

When we do, spend a little more and get the efficiency. Natural gas prices are bound to start up at some point. Don't you wish your car was 99 percent efficient on gasoline?

One of my favorite booths at the show was the National Pride booth because of a video display they had running. They had a video demo showing their self-service bay meter coin box in a head-to-head competition with an unnamed competitor's coin box. Obviously, their box resisted the four-foot pry bar and did not bend and pop open. It was fascinating in a perverse fashion to watch this happen in a well lit, controlled environment and see how quickly a pry bar can ruin a carwash operator's day. Any of us in the self-serve business more than a month or two have had their day ruined by finding this in the morning.

As an in-bay operator at two locations, I am always looking at carwash equipment. In-bays seem to operate on a much shorter life cycle than a conveyor wash. You can't add new wraparounds one year and the rocker panel brushes two years later. You have to replace an entire unit at once. Since I took the leap several years ago, and added a friction machine, I have been a fan of the touch machines. This year, PDQ introduced its three-brush ProTouch Icon in-bay. It is very nice, and looks to have great curb appeal to the carwash consumer. Great looks, full electronic controls, tire scrubbers and of course, LED lighting.

As a yin for the yang, you have Belanger with its Kondor® line of touchless automatics. This is a minimalistic machine compared to their Vector® or FreeStyler®. It features just a small center mechanical pod and your choice of one or two arms. Then, the fun begins. The arm or arms light up with LED displays to guide the customers into position. The arms auto reset when struck. Full electronic and Internet control, multiple cycles and profit options exist with this unit. As a long-time Vector® operator, I'm impressed. Touch free in-bays may not clean as well as touch in-bays, in my opinion, but there is a market especially for those of us with length-challenged bays.

This was a great year for The Carwash Show. There were some new and innovative ideas, but emphasis by all seemed to be a concerted effort to improve and refine. That's great and lays the foundation for our industry's future success. I personally and professionally have had a challenging past year and am looking to just improve my basics. I'm looking forward to the NRCC show in Atlantic City. Hope to see you there! ■

Doug Rieck operates Magic Wash and is a past president of the Car Wash Operators of New Jersey. He also sits on the CWONJ and NRCC board of directors. You can reach him at 609/597-SUDS or dougriek@gmail.com.



Doug Rieck

*Editor's Note: The comments and opinions in this article are of the writer and are not meant to endorse any one vendor.



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What Towels do Other Carwashes Use?

By Valerie Sweeney

Winter is long gone, and the summer washing season is shaping up nicely! Hopefully, there will be lots of sunny days ahead of us! I'm looking forward to walks on the beach after work, kids falling quickly asleep after a long day of swimming, followed by cocktails on the back deck...Ok, that thought just had me daydreaming for a second (since I'm writing this in April).

I've been supplying towels for quite some time now. In fact, this June marks 18 years for me. I'm not sure how I can be that old already, but it happened. Obviously, the towel trends have changed in the past couple of decades. When I first started, our company just began breaking into the carwash industry. We supplied some washes with recycled terry towels that we purchased from local laundry and linen companies. Most carwashes used either smaller, lightweight terry on the windows (like a bar towel) or they used hucks. In fact, I even remember a group of operators who still used newspaper on the windows.

Since American towel mills still existed, towel vendors would buy the overruns, seconds, and end-of-season col-

ors to supply to the carwash industry. The carwashes were getting retail towels, for much less than retail pricing. This trend went on for years. The only downfall was that we did not have much control over what colors/weights we received, so towels tended to change from order to order. In fact, old towel tips of mine included, "Why Can't I Get The Same Towel as Last Time?" and "Domestic Towels vs. Imported Towels."

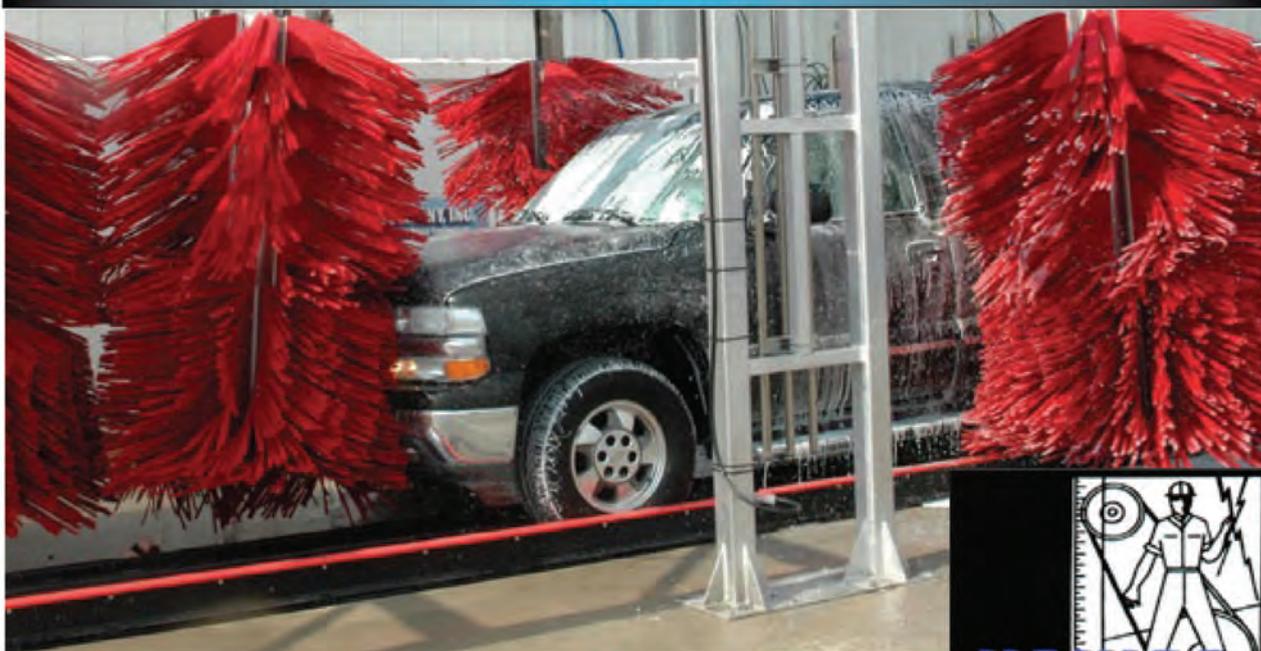
Well, a lot has changed since then. Most of the towel mills have closed, and product is now manufactured overseas. Imported towels used to be viewed as inferior to American, but once all the big towel guys opened overseas, many imported towels became the same quality as domestic.

Another big change was that carwash towel vendors could start having towels made in the qualities, weights and colors that they desired providing more consistency to the end user.

The Introduction of Microfiber

The biggest change to the industry was the introduc-

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tion of microfiber. Microfiber has become one of the leading towels supplied to the carwash industry due to its versatility. Many carwashes switched from hucks to microfiber on the windows, while others switched from terry body towels to micros, and many just added it to their mix.

I thought it would be interesting to take a look at what towels people are using now. I took a random sampling of 100 carwash customers nationwide and looked at the types of towels they have purchased within the last year. Here is what I found:

Terry Towels	68%
Microfiber	45%
Huck/OR Towels	19%

As you can see, many washes use a combination of several types of towels. I can only imagine that the mix was much different 15 years ago. I know that almost 50 percent of carwashes did not use microfiber, and I assume the number of washes that utilized huck/OR towels was higher.

I also thought it would be interesting to take another

random sampling of 100 carwashes located in the Northeast, just to see if there were any differences in our region. Here is what I found:

Terry Towels	68%
Microfiber	47%
Huck/OR Towels	26%

The results are very similar, except it looks like the Northeast has more huck towels still intertwined in their "towel toolbox." Many carwashes do use the same type of towel throughout their wash, but many will use different sizes, styles or colors for various tasks. What's your towel mix? ■



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

Valerie Sweeney

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*Dear Venus and Mars,
What impact will the increase in the minimum wage
have on our industry?*



Linda Feriod

Venus Says

Unfortunately, when a business owner discusses this topic at a cocktail party with people who have always received a paycheck from an employer they look like an unreasonable selfish cheapskate. They would see the business owner as a rich person living the life of luxury and not

wanting to share his wealth with his hard-working employees who help make the business successful.

How can somebody ever expect a person to work hard all day and their reward is being paid minimum wage? Most would question if anyone really got paid only minimum wage these days, however? And if they knew somebody who was working for minimum wage, it would most likely be one of their teenagers.

Employees usually feel that they work hard and don't get paid enough and the employer is making big bucks. What most don't realize is that being a business owner is risky and they have to put up large amounts of their own money to establish their business. Successful businesses have a budget they need to keep to continue to be successful. And when business is slow and cuts need to be made, wages and salaries are the first to be reduced. We hear about major corporations announcing huge amounts of pink slips frequently these days in a measure to reduce losses.

When somebody like myself hears this topic being discussed it is hard to say what I would do if I had to vote on such a topic. I have been on both sides as an employer paying out wages, and also as an employee who at times felt I should have been paid more. The bottom line is if they increase the minimum wage it would be great for those who are fortunate enough to get the increase in their paycheck. I am sure they will appreciate having more money in their pocket. However, some minimum wage earners will find a pink slip in their next paycheck. Some businesses may find it hard to stay in business if they can't find a place in the budget to cut back if they can't reduce their payroll. Raising minimum wages will reduce the amount of jobs available which I feel will hurt the economy as we all know jobs are the number one thing we need for a strong, vibrant economy. ■

Mars Says

The carwash business is made up primarily of minimum wage employees at the entry level. The increase from \$7.25 per hour to \$9.00 per hour will be phased in over three increments. It will first go to \$8 per hour on January 1, 2014. Then it will rise to \$8.75 per hour one year later and then finally to \$9 per hour one year after that. That is a 23 percent increase in payroll over the course of two years. Additionally, the new bill in New York State will also require paid sick leave for minimum wage employees of up to two weeks per year. So through that into the mix and expect your payroll expense, which is already your highest expense, to skyrocket.

The carwash industry, I believe, is going to be turning toward increased automation. You will see more locations switching from full service to flex service or express exterior models. I am in the process right now of converting one of my full-service locations to flex service to plan for the future. The end result will be less jobs available or loss of hours for many minimum wage employees. You can expect to pay more for many services such as a carwash or anything that requires the use of minimum wage employees.

You combine this with the increase costs of health care, taxes, fuel and supplies and you can surely expect your profits to diminish. But the transition toward increased automation I think will be a positive step for our industry. The equipment manufacturers will surely be happy as their sales should increase. The technology is so good now that you can run a carwash with as little as one employee at times. The advantages of automated labor vs. human labor are endless. Staffing a carwash dealing with all of the human resource issues that go along with it can be a nightmare for a small operator who does not have a human resources department. In addition to less payroll costs and less paperwork, an operator can offer customers lower priced washes to drive up



Paul Vallario

Continued on page 39...

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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It's All In a Day's Work

By Gary Sokolowski

Most of us would like to think that multitasking is the way to accomplish more in any given day. The reality of this practice is that many people end up starting a lot of different projects and never finishing any of them. It takes discipline and concentration to truly be a multitasker. Instead of bouncing around from one project to another, try

to focus on the task at hand and leave the next project for later. This is true no matter what the task or job you are trying to accomplish.

In a field environment, whether you are doing a service call or installing a completely new system, keeping the big picture in mind, yet still concentrating on the little things will eventu-

ally help you accomplish the entire job. We all know doing a simple service call can turn into a major overhaul. Staying focused and resolving issues in the proper order of operations for any task can make even the toughest of jobs seem easy.

The same is true for those of us who install equipment and have the ability to understand and realize the interconnection between equipment, other contractors, and the owner's expectations. While being able to put something together is an admirable accomplishment, knowing all of the aspects of a project, and how the finished job will work, is something very few have been able to achieve. The big picture is made up of many small snap shots along the way.

This is also true for those who are in the sales side of our industry. While there are some who think that getting the check is the sale, a true multitasker understands that is the easy part. Knowing the details, options and impact of what you are selling is more important than actually selling something. It has long been known that there are good and bad salespeople. Being someone who has the understanding and experience to fully comprehend the scope and project at hand, and can see it through, is a real multitasker.

In your business, I am sure there is someone who seems to be involved with every part of the daily routine. This person is most likely the one with the messiest desk that jumps around from department to department trying to get things accomplished. While many would think this person is doing most of the work, in reality, he is just making sure that everyone else is doing their job. This can be very frustrating for some, but if you stand back and look at the big picture of what this person is doing, he is focused on the end result and doing many little things in an orderly fashion to complete the project or projects at hand.

In a way the phrase, "Seeing the forest through the trees" is a good way to handle your daily tasks and respon-



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Continued on page 39...



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A Gap Analysis Can Reinvigorate Your Business

By Perry Powell

Recently, I took on a new client with several locations and many employees. The operations and profits were healthy, but upon looking a little deeper, things became fuzzier. I could not tell who was reporting to whom in the organization and I could not see that there was a cohesive method to the flow of some of the work.

A business with employees is like a living, breathing organism. All of the nerves, joints and ligaments must work together, as a single unit, in order to produce the results needed.

This contrast between what can be known about business excellence and the unknown confusion of this particular client's business, led me to the conclusion that we may not know everything we need to know or think we know about this business and its flow of work.

The solution was to conduct a gap analysis. A gap analysis or GA is a method of studying an enterprise to define where there are gaps in the flow of work. These breakdowns in communication and follow through can lead an organization to appear to customers to be fragmented and inconsistent in production and quality.

Here is how the GA was conducted. We developed a form that asked for name, position and supervisor. Next, we asked for their job description and if they supervised any employees. Then we asked that they name the employees and give their job descriptions. We conducted the GA with every employee above an entry-level line worker.

After all analysis was completed, we laid the GA's out like a family tree and began the forensic discovery phase. The results were telling.

Observation 1: Broken hierarchal structure.

The chain of command did not exist. The general manager recorded that he was directly responsible for 14 people. The idea of a military-style supervisory role did not exist. The employees may have had names like manager and assistant manager, but they all reported to the general manager including the assistants, who would normally report to the manager.

This was interesting, as one manager reported he also was directly responsible for 14 people. The hierarchy was a flat line. This monolithic management style did not help with the free flow of information from the top down or with the appropriate accountability for subordinate's responsibilities.

Observation 2: What's my job anyway?

When the family tree was examined, there was no consistent understanding of the employees' role in the organization. The descriptions from employees, of their roles and responsibilities varied, not only among employees with the same job title, but within a single location, as well as, from location to location.

To make matters worse, the job descriptions between

the employees and their supervisors, in most cases, had no resemblance.

Observation 3: I can't train my replacement.

The lack of connectivity produced a lack of training. A lack of job security, on the part of the members of the staff, left them feeling as though they needed to leave their subordinates ignorant. If the manager properly trained the subordinate, they might eventually be replaced by the very person they worked so hard to train.

Many employees used the job description process to "rat out" their subordinates, even though we did not ask a single question related to character or conduct in the GA forms.

Observation 4: Ogre!

The general manager was egocentric in his management style, and regularly pounded the desk and threatened the jobs of everyone, including the company's prized employees, many of whom were in their '50s and had been with the company for many years.

Observation 5: He is going to kill us all!

The employees of this organization felt that the new consultant advising the owner would surely fire every last one of them, an idea that was propagated by the general manager in his desk pounding. It took a while before the employees realized it was getting better and the paranoia receded.

Solution Number 1: Pull the tooth and the pain will go away!

The tooth in this case was the general manager and while this was not the only solution that the GA pointed to, it was the overwhelming first move that needed to be made, and things immediately settled down! Pressure instantly started going away. Employees started talking and telling us about being fired and rehired in the same day, multiple times.

Today this business is in full recovery mode. Many changes have been made and the profits are soaring as unneeded fat has been trimmed and revenues per car are soaring.

It is easy to sit on the outside and say that you would never allow your business to get in this condition, but without closer, unbiased, third-party review, how will you know if you aren't already there? I cannot assure you that gap analysis will totally heal all that ails your business, but it is a great place to start! ■

Perry Powell is a carwash consultant. He specializes in structuring quick turnarounds, business models, management methods and sales processes using the consumer behavioral science of Neuro-Marketing. He can be reached at 817/307-6484, perry@perrypowell.com or www.perrypowell.com.



Perry Powell

As I See It ... continued from page 6.

learned from John's daughter's email that he shared the words that I had emailed to him with his family before he passed. He read them the words I had shared because they really mattered to him.

John died of COPD, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, a lung disease that causes breathing to worsen over time (copd.com). Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of COPD. My father died of the same disease and although he had quit smoking years before the symptoms arose, it took his life as well 10 years ago.

If you walk away with anything from this column, please make a note that smoking is the devil and it will kill you or someone you love. And, then take a moment and tell someone you care about that they matter and that your life is richer for having them in it. It will only take a moment, but they will thank you and it will matter to them. If you're really lucky, they'll do the same for you.



Suzanne Stansbury

Suzanne Stansbury
Editor/Publisher

Mars ... continued from page 34.

volume. With the use of more automation an operator can provide longer hours for customers.

The bottom line is the increase in minimum wage is going to result in less employees at carwashes and a transition from full service to less labor intense segments and more business for the equipment manufacturers. ■

Gary's Tech Tips ... continued from page 36.

sibilities. No matter what the job you hold is, try to see the finish line while thinking about every step there is to getting there. There is a fine line between having tunnel vision and a broad view of things. Stay focused, pay attention to what you are doing, and always remember there is a bigger picture to everything we do. Work hard, work smart and always keep the next step in mind for when you have accomplished the first one. ■

Gary Sokoloski owns Centerline Carwash Sales and Service in Wales, ME. He can be reached if you have questions, comments or suggestions for future articles at 207/375-4593 Office, 774-248-0171 Cell, and at gscarwash@gmail.com.



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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

The Carwash Association of Pennsylvania (CAP) has engaged in a six-month contract with the consulting firm of Long & Nyquist to amend current sales tax laws as they apply to carwash businesses in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

After assessing the current political climate of Pennsylvania's General Assembly and Administration with Long & Nyquist, Harrisburg, PA, a plan of action was established to address the Pennsylvania tax code as it is currently written.

The Governor's proposed 2014 state budget bill presented an opportunity that CAP will use as a vehicle for tax code amendments. CAP has a narrow window of opportunity to convince the Administration and General Assembly leaders that a carwash tax exemption is a worthy initiative to strengthen small business.

What Is CAP Asking For?

CAP's request will be for everything... Exemption of sales and use tax on carwash services, exemption of sales and use tax on products, including water and electricity, required to provide the services of a vehicle wash, wax or detailing.

The Board has agreed to take a flexible approach with this issue. Understanding that the industry may have to compromise in one area to achieve a gain in another area, the CAP board will carefully consider each and every offer submitted by the legislature in an effort to make a positive gain for the industry in the Commonwealth. While the industry may not walk away with everything that is requested, the objective is to "move the ball forward." Often agreements are made with an understanding that initial efforts are only the first step in achieving long-term goals and that additional considerations will be requested by the industry in the future.

Get On Board!

Have you paid your 2013 Association dues? We need every operator and industry vendor involved to make an impact. No more of this attitude, "What do they do for me?" What are you doing to strengthen your industry?! The reality is that we are stronger in numbers, and there is true benefit to working collectively, sharing best practices and operating as a cohesive unit. To operate contrary to this is a true disservice to your business and your industry. You need to put on a uniform and get in the game! Additionally, these efforts take a significant financial commitment by CAP, and we need everyone in the carwash industry in Pennsylvania to step up financially to fulfill this short-term financial obligation. For this reason, we are offering a variety of membership levels that can be found on our website: http://www.pacarwash.org/membership. Upcoming events include our annual picnic and golf outing on September 26, and a clay shoot scheduled in early fall. Make sure you are there and bring a friend!

Stay Connected

We have everything up and running on the CAP website. Members can renew or purchase memberships, register for events, submit content for classified ads and more. We will strive to keep information on the site current so that members stay up to date on all initiatives and activities of CAP. Make sure you check the site from time-to-time and make sure the CAP office has your current email address.

Handwritten signature of Keith Lutz

Keith Lutz
Carwash Association of Pennsylvania President

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26TH



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Vendors: Use this opportunity to network with customers in a casual atmosphere!
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Golfer Name _____ \$ _____

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 Includes one player, tee sign
 & appropriate recognition in event materials \$ _____

Door Prize Donations: _____
 Please indicate if you would be able to donate items for door prizes

Highlights

Cumberland Golf Club, 2395 Ritner Hwy, Carlisle, PA
 Registration starts at 9:00 am
 Shotgun start at 10 a.m.
 Four-person scramble, best-ball format
 Membership Picnic 3:00 p.m.
 Networking, Announcements & Prizes for winning team
 Proceeds go to Carwash Association of PA



Please complete registration form, include your address & return with payment by September 19th, to CAP,
 430 Franklin Church Road, Dillsburg, PA 17019. Make all checks payable to Carwash Association of PA.

For registration information, call Dawn Keefer at 717-648-0159

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Scott Funk

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Final wash numbers were not available at time of reporting. Please check graceforvets.org for final total.

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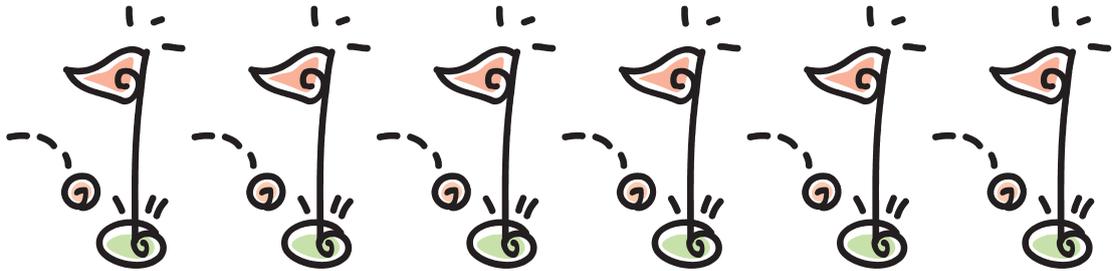
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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26TH



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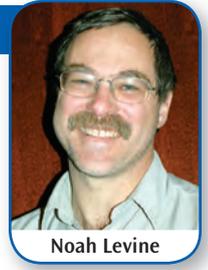
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Carwash, Q-Lube, Detailing & Self Storage

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- CHAT** with other operators online
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TalkCarWash.com

TalkCarWash is a free online community for car washers. Growing by 3 members daily and receiving over 90,000 page views per month, come see what you are missing.



Noah Levine

CONNECTICUT CARWASH ASSOCIATION

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E-mail: mediasolutions@nycap.rr.com
Contact: Suzanne L. Stansbury, Executive Director

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- *James Rossini Mark Curtis
- *Bruce Sands Doug Newman
- J.J. Listro Paul Ferruolo
- Alan Tracy Tom Mathes
- Dwight T. Winter Daniel Petrelle
- Anthony Setaro Joe Tracy
- *Steve Ludman
- *Deceased

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

Like most operators, I constantly stress safety in every aspect of the carwash business. However, when incidents happen we tend to downplay them if we can. I'd much rather deal with a customer complaint than navigate the maze of medical workman's comp forms from an employee mishap. Occasionally, the smallest incident balloons into a major episode.

Early this May, I was performing an interior detail on a Town and Country van. It had some window decals for a residence-parking permit on the driver's side windshield stuck way down near the dashboard. I used a long handled razor blade to scrape them off. Instead of putting the razor blade away immediately, I left it on the passenger seat while I finished cleaning the windshield. As I reached toward the middle of the windshield, my right hand just grazed the corner of the razor, poking a 1/8" hole in the palm of my hand near my thumb. Fortunately, I didn't get any blood on the van's interior. I (sort of) promptly rinsed off the cut, put a bandage over the wound, and went back to detailing the van.

That was on a Friday. By late that day the bandage had fallen off and I all but forgot the incident. A busy weekend passed without a thought of the detail job. However, I awoke Monday morning with a painfully swollen right hand and wrist. I couldn't grasp anything or turn my wrist without experiencing pain. I inspected the tiny cut from the Friday before, but it had scabbed over and looked benign; no tenderness, nor redness. I figured I must have twisted my wrist in my sleep. I tried a succession of home remedies starting with hot compresses, and cold compresses, ending with painkillers with anti-inflammatories and elevating the hand. Nothing seemed to work particularly well.

On Wednesday (at the strong urging of my loving wife) I phoned the doctor. Four hours later I showed Dr. Allard the swollen hand/wrist expecting a recommendation of cold compresses and prescription strength anti-inflammatory drugs. She instead ordered blood work and x-rays. Nothing remarkable appeared in the x-rays or blood work so she started me on a big gun antibiotic.

By Friday, the swelling had worsened and extended to the elbow. The doctor recommended going to the hospital Saturday morning. My wife recommended going NOW. Friday evening I drove to the emergency room. Diagnosis: cellulitis or a skin infection caused by bacteria. If it is not treated with antibiotics, the infection can spread to the blood or lymph nodes and become deadly!

The likely culprit was the tiny cut on my palm received a week ago Friday. Four days in the hospital on intravenous antibiotics later, I'm as good as gold. Well, good as I ever was. The moral of the story is to take care of all cuts and bumps, no matter how insignificant you think they might be. They can become major issues quickly. Treat them as if they are all major mishaps because, as in my case, they can become really serious really fast.



Noah Levine
Connecticut Carwash Association President

Industry Loses a True Professional In Steve Ludman

Long-time Blendco Systems Northeast Regional Manager Steve Ludman, 51, of Holtwood, PA, died suddenly on March 12. He spent the better part of a decade with the company and recently served on the Connecticut Carwash Association (CCA) Board of Directors.

“Although Steve left recently to pursue other opportunities, many of us here at Blendco, as well as many Blendco distributors, kept in close contact with him,” said Kelly Swope, marketing programs coordinator at Blendco. “We are very saddened by this tragic loss and send our prayers to Steve’s family.”

Steve’s personality and positivity touched many. Including CCA board member Bob Rossini. “As of March 8th his new motto was, ‘You are not passing through a door, you are climbing the stairs to success,’” said Rossini. “On March 12th he passed away.

“Success comes from action. Passion comes from within. Those were the last words he gave me before he passed away.”

Steve most recently worked for Stoner, Inc., Quarryville, PA.

He was born in Ridley Park, PA, and is the son of Edward and Charlotte Mangeck Ludman. Steve is survived

by his wife Cynthia Lynne, his two children Steve of Lampeter, PA, and Jenna Ludman of Holtwood, PA, granddaughter Averie Ludman, brothers and sisters Kirk Ludman of New Providence, PA, Eric Ludman of Bensalem, PA, Karen Ludman of West Chester, PA, Patty Alvanitakis of Landenberg, PA, and Kathy Szaplicki, of Glen Mills, PA.

The family asks that contributions in Steve’s name be sent to the Wounded Warrior Project, 301 Grant St., Ste. 900, Pittsburgh, PA 15219 or online at wounded-warriorproject.org.



Steve Ludman

The CCA Board of Director’s extends its deepest sympathy to Steve’s wife Cynthia and her entire family at this tragic loss.



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Submarine Car Wash Takes Name From Groton Navy Base



By Alan M. Petrillo

Submarine Car Wash and Detail Center in Groton, CT, isn't seeking to corner the market washing undersea vehicles, but rather takes its name from the nearby Naval Submarine Base New London, what the U.S. Navy calls "the world's first and finest submarine base."

The carwash's owners, Shlomi Peer and Ofer Tal, attempt to match the "first and finest" part of the base's motto by making its customers their number one priority.

"At our carwash, the customer is king," Peer said. "They are our first priority and put the food on our table. We give them the best quality wash we can and guarantee our washes for up to 72 hours after they washed their car."

Submarine Car Wash and Detail Center, at 591 Route 12, is a 100-foot full-service tunnel wash with a large indoor detailing center and attached gift shop that sells auto-related accessories.

Peer and Tal bought the 1990s-era shutdown carwash location in 2007 and immediately invested in a complete renovation of the structure and replacement of all the equipment, Peer noted. Using direct mail, newspaper and cable television advertising, the partners generated enough brand recognition for Submarine Car Wash that they now wash approximately 30,000 cars a year.

Tal has been in the carwash business for more than 20 years, owning several carwashes, while Peer has been in carwashing for 10 years, the last six as a partner in Submarine Car Wash.

"I started out as a towel guy in a carwash, learned the business, and four years later opened Submarine with Ofer," he pointed out.



Submarine Car Wash in Groton takes its name from the city's U.S. Naval Submarine Base.



The wash was rehabbed in 2007 when new owners Shlomi Peer and Ofer Tal purchased the 1990's-era wash.



The wash offers five nautical-named wash packages.



Shlomi Peer began his career in carwashing as a towel man and worked his way up the ranks before becoming an owner in 2007.



Submarine features full-service detailing.

The carwash offers five levels of wash service, starting with an exterior only wash for \$11, followed by a basic wash called the Lieutenant for \$14 that gets an exterior wash with rims cleaned, underbody wash, interior vacuum, dash wiped and windows cleaned. The next step up is the Commander, which adds underbody sealant, a wheel blast and triple wax polish for \$16.

The Captain wash, at \$18, adds clear coat super shine, while the Admiral includes the Captain package plus extra vacuuming, rubber mat cleaning, interior dressing, spray wax and an air freshener.

Peer noted that Submarine Car Wash offers a monthly membership for \$29 per car that gets unlimited exterior washes or a minimum of \$100 off other wash packages. The carwash also offers a \$5.99 Early Bird Special daily from 8 am to 10 am for an exterior wash and towel dry, as well as a pre-paid savings card where the customer pays for three washes and gets a fourth wash free.

Submarine's full service detail center offers a full detail

for \$175, exterior for \$105 and interior for \$95. Extras include waxes, hand washing, express leather cleaning, express seat cleaning, express carpet shampooing and headlight restoration.

Peer pointed out that he and Tal have done a considerable amount of advertising across different types of media and found success in several of them.

"We use direct mail, newspapers and Facebook to get our coupons to potential customers," Peer said. "Most of our coupons are \$3 off the basic wash, but we have sent out coupons for \$30 off detailing services. We tried radio advertising a few times, but found that it didn't work for us."

Submarine Car Wash also gives coupons to existing customers after they've just washed their vehicle at the carwash.

"Every customer gets a \$3 off coupon for the next time they visit us," Peer said. "We find that we get more than 50 percent of customers returning to use those coupons."

Peer noted that he and Tal "never say no" to any charity that requests a donation, often donating to schools and local sport teams. "We give away free carwashes to any organization that will raffle them off for a good cause," he said. "It helps the organization and it helps show people that we are supporting the community." ■

Alan M. Petrillo is a Tucson, AZ, freelance journalist 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.

Impulse abounds at Submarine Car Wash.



CCA Detailing Seminar Delivers

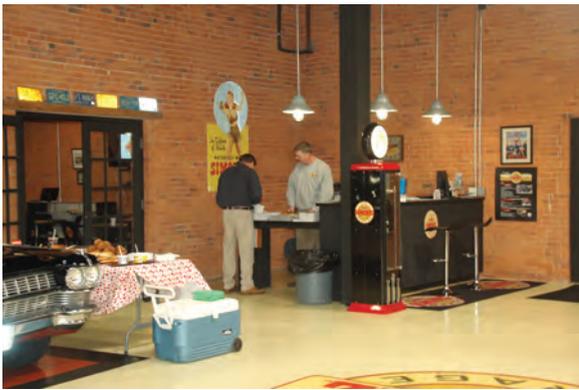


W. HARTFORD, CT - The Connecticut Carwash Association (CCA) met here on March 19 for a detailing seminar put on by Tom Palancia of Simoniz USA at its "Simoniz Garage." More than 30 participated in the educational program and hands-on seminar at the newly refurbished state-of-the-art

training facility. "This was a great way to demonstrate how easy it is to add this profit center to your operation," said CCA President Noah Levine. "I think the group got a lot out of it, and Tom's presentation was outstanding."

The four-hour program, which demonstrated how to improve your cash flow by a minimum of 30 percent while creating a sustainable additional profit center, also included a continental breakfast and take-home literature. The association will hold a second part to this program in July for its members at the FL Roberts facility in Hartford.

For more information on the association visit www.wewashctcars.com or call 800/287-6604.



CCA President Noah Levine, Board Member Dave Petit and Past CCA President Tony Setaro enjoyed the program.



The detailing seminar was held at Simoniz' impressive "Garage" in West Hartford.



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Water Works Car Wash Adds Third Location in Connecticut



By Alan M. Petrillo

Water Works Car Wash has expanded its operations to three locations in Connecticut with the purchase and refurbishment of a carwash in Southington to add to its locations in Farmington and Terryville.

Owner Steve Cromack said the newest Water Works Car Wash at 312 Queen St. in Southington is an express wash with a 120-foot tunnel and nine vacuums that compliment the Terryville wash (108 Main St. at the corner of Routes 6 and 72) that has two touchless automatics and two self-service bays. His first location at 362 Swamp Rd., (Route 6), is a 110-foot exterior tunnel with one touchless automatic and three self-service bays.

“In the past year, I had been actively looking for another carwash site,” Cromack said, “and found the Southington location where a bank had put the carwash assets up for bid. There was a lot of bidding activity and we won the bid but had a lot of work ahead of us.”

Cromack said the building and the equipment in the carwash had not been maintained well, which meant he had to gut the place except for the conveyor, and then renovate the structure with new lighting and wall panels and install all new carwash equipment.

“It was only a six-year-old express carwash, but needed a lot of work because of the lack of maintenance,” he said. In refurbishing the carwash, Cromack reduced the number of vacuums on the site from 14 to nine, and changed from free vacs to \$1 per use. The site has electronic pay stations that take credit cards, cash and coins.

One of Cromack’s projects for the near future is figuring out how to tie each of his three locations together electronically, even though they use different software and auto cashier systems.

“We use DRB in Farmington, Terryville is a self-service site that runs itself and isn’t tied in because it has Unitec Electronics auto cashiers, and Southington uses ICS software,” he said. “I’d like to have everything tied together and am working on getting that done.”

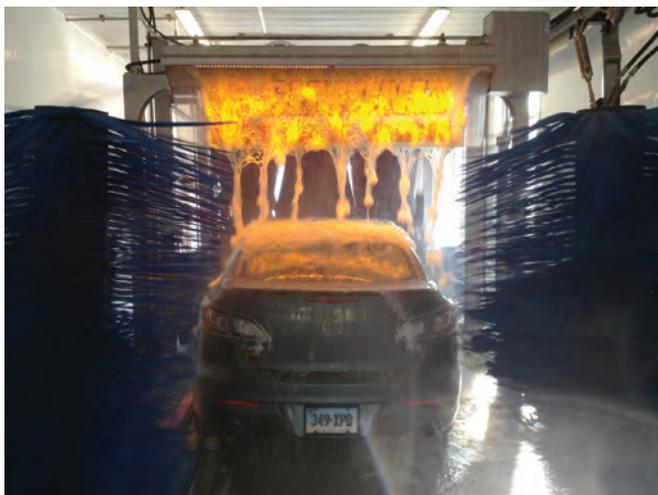
By linking all three locations, Cromack said he can offer special deals in all three towns simultaneously, and change those specials at the stroke of an electronic key.

In the meantime, Cromack is building his email and text message list of customers, handing out signup cards for current customers through his Loyal eCustomer program.

“We encourage each customer to sign up and give them a free express carwash just for signing on,” he said. “Once we have them in the program, we can email or text special deals to them very quickly. If things are slow on a particular week, we can immediately send something to their phone or computer instead of being locked into when a direct mail piece goes out. Our offerings can be stronger this way.”

Cromack said he’s also having his website redesigned so he can offer coupon specials online and hopes to attract more people to the Loyal eCustomer program through the site.

While Cromack has carwash locations with the same name in three towns, his wash prices are slightly different, reflecting the demographics of each market. In Farmington, the Express wash starts at \$6.99 and goes through three other washes to the Works at \$15.99. However, the newest location, in Southington, starts its Express Wash lower at \$5.99, but has a higher Works Wash at \$17.99. Terryville, as a completely automated wash with frictionless and self-service bays, runs from \$5.00 for an Express Wash to \$12 for the Works in its automatic bays.



Providing your customer with a great washing “experience” and a clean, shiny car is what owner Steve Cromack strives to accomplish.



Cromack has three locations and prices his washes according to each market in which he operates.

A Career in Washing

Cromack began his career in the carwash business working for his father, Bill Cromack, who opened his own carwash in 1984.

"I worked part-time through high school and college and then joined my dad full-time in 1990," Steve Cromack said.

"In 2002, I partnered with him and we built the Farmington express wash on the site of a former restaurant on the main route in town, with a busy shopping area nearby."

A few years later, the partners built the Terryville Water Works Car Wash location at the intersection of two main roads in the area. Cromack later bought out his father's interest in the Farmington location and in 2012 opened the Southington carwash site. He and his father are still partners in Terryville.

"The Southington location is a challenge in that it has a competitor four doors down on the same side of the street who does express washing, detailing and quick lubes," Cromack said. "But our location is in a highly-trafficked area with a lot of retail around it. While I'm just getting started there, I think it has the potential to be busier than the Farmington carwash because of its location and the fact it gives clean, friendly service in a brightly-lit tunnel, unlike our competitor."

Cromack pointed out that he has received "excellent feedback" from customers about the new site, its appearance and service.

"I want to get Southington growing and give people more offerings," he said. "I'm getting requests for aftercare and interior services there, so I'm considering setting up express detailing at that site. But that's in the future right now." ■

Alan M. Petrillo is an independent journalist based in Tucson, AZ, 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.

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Carwash Sales Tax Again Kept At Bay

By P.J. Cimini

By the time you read this the 2013 Legislative Session will have come to a close and a number of the issues under consideration will either be settled for this year, or pushed to the next year's session starting in February 2014. Here's a quick summary of where things stand on issues we've been working on for the Connecticut Carwash Association (CCA) in Hartford.

Despite concern about the re-imposition of the sales tax on carwashes, at this point in mid-May, it has not been reintroduced. While the budget continues to be a problem and balancing it is a challenge this year, both the Governor and the General Assembly's Finance Committee have not proposed re-instituting it this year. The CCA continues to monitor and stay close to the issue as it could come up at any time given the tight financial circumstances in which the state continues to find itself. In short, if more revenue is needed, sales tax exemptions like ours will always be a major target to raise revenue.

Minimum Wage

Governor Malloy has come out in support of a move to increase the minimum wage in Connecticut. While this was not unexpected, it has provided State Legislators who have wanted to increase the amount for a number of years an opening.

There will be proposals in the State Senate to increase the minimum wage by 50 cents a year for the next two years with NO CPI (consumer price index) which would bring the minimum wage to \$8.75 by 1/1/14 and \$9.50 by 1/1/15.

This would make the increase more aggressive than what Governor Malloy and Speaker Sharkey had originally agreed upon. By increasing the minimum wage \$1 over the next two years (vs. the plan to raise the minimum wage by 75 cents over the next two years), it would increase Connecticut's wage rates and make them uncompetitive with surrounding states. Connecticut already ranks 45th in terms of business climate and this would unfairly burden businesses at a time when the economy is not growing.

Workers Comp

The State Senate is considering legislation (SB 907) that would prevent employers from ensuring that their employees get appropriate quality medical care as soon as possible in workers compensation cases. A new study out shows that SB 907 could cost private-sector insured employers as much as \$204 million over five years. When insured employers are added to the mix, the price tag rises to \$258 million. However, the real price tag is potentially much higher. That's because the proposal mandates timelines that preclude getting a careful review of an employee's course of medical treatment in workers' comp claims.

Employers like carwash owners know that it's in their best interests to see that their employees get the best and

most appropriate workers comp medical care. They want their employees to return to work as soon as possible, but they also want to be sure of providing accurate medical care for the lowest possible chance of any permanent disability.

But SB 907 accelerates the review process so hastily that it risks just that – the employee getting inappropriate or lower-quality treatment, and the worker's medical condition worsening. The consequences could be devastating all around with higher follow-up medical costs, longer out-of-work durations, lower employee morale, and the very high likelihood of contentious litigation.

State Spending

Lawmakers are considering a proposal (HB 6352) that would modify the spending cap in order to make the current state budget proposal for the next biennium work. The proposed budget – now in negotiation between the administration and Democratic legislative leadership – goes \$500 million beyond the cap. But with the revelation of significant healthcare savings that answer more than half that amount, legislators should continue to pore over every line item in the budget to find additional savings.

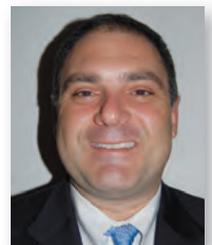
State spending has soared 153 percent over the past 20 years, far outpacing household income, the inflation rate and Connecticut's population growth. We are supporting that the state set a more realistic budget priorities system and fund only those programs with proven track records, and lean the cost of delivering public services.

There's no better economy-driving, job-creating program available to lawmakers than delivering a balanced budget that doesn't increase taxes or extend those due to expire – and doesn't change the spending cap.

Environment Regulation

Before approving SB 1019, a bill streamlining the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), the Senate added a section providing businesses with relief from penalties for first-time, noncriminal violations of regulations if they are corrected within 30 days. The addition, previously raised and approved by the Commerce Committee in another bill, covers potential violations of regulations administered by DEEP, the Department of Public Health (DPH), and the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). ■

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@csqct.com



P.J. Cimini



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Carwashes, Cuisine and a Little Research

By Cookie Anthony

When my copy of the *Northeast Carwasher* magazine arrives in the mail I know it's time to sit down and write the next column. I always have three or four ideas in mind but the hard part is finding time to sit down and put them to paper.

Alas, Suzanne has been trying for a decade to get me to use the computer. Slowly, I am learning but often loose typed pages and somehow can't find them. I know it's in my computer somewhere so I prefer to sit with pen and paper to write. Since I am left handed, and my handwriting is poor, Suzanne works hard to produce the article. I hope the other contributors are easier than me!

This is a long introduction to my latest Tidbits From Cookie.

On the Road Again

Let's start on Rt. 125 in Branford, MA. The first stop is lunch at Joseph's Trattoria Bakery Cafe. They're at 145 Oxford Ave. and have won awards for "Best of Greater Haverhill" and "Best Italian Restaurant" market survey of America. Complementary olives, crusty warm bread with olive oil and white Tuscan bean spread start the meal. Selections include a variety of fish, meats, pasta, salads and roasted vegetables along with wines and other beverages.

Two complimentary macaroons finish the meal, but other deserts are also available, but don't order one as a surprise is coming down the road. We often bring home a loaf of bread from their bakery and linguine alla Bolognese. That way, I don't have to cook supper! Now that you're full of good food you're ready to do some carwash exploring so turn right out of the restaurant parking lot onto Rt. 125. Approximately 1000 feet down the road on the left hand side at 1200 Boston Rd. in Haverhill is the Clean Machine Car Wash.



The Clean Machine in Haverhill, MA.

This wash has a deceptive lot that is narrow near the road but widens to a very large area on the side and rear of the lot. Their electronic signage gives time, temperature and specials. Many vacuums are spread throughout the facility for cus-

Signage is clean and easy to comprehend at this wash.



tomers use and ease. Four are out front at the exit end of the tunnel. More are scattered along the side and in the rear near the self-service bays. Vacuum islands have trash receptacles embedded in concrete.

Well delineated arrows direct traffic around the lot as some areas are more narrow then widen to a detail area, self-service bays and an automatic tunnel and two laser washes.

The rest of the wash has a huge grassy area with lots of room for stacking and signage.

The owner, James Rogers, bought the wash about eight years ago. He said he's had a steady increase in business that is great considering there are about six carwashes within two miles of him!

Autowash Maintenance of Malden helps with repairs on his 150-foot tunnel.

Roger made sure I saw a cleverly-framed mosaic that Christina, his employee of two years, created. She took pictures of cars and made them into the wash's carwash name. It hangs proudly near the detail waiting area.

While I was there, Sergeant Smith drove a police cruiser through the tunnel. Sgt. Smith said, "Clean Machine is very good to the Haverhill Police Department." The owner said they have had no vandalism problems. Do you think there is a connection?



There is no problem with vandalism at this wash thanks in part to a strong relationship with the area law enforcement.

So, when you look at the Clean Machine Car Wash be ready to expand your view. They have any service you might want.

Auto Spa Doesn't Disappoint

To continue the trip exit left and proceed about two miles down the road. There on the right side is Auto Spa Car Wash. It's located at 10 Commerce Way, Rt. 125, but now you are in North Andover.



Auto Spa Car Wash in North Andover is attractive and meticulously maintained.



Auto Spa has a huge well-lit detail area, a freestanding vending area, six vacs and carpet shampoo machines. The vacs are located in a side area that is visible from the highway and doesn't interfere with the traffic flow.

Customers can wait for their car being detailed in an air-conditioned room with a coffee and soda



machine. Magazines and rest rooms are available and everything is new, clean, neat and orderly at the Auto Spa.

Turn right out of the Auto Spa and go slow about one-tenth of a mile on the left is Mad Maggie's ice cream. They serve homemade ice cream with very generous scoops. The chocolate chip has huge chunks of chocolate, not tiny chips.

Last Stop - Haffner's Car Wash

We have been driving in a straight line. Again, turn left out of Mad Maggie's and drive down the road and you'll come to Haffner's Carwash on the right hand side. It's connected to a large gas fill up area. Haffner's accepts money and credit cards. They deserve a section all to themselves as they have so many washes, self-service bays and fuelling stations with convenience stores; maybe their own zip code!

Hope you've enjoyed your road trip. You've had lunch, seen three carwashes, and had ice cream. Hopefully, you picked up some carwash ideas not just some extra pounds!

Rule One, Rule Two

They say to steal ideas from one person is plagiarism, but to steal from many is research! Here's some research by Michael Raynor and Mumtaz Ahmed that was in the Harvard Business Review. They analyzed 25,000 US companies going back four decades with these findings:

- ❖ Rule One, better before cheaper. (Compete on benefits other than low price).
- ❖ Rule Two, revenue before cost (go for increased sales over cost-cutting).

How do we apply these findings to carwashing? Are you looking for a new manager? Perhaps you need to consider offering better benefits, profit sharing or bonus'.

Continued on page 58 ...

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Tidbits From Cookie ... *continued from page 57.*

You don't have to be the cheapest wash in town. Better is offering specials and incentives for both customers and employees.

Didja Know That?

USA Today said it cost 2 cents to make a penny. For the first time it costs more than one cent to make because of the price of metal. Who would think the saying, "A penny for your thoughts" would be rising in price to 2.4 cents for your thought!

John Kennedy said, "When written in Chinese the word "crisis" is composed of two characters. One represents danger and the other represents opportunity." While I'm not wishing you crisis I do wish you the eyes and mindset to recognize opportunity. ■

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.

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CCA 2013 CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 24

16th Annual Golf Invitational
Topstone Golf Course, S. Windsor
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OCTOBER 7-9

NRCC
Trump Taj Mahal, Atlantic City, NJ
www.nrccshow.com

DECEMBER 5

Holiday Gathering
TBD
www.wewashctcars.com

Four Key Phrases to Boost Morale and Motivation

Most organizations won't survive if they don't learn how to change as they grow and adapt to market conditions. But employees sometimes resist anything new – not because they're stubborn or old-fashioned, but for these basic reasons:

- ❖ **They don't see the need.** You've got to explain why the change is necessary — how it will help your company, your customers, and the employees themselves. Otherwise, they may think you're just randomly messing with them.
- ❖ **They're afraid of the unknown.** Employees may not understand exactly what they'll have to do differently, or how the change will affect their daily lives. Or they may worry that they don't have the skills they'll need to adapt. Tell them what's changing, and give them the training and support required.
- ❖ **You didn't seek their input.** Employees need a sense of control over their work and their careers. You'll get a better response by including them in planning from the beginning. Employees who know how your organization functions at the ground level will be able to help you target the right areas for change, and be more comfortable with the result.
- ❖ **They're exhausted.** Downsizing, reorganizations, new products, and revamped organization charts can take their toll. Employees may feel they don't have it in them to go through a major overhaul. Take their feelings into account when announcing any new direction so they know you understand what they're going through. ■

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THE BOARD MEMBER QUESTIONNAIRE: Allison Shackett



Allison Shackett, Car Washing Systems, Inc.

Q. How many years have you been in business?

A. Car Washing Systems, Inc. has been in business for 25 years.

Q. Tell us what your business does.

A. Car Washing Systems, Inc. is a distributor for a variety of major carwash manufacturers cover-

ing all aspects of the carwash industry to include service and installation of in-bay automatics, tunnels, self-serve equipment and cleaning solutions.

Q. Why do you want to be a CCA board member?

A. My company is in the business of giving the best support possible to carwash owners and being a Board Member of the CCA is another way to do more for our clients, and to look out for their best interests.

Not only is it our responsibility to support our clients, but it's a chance to promote the carwash industry as a whole. It's always good to keep your eyes and ears open to all that goes on in this industry as there are always new ways to increase a business' success.

Q. How was business in 2012?

A. It is no secret that this industry, like any other, has seen its fair share of struggles over the years, but we definitely saw a shift going into 2012 in a positive direction which has motivated operators. The carwash industry and carwash operators have been, and will continue to be, our priority in the years to come, as their success is our success. ■



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Al Villani

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

After a very long winter, spring has finally sprung. The temperature rose as well as the pollen count! Hopefully, everyone also saw their car counts rise giving operators hope that consumers still desire to drive a clean car. Speaking of clean cars, the Car Wash Operators of New Jersey (CWONJ) has recently unveiled its 'Jersey Clean' program for members along with the tools that will assist operators with the implementation of the program. Also, the CWONJ \$1000 scholarship winner, Ryan Clark of Magic Wash in Manahawkin, was recently announced at our Annual Golf Outing held at Suburban Golf Club in Union. The Board of Directors and I are also proud to announce that the CWONJ has made a generous donation to Children's Specialized Hospital again this year from the proceeds of that outing.

As a Board of Directors, we are continually striving to present valuable programs and information to our members. If there is a specific topic or program you would like to see at a future meeting, please send an email to CWONJ@yahoo.com or mediasolutions@nycap.rr.com or better yet, give us a call at 800/287-6604.

AL VILLANI

*Al Villani
Car Wash Operators of New Jersey President*

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CWONJ.COM



ICA President and Splash CEO Mark Curtis will be our featured speaker at the November 12 Membership Meeting. Hear how Curtis has overcome adversity and built one of the strongest and most innovative carwash chains in the country!



2013 CWONJ CALENDAR

OCTOBER 7-9

NRCC

*CWONJ host association
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nrccshow.com

NOVEMBER 12

Fall Membership Meeting
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Speaker: ICA President Mark Curtis of Splash Car Washes



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The Promenade Car Wash Enjoys Successful First Year of Business

By Alan M. Petrillo

The Promenade Car Wash at 987 Route 73 South in Marlton, NJ, is only a year old in its operations, but already its owner feels a sense of success in attracting business to the full-service carwash.

With a 140-foot long tunnel that includes a covered entryway to the wash and two detailing bays, plus an outside detailing area, The Promenade allows owner Michael Ambrosini the advantage of a wide array of wash and detailing pricing options for his customers.

Ambrosini prices his basic exterior carwash at \$6.99, followed by the basic interior and exterior wash, called Silver, for \$11.99 that includes interior vacuuming, windows cleaned and hand towel drying. The Gold wash, at \$16.99, adds clear and foam polish, wax, wheel brightener, rust inhibitor and undercarriage wash; while the Platinum wash, at \$21.99, adds tire shine and triple foam polish. The Promenade also offers a hand wash option for \$26.99. All prices exclude sales tax.

On the detailing side of things, an interior detailing goes for \$99.99, exterior for \$109.99 and full detailing, \$179.99. SUVs, vans and trucks are levied a 10 percent premium.

A la carte detailing services available include spray wax, headliner shampoo, cloth seat shampoo, leather or vinyl seats conditioned, hand wax and buffed interior, carpet shampooing and headlight restoration.

“The big thing for me is customer service,” said Ambrosini. “I want people to be happy when they leave here, either after a carwash or detailing. If there’s some sort of issue, we’ll fix it immediately.

“Keeping people happy means they will speak well of your business and be return customers, as well as helping attract other potential customers to the carwash.”

Ambrosini, who has a background in finance and management, got into the carwash business in 2009 when he leased an express carwash in Morristown, NJ, with an option to buy.

“After I had the place for a year, I realized it wasn’t exactly what I wanted,” he said. “Coincidentally, a realtor put an ad in my mailbox for a full-service carwash nearby with an oil lube that was for sale. I checked it out and negotiated with them, but the appraisal came back too low for what they were asking so the deal fell through.”

But being at the right place at the right time can be an important facet in any business startup. The same builders for the realtor’s carwash had another carwash project on the table where the property had been zoned, the building’s footprint decided and the land already cleared. Ambrosini

The Promenade Car Wash in Marlton, NJ, is just a year young but steadily building volume and customer loyalty.



cinched the deal for what would become The Promenade Car Wash.

“I was able to choose the design and colors of the building, and the equipment inside it,” he said. “We added a waiting room that has an ATM and vending machines, as well as selling items like windshield wipers, floor mats and air fresheners.”

Ambrosini believes that a business has to be involved in the community, so The Promenade Car Wash does a lot of fundraising events for sports teams at local schools. It even helped out a local pet cemetery that was in trouble, donating half the proceeds from sales for an entire weekend to the organization.

Labor costs are always a challenge for a full-service carwash, Ambrosini admitted. “On Friday through Sunday I have five prep guys and three dryers, plus myself,” he said. “Weekdays, it’s usually a total of seven employees. So labor costs are the biggest chunk of my expenses.”

But for Ambrosini, being a hands-on owner is the best part of the business.

“I want to be here to answer any questions my customers might have and to make sure any issues are addressed,” he pointed out. “I want to get this carwash off the ground and learn as much as I can about the business. I hope to have another location or two in New Jersey or Pennsylvania up to a 50-mile radius from here and am always open to talk about a carwash for sale at the right price.” ■

Alan M. Petrillo is a Tucson, AZ, freelance journalist 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.



There is plenty of stacking area at this exterior-only tunnel.



The wash sits on a heavily traveled street but ingress and egress are good.

Promenade owner Michael Ambrosini's number one mission is keeping his customers happy and coming back.



Kar Kleen and Kleen Kar Complement Each Other



By Alan M. Petrillo

In-bay automatics, an exterior-only tunnel and self-service bays at two locations comprise the offerings of Kar Kleen Car Wash of Williamstown, and Kleen Kar Carwash of Sicklerville, both owned by John Lastata.

The Williamstown location features three in-bay automatics, five self-service bays, 10 self-service vacuums and a vending area that is open 24 hours a day/7 days a week/365 days a year, Lastata said. The original carwash was built in 1988 and Lastata took it over in 1997, doing the first major expansion there by putting in five self-service bays and an in-bay automatic in 2005.

Two years later, Lastata purchased the property next door to the carwash and tore down a residential structure, then put \$1 million into adding two more in-bay automatics to the facility.

Expansion fever overtook Lastata once again in July of 2012 when he purchased a severely run down tunnel wash in Sicklerville, about four miles away from his Williamstown location.

“I spent \$400,000 upgrading the wash for new equipment and the entire exterior of the facility, including the landscaping,” Lastata said. “I reopened the 90-foot tunnel as an exterior-only facility with five self-service bays, eight self-service vacuums and a vending area.”

Lastata pointed out that the operational difference between the two facilities is that the tunnel has to be manned during open hours.

“It’s open from 8 am to 5 pm weekdays and Saturdays, and from 8 am to 3 pm on Sundays,” he said. “The in-bays run by themselves, but need a little more maintenance because of all the electronics and plumbing in the machines. I’ve found there’s definitely more work when you have more than one in-bay automatic on a single site.”

The Sicklerville exterior tunnel wash offers three wash options for customers – a Deluxe at \$5, a Super at \$7.50 and a Works at \$10. All wash options are exclusive of New Jersey’s 7 percent sales tax.

The in-bays offer washes that are priced at \$6, \$8, \$10 and \$13. The Williamstown self-serve charge is \$2.50 for four minutes of washing, while the Sicklerville location charges 50 cents for the first minute and 50 cents thereafter.

Lastata said that most exterior tunnel carwashes in the area charge between \$3 and \$15, while full-service tunnels charge in the \$6 to \$20 range.

“The Northeast is a highly competitive area where there are a lot of carwashes,” he said. “In some suburban and rural areas there are a lot of carwashes and not enough population to support them.”

Labor isn’t a huge issue with Lastata at either of his locations.

“At the in-bay automatic and self-service location in Wil-



John Lastata’s washes, Kar Kleen and Kleen Kar hit all the bases with in-bay automatics, an exterior-only tunnel and self-service bays in Williamstown and Sicklerville, NJ.





Lastata promotes both washes through local media.

liamstown, it's just me who does the daily maintenance and cleanup, and any installation work," he said. "At the Sickler-ville tunnel, I usually have a couple of people working, depending on the day, three of them when it gets really busy."

Lastata noted that he's fortunate that his businesses are on well-traveled highways that promote visibility and accessibility to his carwashes. But he still promotes the two car-washes through local media.

"I run ads in local supermarkets on the back of cash register receipts," he said, "and also through direct mailers and penny saver-type publications. I'll offer a coupon for \$2 off any wash, or maybe one for \$1 off my \$5 wash and \$3 off a \$10 wash. Sometimes it's visually more appealing to offer more options to customers."

Lastata noted that keeping his customers happy is foremost in his mind.

"I offer a money-back guarantee on every service we provide," he said. "I advertise my cell phone at every location so if someone isn't satisfied in some way, they can call me and I can make it right for them." ■

Alan M. Petrillo is a Tucson, AZ, freelance journalist 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.

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CWONJ “Asks The Experts” at Spring Membership Meeting in Clark



The Car Wash Operators of New Jersey (CWONJ) met at the Holiday Inn, Clark, NJ, Tuesday, April 16, for its Spring Membership Meeting. “Ask the Experts.” The dinner meeting included an Italian buffet followed by a panel discussion on all topics carwashing. Led by CWONJ President Al Villani of Supreme Car Wash in Newark, the panel and attendees discussed everything from the minimum wage hike and its impact on our industry, to successful profit centers, to how to motivate service advisors and best remove bugs. The panel of experts included Rain Tunnel’s Mike Conte, Magic Wash’s Doug Rieck, Posh Wash’s Stu Markowitz and Robinhood’s Richie Boudakian.

The meeting also included an opportunity for member vendors to provide attendees with a brief rundown of what their company offers, as well as literature on their products and services. Featured vendors included: Beckerman, ICS, Jobe Industries, Kirikian Industries, McNeil & Co., Inc., Micrologic, Frank Millman Distributors, Shore Corporation, Tamerica, ZEP/Ecolab. ■

The association’s next event is its November 12 Fall Membership Meeting in Clark. ICA President Mark Curtis of Splash Car Washes will be speaking. For information on the CWONJ visit cwonj.com.



Posh Wash’s Stu Markowitz.



Magic Wash’s Doug Rieck and Shore Chemical’s Del Burkholder.



CWONJ President Al Villani.



ICS’s Brad Metcalf.



Conte’s Car Wash’s Mike Conte and Micrologic’s Miguel Gonzalez.

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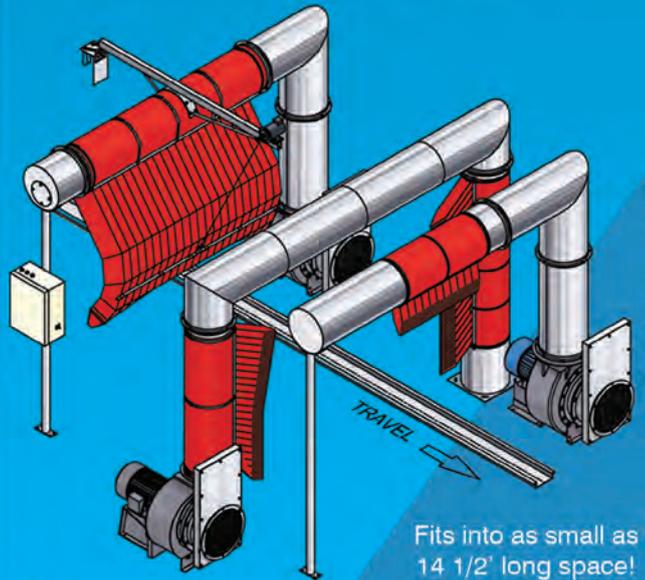
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Early Polling Suggests New Jersey Voters Support Raising Minimum Wage

By Patrick Stewart

A majority of New Jerseyans agree with Senate President Stephen Sweeney who first proposed a ballot question to raise the state minimum wage. New Jersey voters are ready to bump up the minimum wage by \$1 an hour, with strong support coming from Democrats and Republicans alike, according to early polling. The Rutgers-Eagleton survey found 76 percent of voters favor raising the wage floor from \$7.25 to \$8.25 an hour and installing automatic yearly increases afterward, while 20 percent are opposed.

The question will be on the ballot in November, at the same time New Jerseyans will choose a Governor and all 120 state legislators.

Raising the minimum wage via constitutional amendment has never been done in New Jersey, but the survey found voters across the political spectrum are comfortable with the idea: it was favored by 97 percent of Democrats, 57 percent of Republicans and 71 percent of independents.

In January, Governor Chris Christie vetoed a minimum-wage increase passed by Democrats, offering instead a dollar an hour bump phased in over three years. The Republican

governor also rejected the automatic yearly increases, which business groups opposed and which Christie said would “jeopardize the economic recovery we all seek.”

In response, Assembly Speaker Sheila Oliver (D-Essex) and Senate President Stephen Sweeney (D-Gloucester) got their chambers to approve the ballot question for November, saying voters should get to settle it.

The Rutgers-Eagleton poll also found strong support for a voter referendum on legalizing same-sex marriage, with 69 percent of respondents saying the question should also be on the ballot this year, and 62 percent saying they would vote to legalize.

The poll of 819 registered voters, with a margin of error of 3.7 percentage points, was conducted from April 3 to 7. ■



Patrick A. Stewart is a lobbyist with Public Strategies Impact. You can reach him at 609/393-7799 or email him at pstewart@njpsi.com.

Patrick A. Stewart

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Issue Log Can Serve to be a Handy Tool

By Doug Rieck

At Magic Wash in Manahawkin we started the New Year with a simple and easy-to-use "issue" log my manager keeps. The concept is to maintain a simple daily log, without a ton of detail, to note things like daily weather and equipment issues.

We use a stock Staples planner as our log. The standing routine is at 8 am the temperature and sky conditions are noted. Then during the day any issues are noted. Each customer damage claim or customer problem is recorded. Any maintenance problems or performance issues are noted. An example being: greased bearings, cleaned strainers, or changed hydraulic hoses on first set of wraps. Then, every time we change a chemical drum we note it. If a customer or employee is injured we note that as well. Also, during the winter washing season we maintain a separate Salt Log.

Last week a local Police officer thought we gouged the side of his patrol car. After I went out and discussed it with the officer, I logged the name of the department, the car number and put down a supposed gouge claim.

I think this is useful in a lot of ways and can help standardize operations and accountability at the wash.

After all, we are running multi-million dollar businesses. So far it has become a routine and seems to work for us. ■



Doug Rieck owns Magic Wash in Manahawkin, NJ. He is also a Car Wash Operators of New Jersey board member. You can reach Doug at 609/597-SUDS.

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Help Eliminate Charity Washes!

Join the CWONJ/NJ DEP Program Today



The Car Wash Operators of New Jersey (CWONJ) and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) have created a partnership that will provide charities and non-profit organizations with an opportunity to hold fundraising carwashes at commercial carwash facilities. While charitable carwashes perform a valuable service to our communities, these activities can also result in unanticipated impacts to the State's water resources by discharging pollutants such as petroleum hydrocarbons, surfactants as well as nutrients and metals which can flow into a storm drain, eventually making its way to our rivers, lakes and streams.

The CWONJ and the Department are soliciting CWONJ members to join our partnership and provide charities and non-profit organizations with discounted carwash tickets (by 50 percent) that they can resell at face value. This is truly a situation where all parties benefit. Charities and non-profit organi-

zations can raise money for their causes, the Department accomplishes their goal of protecting water quality, and CWONJ members gain valuable exposure in the community. In addition, CWONJ members have the satisfaction of knowing that they are doing their part to protect the environment.

The first step is to become a participating carwash by completing and returning the application below. The CWONJ will then post your wash on our website and that of the NJDEP's. The CWONJ also did a mass mailing to school and scout groups to encourage participation. Interested groups will then contact your carwash directly. Participating CWONJ members will receive a set of posters and a Certificate of Recognition from the NJDEP. The NJDEP will also publicize the effort through its outreach programs. ■

For additional information contact the CWONJ at 800/287-6604 or 518/280-4767 or visit www.cwonj.com.

CWONJ Mailing Address:
 CWONJ, PO Box 230, REXFORD, NY 12148 • 800/287-6604 • PHONE/FAX: 518/280-4767
mediasolutions@nycap.rr.com

www
PUT YOUR WASH/BUSINESS ON THE CWONJ WEB SITE!
www

As an added value to our members we will be listing our member's carwash locations on our internet site at NO ADDITIONAL COST to members. Please, complete the form below by providing the information that you want posted on the Web site. (i.e. if you use your home phone number and don't want it posted on the Web site don't fill out that section). If you have multiple locations please copy this form and complete a form for each location you want listed. If you have any questions please call Suzanne Stansbury at (800) 287-6604, Fax (518) 280-4767 or send your information to: PO Box 230, Rexford, NY 12148.

Carwash Name _____

Physical Location _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

Owner or Contact Name _____

Type of carwash and services provided: *(please circle all that apply)*

Full service	Detailing
Exterior	Gasoline
In-bay automatic	Lube Center
Self Service	Convenience Store
Express Wax	Other

Are you a carwash manufacturer or supplier? (Give a brief description of the service(s) you provide.) _____

Yes, I give my permission to have my carwash location listed on the Car Wash Operators of New Jersey Web site.

Authorized Signature _____

Title _____

I also give my permission to have the CWONJ Web site linked to my Web site. My Web site address is: _____

IMPORTANT: This registration must be returned or your carwash won't be listed and shown on the Web site as a member.



Fundraising Car Wash Participation Form

Sponsored by the Car Wash Operators of New Jersey with support from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

Thank you for your interest in participating in the CWONJ and NJDEP's partnership Fundraising Car Wash Program. Your efforts will help numerous charities and improve New Jersey's water quality. CWONJ will create a list of participating CWONJ members that will then be supplied to schools, religious organizations and other charities and non-profit organizations.

Participating CWONJ members provide charities and non-profit organizations with discounted car wash tickets (by 50 percent) that they can resell at face value instead of holding car wash fundraisers.

For more information about this program, please contact Doug Karvelas, Car Wash Operators of New Jersey, at (609)888-2568 or Bruce Friedman, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, at (609)633-7021. Additional information is also available at www.cleanwaternj.org.

Car Wash Facility Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____ County: _____

Contact Person: _____ Title: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

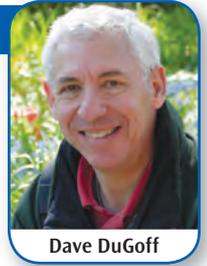
Website (if applicable): _____



Please mail or fax this application to:

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Fax: (609) 888-4405





Dave DuGoff

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If you have an MCA story idea or wash you think we should feature, drop us an email at: mediasolutions@nycap.rr.com

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

The MCA is always ready to try something new. Our last meeting was in Warrenton, VA, complete with historic rolling hills, golf courses and horses. We toured an interesting double tunnel built at the intersection of Rt. 66 and Lee Highway. Thanks to Flagship Carwash for opening their doors to us. After dinner at the iconic Fauquier Springs Country Club, we enjoyed a panel discussion of experienced carwash operators sharing their "Best and Worst Decisions."

It will come as no surprise that not every business move was a home run, but to hear what they did about it was fascinating. Bill Bascom, Clean Machine Car Wash, based in Charlottesville; Dan Callihan, Glen Burnie Car Wash, and Sean Larkin, Westminster Car Wash & Detailing, with a combined 80+ years of carwash experience, had a lot to offer. I'll try to summarize some of the major themes.

Stick to the fundamentals. Don't let your basic controls go slack. Take the time to personally train your employees and reinforce the things that are important to your business model. For example, when the economy was hit and volumes dropped, you can get more from the customers you have by up-selling services that you have always offered, but the greeter has to make the suggestion to the customer. So, even when wash volume dropped, revenue went up, \$3 per car. Sometimes, it's worth having a consultant come in, and look at the same things that you see every day, so that you will focus on weaknesses and do something about them. We have all let things slide and need a gentle nudge to address the little things that cumulatively add up to big things.

There's something we all want to avoid – death and taxes. One you can't run from, the other you can reduce, with some thought and planning. There are several ways to do this but one way is to set up the company so that your kids own 99 percent of the non-voting stock, you keep 1 percent voting stock. You can take a "management fee" to run the business. As the company makes profit distributions, it is taxed at the kids' lower income tax rates. This is a great way to pay for college tuition. Then, upon your death the company is not part of your estate and not taxed. Like the daredevil stunts on TV, don't try this on your own, consult with your accountant and attorney.

Engage in your community. Participate in local events, like "Cops on the Roof" for the Special Olympics, and Grace for Vets. It doesn't have to cost a lot. There are lots of ways to be a part of your local scene that builds goodwill for you.

Discounting? There are different views of discounting. Books of washes are very popular, 4 for the price of 3, with a free wash today.

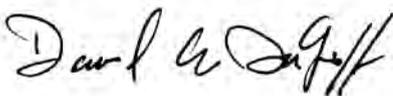
Use social media to build a market when you open a new site or re-hab an old one. For example, if you sell a wash for half price, you actually get half of that, however, only 60 percent are redeemed, so you are really making about half of your retail price. If you look at the other half as the cost of advertising, it may not be a bad deal. Their experience has been that when customers return, they paid the regular price without complaint.

Another operator reported on using "Constant Contact" to send emails to

customers who volunteer their email address to you. He is paying \$10/month for up to 200 contacts and \$15 for up to 2,000. He doesn't use it during winter or spring, but in the off seasons he gives \$5 off a \$12 wash. That's a way to reward and keep the customers you have.

In our next installment, I'll report on MCA's "Wash to Save the Bay" first year. As Program Chairman Dan Calihan says, when he flies into BWI, as the plane is flying over the Chesapeake Bay, he can see one of his carwashes on the right side and the other on the left side. He feels that we are all about water, and dependent on the Bay. And, we have to protect the Bay.

The next MCA meeting will be September 11 at the Hotel at Arundel Preserve, in Hanover, MD. That's near BWI and Dan's Glen Burnie Car Wash, which we will tour. See you there.



Dave DuGoff
Mid Atlantic Carwash Association President

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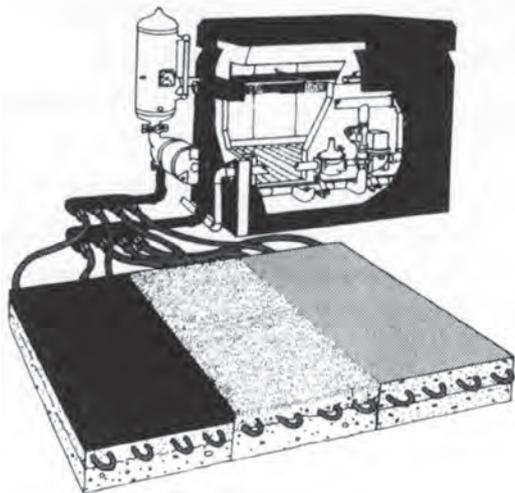
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Greenhill Car Wash Celebrates 4th Anniversary!



Green Hill Car Wash in Wilmington, DE, celebrated its fourth birthday in April, according to a company press release. The anniversary marks the fourth year of the renovated carwash and several decades as a business landmark in the popular “Flats” neighborhood of the city.

The most famous employee of Green Hill is Dave Brittingham who has worked at the wash for more than three decades. He has been featured in the local press and was congratulated by the Mayor’s office on his tenure.

Greenhill, an environmentally-friendly wash, is a former “Brownfields” site that was remediated. It features solar panels, recycled water and environmentally-friendly cleaning solutions. The company’s towel exchange program gives customers a clean towel with every wash.

John Richmond and David Shepherd of Greenhill received a “Wilmington Award” in 2009 for their commitment to the city.

There is a second Greenhill facility in Middletown, DE, that opened in 2012. The washes are owned by local entrepreneurs. ■

To learn more visit info@greenhillcarwash.com



Peco Teams Up with Old Dominion

Peco Car Wash Systems, Auburn Hills, MI, has announced a new tunnel construction project in the Mid-Atlantic region by Old Dominion Car Wash Services, a company press release stated. Old Dominion, although a new organization, is no stranger to carwash development and operation, the release said. They have been active in the full-service, express exterior and self-serve locations, as well as gas and lube centers for more than 30 years.

The Flagstop 105-foot express wash in Hopewell, VA, is on the site of an old eight-bay self serve that Flagstop has owned since 1983. The decision was made to demolish the old wash and rebuild the site as a \$5 express exterior wash. This is one of seven sites that Flagstop owns and operates in the Richmond, VA, market.

Old Dominion represents Peco and D & S Equipment, as well as Turtle Wax and Custom Solutions in a region from southern Maryland through Virginia and into northern North Carolina.

The *Northeast Carwasher* will be following up on this new wash in our fall issue. ■

Mid Atlantic Carwash Association Membership Meeting

The Mid Atlantic Carwash Association (MCA) met March 27 at the Sheraton in Annapolis, MD, for a membership meeting featuring McNeil and Company’s Mike Benmoschè who spoke on “OSHA and Your Wash.” Brian Wessner of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation also spoke to the group on the association’s new “Save the Bay” program. Mighty Spray and Great American Carwashes in Severna Park were toured as was West Street Carwash in Annapolis. ■



Brian Wessner with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.



Speaker Mike Benmoschè and MCA President Dave DuGoff.

2013 MCA MEETING DATES

SEPTEMBER 11

Hanover, MD

NOVEMBER 13

Sterling, VA

For more information visit www.mccarwash.org

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

As a business owner, I have tried many types of marketing from print media, advertising in the phone book, to Groupon and social media. The Groupon concept behind selling one of your services for a huge discount has proven to be a huge hit with my consumers, but is not as popular with business owners because of the high administrative fees.

The New England Carwash Association (NECA) is excited to launch a new site, carwashgifts.com. This site allows carwashes to sell wash books, gift cards, as well as create Groupon-type offers online. Create an online store that sells and distributes your gift cards, and ties into your POS system. Or, do you want to run a special for half price carwash vouchers for one day? Create an offer, send it to your customers, and collect 100 percent of the revenue. As President, I am excited to offer our members another service that will help increase carwash owners' ability to market their wash books and run offers online.

In addition to this website, we have interviewed many social media firms and negotiated a member price for social media marketing. If you are considering expanding your social media network and have a budget, consider using one of the companies that we have endorsed to help your business grow and prosper.

Between carwashgifts.com and monitoring your social media site, your eyes will need a break from your computer screen. Join us for a game of golf on September 10th at Shaker Hills Country Club in Harvard, MA. Enjoy lunch, an amazing day of golf, friendly competition, and numerous contests including the ever-popular 5K Putting Contest during the cocktail hour. The day concludes with dinner, prize presentations, and of course our raffle. We are really excited to partner with Teen Challenge of New England as our charity this year (tcnewengland.org). Teen Challenge not only helps recovering drug addicts, but also operates two carwashes and is a member of the NECA.

Adam Korngold
NECA President

Congratulations to Adam Korngold on his May 26 marriage to Elizabeth Kraft. The ceremony took place at Temple Reyim in Newton, MA.

Solutions for Your Carwashing Challenges

On May 21, the New England Carwash Association (NECA) presented its annual Table Top Show – a mini trade show that offers information, networking and lots of local fun for those who may or may not be able to attend the larger, out of region shows. Our exhibitors provided valuable ways for carwashers to meet their day-to-day and long-term challenges. Visit the NECA website <http://newenglandcarwash.org> Home Page, click “Recent Event Round Up” for all our exhibitors and sponsors, details of the best exhibit awards, and photos of the event.

During the afternoon prior to the show, our very popular motor coach tour of carwashes spotlighted five different facilities, southeast of Boston. These included:

- ❖ The Wash “N” Depot Car Wash in S. Easton was designed as a train depot. This new express carwash features a Sonny’s exterior tunnel, and offers a light touch washing systems. It focuses on sustainable practices, recycling 100 percent of its wash water and using non-oil based hydraulic fluid for its equipment. Self-service vacuums are available. They also offer 10 interior cleaning stations for customer use.
- ❖ Prestige Car Wash and Detail Shop in Taunton is a full service, Econocraft-equipped wash with self-service

bays and vacuums, and full-service detailing. Special services include paint and dent removal and window tinting. This diverse facility also houses a dog wash, gas station and C-store with a donut shop.

- ❖ Teen Challenge Star Shine Carwash in Brockton is a full-service carwash with Hanna and Belanger tunnels, self-service bays and vacs and auto detailing. Teen Challenge, a worldwide organization, provides residential and non-residential care for men and women fighting addiction. The carwash is staffed by people in their training program and those who have successfully completed the program. Our tourgoers enjoyed a lunch catered by Teen Challenge’s catering service.
- ❖ Crossroads Convenience in Seekonk features a 50-foot Sonny’s Express tunnel with pay station and a complete bio-reclaim system. Additional services include a gas station, convenience store and Dunkin Donuts.
- ❖ Big Blue Car Wash in Fall River has a MacNeil gated-entry tunnel and express detailing under a permanent canopy. Additional services include a gas station, convenience store, Dunkin Donuts and Chinese restaurant. ■



Golf Outing

Tuesday, September 10, 2013
Shaker Hills Country Club
Harvard, MA
 10:30 AM Registration
 11:00 AM Lunch
 12:00 PM Shotgun Start
 5:45 PM Dinner & Awards

www.necagolf.com

Photos of the tour and show will be featured in the next issue of the *Northeast Carwasher*.

TREASURER’S REPORT New England Carwash Association

Jan. - March 1st Q 2013

Income	
Interest Income.....	\$51.07
Meetings.....	\$6,915.00
Member Services.....	\$-
Membership.....	\$12,180.00
NRCC.....	\$14,332.95
Scholarship.....	\$300.00
Total Income.....	\$33,779.02
Expense	
Board Expenses.....	\$810.23
Insurance.....	\$512.40
Management Services.....	\$9,485.38
Meetings.....	\$5,735.41
Member Services.....	\$537.49
Membership.....	\$463.61
Office Expense.....	\$790.07
Professional Expense.....	\$600.00
Total Expenses.....	\$18,934.59
Net Income.....	\$14,844.43
Other: Washforacause	
Administrative Income.....	\$7.20
Administrative Expense.....	\$195.19
Donations.....	\$90.00
Cash Balances	
Citizen’s Bank Savings.....	\$174,198.63
Citizens Checking.....	\$34,854.56
Total Checking / Savings.....	\$209,053.19

Hit the Links with the NECA

The New England Carwash Association (NECA) Golf Outing on Tuesday, September 10, promises to be a memorable event. Our new venue, Shaker Hills in Harvard, MA, has been rated the #1 public course in Massachusetts by *Golf Digest*. Recently renovated, the spectacular course layout features 6,850 yards of golf from the longest tees for a par of 71 and sports many "signature quality holes." Be sure to arrive early to try out the 19th practice hole – an industry first. Foursomes will be allowed private access to a full length par 3 hole for short game refinement before the start. A full length driving range with selective target greens will also be available for practice. Visit www.shakerhills.com for more details about the course.

New this year, is our very own NECA tournament golf website, www.necagolf.com. Here you will find all the information you need to know about the outing including on-line registration and sponsorships. Your fabulous day of golf includes green fees and cart, pre-tournament lunch, player gift item, scramble tournament format, many new contests and prizes, dinner and awards ceremony. We have also revised our sponsorship opportunities to provide maximum exposure for our generous supporters who make this outing possible. Check it all out on-line.

Not a golfer – no worries. Come later in the day and join us for cocktails and dinner. From the top deck of the extraordinary new Gallery Lounge you will have incredible views of holes 1,9,10 and of course hole 18 where golfers will put for \$5K.

A portion of the proceeds will benefit the NECA Scholarship Fund and Teen Challenge, a longtime member and sup-

porter of NECA. Teen Challenge serves individuals and families in six New England states and New Jersey, providing long-term residential

recovery homes for more than 400 adults and adolescents, and outreach and drug prevention programs to children and youth in schools and local communities. Teen Challenge helps restore and reunite families torn apart by substance abuse.

Don't miss this opportunity to network and socialize with industry peers and friends and help two very important causes. We appreciate your continued support of our industry association and look forward to seeing you for a great day of golf and fun at Shaker Hills. ■



Shaker Hills Country Club in Harvard, MA.

Questions ???

Contact a committee member or Sherri at the NECA office 781/245-7400.

Patti Kaplan

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starlitecw107@aol.com

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Continued on next page ...

Create a Legacy and Learn

Participation in the work of the New England Carwash Association (NECA) is a membership privilege open to all employees of member companies. Those who are actively involved make decisions about the direction of the Association and the profession on other members' behalf. Most important, participation is a networking opportunity, an excellent way to make industry contacts and tap into the collective knowledge of the NECA community.

A Call For Nominations

There are several openings for both Operator and Supplier Directors on the 2014 NECA Board. These are one-year terms, renewable by mutual agreement, for a maximum of three consecutive terms.

Eligibility

- ❖ Owner or full-time employee of a member company in good standing
- ❖ Interest in becoming more involved in the activities of the association
- ❖ Desire to have an influence on the future of the industry and association
- ❖ Willingness to be a full participant in the work of the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors meets in person six times a year. Dates are set in advance so that Board members can plan ahead.

New Board members are inducted in the fall and take office on January 1. Non-profit governance training is provided during the fall transition period and at a new Board orientation lunch.

By September 3, 2013, please nominate yourself or a colleague by contacting Ron Bousquet, Immediate Past President, at 617/538-6758. ■

Sponsorship Opportunities ... *continued from page 78.*

players (approx 75), company logo on the golf tournament website, visual recognition at the dinner and awards ceremony, recognition of your sponsorship in the *Northeast Carwasher*, recognition on the NECA website.

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Full Service
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Executive Car Care

contact: Chip Spillane
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contact: Shay DiPina
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contact: Jeremy Bates
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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

The New York State Car Wash Association (NYSCWA) held its spring meeting recently in Rochester. A group of operators and vendors attended a great tour that highlighted washes of all types, older washes, new washes, washes operated by large, well-established companies as well as new operators; larger stores with multiple profit centers and single-tunnel locations. Visiting these washes proves that "one size" doesn't fit all. Again, I was impressed by the operators who hosted our tours looking for and receiving open and honest feedback from fellow operators and getting it.

The tour always seems to be the high point of the meeting day, probably because all carwashers who I know like to get into the nuts and bolts of an operation. They get their hands dirty so seeing "how it works" is in our blood.

The second part of the day was spent as we sat with our membership and a panel of operators discussing the state of the industry, especially the changes that will affect New York State.

A major topic discussed was the pending change to the minimum wage and its effect on the carwashing industry. Much of the discussion centered around the impact of the increase in minimum wage and the steps that operators are considering to cope with the increase in the single largest expense most operators incur. In my experience in the carwashing industry, there have been many times when I have heard, "We're just a small operation, that doesn't affect me." This issue, however, affects every operator who has an employee at minimum wage.

The discussion cycled through a number of options that ranged from making use of the "tip credit" to the use of automated tellers and additional equipment to reduce staffing levels. The discussion continued and touched on many of the issues that will face all small business in the upcoming months, from increased regulations to the impact of "The Affordable Health Care Act."

This is a good time to remind you that you are not alone, whether you have one location or 100 these changes will affect you, and you need to be prepared. There will be two types of carwash operators moving forward, those who were ahead of the changes and researched options and made plans, and those who didn't. Either way, these changes will impact the way you do business. I would encourage you to search for information and seek out experts as these are complicated issues and ones that can have a dramatic impact on the way we run our businesses. The NYSCWA and the International Carwash Association (ICA) have resources that are available to operators who want to use them. Don't be like the ostrich that sticks its head in the sand and hopes adversity and challenges simply go away, because they won't.

Walt Hartl
NYSCWA President

Paid Sick Leave Passes NYC Council

By William Y. Crowell, III

The New York City Council passed a paid sick leave bill on May 8. Under this local law, employers with 20 or more employees are required to provide their workers with five sick days. Employers with 15-19 employees are required to provide unpaid sick time. This requirement would take effect on April 1, 2014. The requirement for five paid sick days would apply to employers with 15 or more employees by October 15, 2015. The sick leave is available to a worker when an immediate family member gets sick or also during public emergencies. An employer will be required to provide a written notice to an employee at the beginning of their employment of their right to sick time.

The enforcement of the paid sick leave would be handled by the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs. An administrative tribunal would adjudicate violations with the ability to impose a penalty of three times the wages that should have been paid to an employee denied sick leave or \$250,

whichever is greater. If an employer is found to have retaliated unlawfully, full compensation to the employee for lost wages and benefits in addition to \$500 and equitable relief. In the event of an unlawful employee discharge, the same relief is granted to the employee with the penalty increased to \$2,500. In addition, the employer would be assessed a penalty not to exceed \$500 for a first violation, \$750 for subsequent violations within two years, and \$1,000 for succeeding violations.

This bill represents a compromise as compared to prior versions, which would have applied to all New York City businesses. The Mayor is expected to veto this legislation, however, it is likely that the Mayor's veto will be overridden by the City Council. The business community opposed this legislation with small business concerns at the forefront. This local law mandates additional costs on many small businesses in a particularly difficult economic environment. It also creates a significant enforcement cost and burden for small businesses.

Paid sick leave creates a precedent that in the future will be a target of labor to achieve on a statewide basis. It would add a significant cost to small business operators. It makes an otherwise unregulated term of employment subject to legislative control.

On a positive note, there has been no action to date by the City Council on Int. 0852-2012 to license carwashes.

The 2013-2014 New York State budget included an increase to the minimum wage effective on December 31, 2013, to \$8 an hour. It also has increases to \$8.75/hour commencing on December 31, 2014, and to \$9.00/hour on December 31, 2015. There has been some confusion resulting from some newspaper reports as to the application of these increases to carwash workers. The Labor Department ad-

vises that the new statute is applicable to carwash workers, so carwash operators are subject to the increases when they are effective. The Labor Department has not yet issued a directive or wage order on this issue but the safest course is to plan for the wage increase.

The prescribed increases in the legislation do not apply to food service workers and service employees paid in accordance with 12 NYCRR Part 146. This regulation covers employees in the hospitality industry. Under the newly enacted legislation, the Labor Commissioner is required to appoint a wage board to make recommendations for changes to the wage order, which the Commissioner is required to act on. This means that a determination on the hospitality workers minimum wage will be made administratively.

Prior to the implementation of the increase to \$8.00/hour on December 31, 2013, the Department of Labor should be issuing guidance on the tip and uniform allowances which will be determined by a wage order. Your Association will keep you updated on this information.

The 2013-2014 budget also included a minimum wage tax credit. The tax credit would pay employers for the increase for any workers between the ages of 16 and 19 to the \$8 minimum wage. It would pay employers a \$1.31 credit for the same teenage workers at the next step of \$8.75 for the minimum wage. The tax credit would increase to \$1.35 for the next step to \$9.00/hour. This credit creates a wage reimbursement mechanism for teenage workers age 16-19. Carwash operators who employ teenage workers should raise this tax credit with their accountants to ensure that you take advantage of its provisions. ■

William Y. Crowell, III, is a partner with the Albany-based law firm of Whiteman Osterman & Hanna LLC. You can reach him at 518/487-7677 or wcrowell@woh.com.



William Y. Crowell, III



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NYSCWA Tours Rochester Washes At Spring Meeting



The New York State Car Wash Association (NYSCWA) headed west to Rochester for its Spring Membership Meeting & Carwash Tour, May 14, at the Woodcliff Hotel & Spa. Nearly 50 attended the tour and dinner, according to NYSCWA President Walt Hartl. “For once it wasn’t raining in Rochester, and we had a great tour of four stand-out washes,” he said.

Featured on the tour were Royal Car Wash, a 125-foot express tunnel where 80 percent of their water is recycled. The \$2.7 million facility sits at a high-volume intersection and is owned by Anthony and Danny Daniele.

Continued on page 86...



The exterior wash features a powerhouse blower at its exit.



Royal Car Wash was years in the making due to strict town laws, but the wait was worth it for owners Anthony and Danny Daniele.



Wash owners Anthony and Danny Daniele.



Squeaky Clean's Gary Sloan, McNeil's Mike Benmoschè and Foam N Wash's Gary Baright.



Simoniz' Al West and Gary Baright of Foam N Wash.

NYSCWA President Walt Hartl and NYSCWA Treasurer Mike Benmoschè.



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NYSCWA Carwash Tour ... *continued from page 84.*

Next, the group toured the multi-faceted Delta Sonic on Erie Boulevard in Webster. Built in 2004, this wash features an exterior tunnel, c-store, gas islands, detail shop, express services, oil change facility and Dunkin Donuts. The facility is owned by the Benderson family.

Continued on page 88 ...



This Delta Sonic facility on Erie Boulevard in Webster is a true multiple profit center complete with an exterior tunnel with offline full service, a c-store, gas islands, detail shop, express services, oil change and Dunkin Donuts franchise.





Continued on page 88 ...

NYSCWA Carwash Tour ... continued from page 87.

Next in the lineup was Buckman's Car Wash in Penfield/Fairport. This exterior tunnel features prepping and towel drying, four self-service vacs, vending and a change machine. The site is owned by Jeff Gold.



This exterior-only Buckman's Car Wash in Fairport is attractive and gets the job done.



Owner Jeff Gold also sells propane as an additional profit center.



The final wash on the tour was Rapid Laser Wash/Perinton Express. This location features a touch-free unit with a dryer and three traditional heated self-serve bays, in addition to an exterior-only 120-foot tunnel. The facility was built in 2010 and is owned by Mark and Michelle Landers. The bus tour was sponsored by DRB Systems and Simoniz USA.

Once the group returned to the hotel they enjoyed hors d'oeuvres sponsored by McNeil & Co., Inc. and then a buffet dinner sponsored by Micrologic. After dinner President Hartl ran a brief business meeting and then moderated a panel that hit on topics from the impending minimum wage hike and its impact on our industry, to social media, signage and bug removal. "There was a little bit of everything in our meeting today," recounted Hartl. "The tour included a lot of great washes doing innovative things and our panel provided insight into many issues facing today's operator." ■

The association's next event is its annual baseball game outing to CitiField, June 28, when the Mets take on the Washington Nationals at 7pm.

This new wash, built in 2010, is attractive, colorful and puts out a really clean car. It's gated entry format streamlines production. The wash is owned by Mark and Michelle Landers.





Acceptance - How It Feels To Be Who You Are

By Ray Justice

This writing is about how it feels when others, especially when they are close to us, accept us as we are. Personal confidence goes up a notch and we can relax and be ourself.

If Water Could Talk

They say that water carries memory with it on its journey

We have to wonder memory of what?

Is it that which was touched, felt or collected in its continuous travels through our world?

Water moves, water changes

It moves on the surface then mixes with our clouds and below, down under with our rocks and soil.

Always returning circulating and connecting along the way.

I wonder if water could tell us its story what would we know?

.. or maybe it does, and has been, and we have not yet learned how to listen.

Ray Justice is an Entrepreneur, Poet & Creativity Explorer. He is a former car wash operator and past president of the NYSCWA. Visit him at Think2wice.com or email him at ray@ThoughtCompass.com. ©2013 ray justice

It starts out with the funeral service and celebration of life for my father who passed away at 92 years old. The service itself was full of stories of a man who served his country in World War II, started his own florist and plant growing business and raised a family of eight children along the way. His favorite song was titled, "In The Garden" and he passed at the exact time while 32 close relatives were singing that song to him.

Several family members spoke of his Navy days, community and family involvement, his entrepreneurship, and hard work while building a successful business. It was very touching, but it was the last speaker, my brother in-law Jerry, who hit the high note. He spoke of the very strong feeling of acceptance felt by him, as an in-law, to our family. As he emotionally continued I was well aware of the heads nodding, in agreement, especially by the extended family members. You see once you were part of our family, it did not matter if your relationship changed with your spouse. My parents accepted you as you were and if the relationship changed you were still accepted, exactly the same, just because you were you. My parents currently have 63 members of their extended family. That includes their eight children, grandchildren and great grandchildren and partners. You can imagine the different personalities, beliefs and desires of a group that size, yet all are accepted for who they are not how another thinks they should be.

As I heard the emotion in my brother-in-law's voice, it took me to another level. Acceptance, so gratefully appreciated by those stepping in from other relations, and which I have so naturally taken for granted, moved me to yet another level of appreciation for my parents.

Thanks Dad, and as you already know, Mom is still at it, accepting all for who they are. ■

Ray Justice is an Entrepreneur, Poet & Creativity Explorer. He is a former carwash operator and past president of the NYSCWA. Visit him at Think2wice.com or email him at ray@ThoughtCompass.com.



Ray Justice

Hoffman Development Moves Into the Auto Sales and Financing Business



By Alan M. Petrillo

Diversity is the name of the game for some carwash operators, but Hoffman Development Corp. in Albany, NY, is taking the concept to an entirely different level than that typically associated with carwashes.

Hoffman Development chief executive officer Tom Hoffman, Jr. said the company has entered into a development agreement with J.D. Byrider to build four franchise automobile sales and financing locations – two in Albany and two in Syracuse – over the next eight to 10 years.

J.D. Byrider is the country's leading used car and finance company franchise, doing business in 32 states and handling more than 4,300 customers each month.

Hoffman said the first Hoffman-owned J.D. Byrider is expected to open July 1 on Central Avenue in Albany in a 20,000-square foot building sitting on six acres of land.

"The business will be in the J.D. Byrider name and will be a standalone business for us," Hoffman pointed out. "We will try to market our carwash customers to J.D. Byrider and vice versa. It's the car-relationship part of the business which creates a synergy for us."

Ron Slone, Hoffman Development's president, said he became aware of J.D. Byrider a couple of years ago through his work as the national fleet committee chairman for Jiffy Lube, another franchise which Hoffman Development owns.

"I filled out an application for a franchise with them, did a webinar and talked with Tom about it," Slone said. "After we both did the webinar, we flew to Indianapolis (IN) to meet with them and some of their franchisees. Their business makes a nice fit with our carwashes and Jiffy Lubes."

Slone added that J.D. Byrider has metrics for every aspect of its business – the number of cars needed to sell, the types to buy, the cost to pay for them and what the costs of sales should be.

Hoffman Development currently has 19 carwashes and 10 Jiffy Lube locations in New York. It will open its 20th carwash location on Route 30 in Amsterdam in October, Hoffman said.

"We are putting in a 128-foot exterior carwash with self-service vacuums at a former McDonald's site," he said. "It's a small site for us, so that's the most we'll be able to fit on the property."

Mike Pearce, vice president of franchise development for J.D. Byrider, said the company currently has 135 franchise units in operation, as well as 23 corporate units.

"Some of those franchises belong to multiple franchisees that own multiple stores," he said. "The largest franchisee owns nine stores."

Pearce said that J.D. Byrider strives to be an industry leader in the ethical treatment of customers.

"We offer a better car with a three-year/36,000-mile warranty," he said. "Our cars typically are seven to eight years

old with between 80,000 and 95,000 miles on them. We help people out by giving them a vehicle at a reasonable cost and if it breaks down, we fix it for them."

J.D. Byrider puts out a list of recommended cars for franchisees to purchase, he added, such as Chevrolet Impalas, small SUVs and minivans, usually US-made vehicles and not a lot of imports.

Pearce noted that the Hoffman Development franchises are his company's first foray into the New York State market.

"New York is a challenging state to get licensing to lend money," he said. "Hoffman had to get a full banking license in order open their doors."

Hoffman said J.D. Byrider is not so much a used car business, but rather "a finance company that provides reliable transportation to people who can't find financing from traditional lenders. This company looks at each customer and their credit history, where they work, creates a budget for them, does credit counseling, and if they look like a good risk, lends them money to purchase transportation."

Hoffman said there's an opportunity to tie into his firm's carwashes. "Perhaps for every on-time payment a J.D. Byrider customer makes, we might provide a low-cost or no-cost carwash," he suggested. "And the J.D. Byrider service department will only be for our customers, using SAE-certified auto mechanics. We want the service center to be a break-even enterprise because we want to keep our customers' cars on the road. We intend on charging only \$45 an hour for labor and pass through the cost of any parts. In effect, the customer is buying into a program."

Slone said that Hoffman Development had to arrange for a \$5 million line of credit for the J.D. Byrider franchise that will be used to finance the cars they'll sell. He added that one of the franchise requirements was a minimum of \$1 million in working capital.

"We bought a building and there are plenty of startup costs," Slone pointed out. "There are legal and training costs, and our general manager is now on the payroll training at the J.D. Byrider corporate office. He'll soon be working with other franchisees in Springfield, MA, and Davenport, IA."

Hoffman believes that moving into the J.D. Byrider business is a great diversification move for Hoffman Development.

"We have a great name in carwashing and the Jiffy Lube business, so our reputation is important," Hoffman said. "We think we will do very well in this new area. We have been good at attracting and keeping employees over the years, and this allows us the opportunity to provide a whole new industry for them." ■

Alan M. Petrillo is a Tucson, AZ, freelance journalist 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.

Royal Car Wash Owners Bring Diversity to New Level



By Alan M. Petrillo

Danny Daniele is a well-spoken, easy-going owner of Royal Wash in Rochester, NY, with a sharpshooter's ability for hitting a target of opportunity, who with his family, is able to identify likely business prospects that have a hint of success and jump into the fray to make their mark.

The Daniele family companies own an array of businesses in the Rochester, NY, market in addition to the Royal Car Wash – Mario's Italian restaurant, Basil (a casual Italian kitchen), the Original Crab Shack, Mario's Cafe, Daniele Construction, Mar-danth Enterprises, Southpoint Cove Waterfront Apartments, Royal Atlantic Condominiums and Southpoint Marina.

Royal Wash, their newest venture, is a 128-foot express exterior tunnel built to look like a "fancy bank," according to Daniele.

"It has a European flair to it," Daniele said. "We opened the carwash in July of 2011, which was our first step into the carwash business. We couldn't be happier."

The operating triumvirate of the Daniele family companies consists of father Mario, and sons Danny and Anthony.

"My father came here from Italy when he was 18, when he had a little high school education and could speak some English," Danny Daniele said. "He had a background in construction and when he got to this country he opened a pizzeria and then a restaurant."

Daniele said he and his brother grew up in the restaurant business and both went to Auburn University, graduating with degrees in business management and finance.

"We opened up a second restaurant within a year and then a third," he said. "Then we purchased and renovated a 200-slip marina, where we are now getting final approval to construct a restaurant, a pool house and 200 more slips. Through our construction company, we also built condos and apartments overlooking the marina."

After Mobil closed a number of gas stations in the Rochester area, a site at 2875 Monroe Avenue sat vacant for nine years, according to Daniele. He thought it would make a great corner for a conveyorized carwash.

The Daniele family approached the town of Brighton, where the property is located, to get a zoning variance for the proposed carwash.

"The town of Brighton and neighboring town of Pittsford have ordinances that don't allow carwashes as approved businesses in the towns," Daniele said. "We thought the ordinances were outdated and took two years to fight and negotiate with the town (of Brighton) and finally got a zoning variance to allow our carwash to be built."

The caveat was that the family had to pay the town \$50,000 and agree to maintain a half-acre of landscape, on town property near an expressway.

"We agreed," Daniele said. "While our carwash sits on only three-quarters of an acre, because it's so difficult to get

approval for a carwash in this town, it means there's virtually no competition in town."

Daniele pointed out that he served as the General Contractor at Daniele Construction and had the new carwash open in 93 days, including razing the former Mobil station on the site.

Royal Wash is built to handle cars in a speedy, efficient and quality manner, Daniele noted.

"We can process 500 cars with two employees working all day," he said. "With four employees, we can do 1,000 cars a day. The labor costs are tremendously low because of our Sonny's equipment and DRB systems."

Daniele pointed out that Royal Wash was the first carwash in the area not to hand dry vehicles when they exit the tunnel.

"We use an RO (reverse osmosis) system for a spot-free rinse," he said, "and have 11 15-horsepower blowers at the end of the tunnel to dry the vehicles."

Customer service is an important facet to the carwash business, Daniele maintained, as it is with the other Daniele family businesses.

"All our employees wear bow ties and button-down shirts," he said. "We keep them smiling because when you hire happy people, your business is a happy one. The number one comment we get on our response cards is that our people are so friendly and happy."

Daniele said that the family business motto is "WIT – Whatever It Takes." He noted, "We look for passion and intensity in our employees, and added to our culture, that's what makes sure everything is right with our customers." ■

Alan M. Petrillo is a Tucson, AZ, freelance journalist 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.



Wash owners Anthony and Danny Daniele.

Royal Car Wash is owned by Anthony and Danny Daniele, an established family in the Rochester market with holdings in restaurants, real estate and boating. Their exterior-only wash is state-of-the-art.



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Can You Guess How Many Flags?

This shot from the Hoffman Car Wash location in Queensbury, NY, was taken last July 4. According to Hoffman President Ron Slone, each store displays 40 flags,

plus one under their company sign. So all together Hoffman Car Washes display 500 flags to mark Independence Day!



Make Sure Your Wash is Properly Insured When Mother Nature's Wrath Hits Hard!

By Mike Benmoschè

Whatever the cause, there is no doubt that our weather patterns have drastically changed and consequently we are experiencing some devastating storms across the country. Many of our operators have been adversely affected by these occurrences, which have cost thousands of dollars in damage. The alarming part of this is, in many cases, they were either not covered by insurance or inadequately insured.

Most standard property insurance policies exclude off premises utility coverage for damage to property or business interruption losses. Last year, there was a change to these standard clauses that even made it more restrictive by excluding coverage from damage to a utility service on premises.

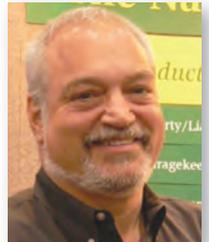
For clarification purposes, utility services is defined as the failure of power, communication, water or other utility service supplied to the described premises. The exclusion only applies at the location if the damaged equipment is used to supply utility service from a source away from the described premises. Example: If a lightning storm passes over and damages a transformer on your property that sends a surge causing all the computer circuit boards to burn up, most insurers will not pay to replace them. They will also ex-

clude any business income loss. Fortunately, there is an endorsement that can be added to most policies that will add this very important coverage.

When requesting adding this feature, here are a few ideas that you may want to discuss with your current agent: You can include or exclude overhead transmission lines, Be sure that you have damage to property and business interruption and double check the limits that you have. Some companies have limited coverage that is part of a list of several added coverages designed to give the illusion that you are adequately protected.

Don't be one of those that ignore this exposure until it is too late. Make this an important addition to your risk management program! ■

Mike Benmoschè is with McNeil & Co., Inc, based in Cortland, NY. You can reach him at mbenmosche@mcneilandcompany.com or 607/220-6344.



Mike Benmoschè

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NYSCWA Member Leon Husisian, 75, Passes

Leon Husisian of Elmira, NY, and owner of Magic Car Washes (formerly AutoMagic) died February 28, at his home, of cancer. He is survived by his wife Nancy, his two children Greg and Jeff and his six grandchildren. Born in Worcester, MA, on December 2, 1938, he graduated from Worcester Classical High School in 1956. After graduating from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in 1960, he began his career as an engineer at Corning, Inc., after serving in the U.S. Army as a First Lieutenant. A longtime entrepreneur, Husisian owned the Elmira Judo School from 1967 to 1972. He also owned apartment houses in Elmira and since 1985, he owned and operated the Magic Car Washes in Elmira Heights, Vestal and Binghamton with his wife.

A military funeral was held for Husisian at Woodlawn Cemetery in Elmira. He was buried alongside his daughter, Christine, who preceded him in 2006. ■

Remembering a Good Friend...

Ray Justice (former Buckman's Car Wash owner) introduced me to Leon and Nancy (Husisian) in the early '80s after they built their first wash in Elmira Heights. Leon had been in many other businesses before he entered the carwash industry, though. He was an Army Officer, a lieutenant, I believe. He ran a judo studio, worked at Corning Glass, painted and was a landlord. But you could tell he loved being a carwasher. After being in his company for a short time, I realized he was a genius and loving husband.

Leon and Nancy and Terri (Kubarek) and I became great friends. We shared many dinners together over the years. Terri and I were honored to share their children's weddings and Leon and Nancy's 50th anniversary in 2012. Leon, in addition to being a successful carwash operator, was also a master chess player and he loved backgammon and the craps table at the casino. He loved activities that challenged his mind.

He also was a master practical joker. Leon always had a big smile on his face and would start his days very early in his Magic Car Wash van be it to start a new project or make a repair at one of his locations, sometimes at 3 or 4am. This early start would require an afternoon nap whether it meant pulling alongside the highway or in the Lowes or Home Depot parking lot. This activity resulted in many knocks on the van window to see if he was ok!

I considered Leon Husisian one of my greatest friends. I will miss him terribly.

Mark Kubarek, K & S Car Wash, Auburn, NY

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The *Northeast Carwasher* is produced by Media Solutions, 2214 Budd Terrace, Niskayuna, NY 12309, in conjunction with the design firm Media Magic, 121 Loudon Road, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866, for the New York State Car Wash Association, New England Carwash Association, the Car Wash Operators of New Jersey, Inc., Connecticut Carwash Association and the Mid-Atlantic Carwash Association. Neither Media Solutions nor Media Magic assumes any responsibility for claims made in advertisements, classified or otherwise, listed in this magazine. All contents property of Media Solutions. Reproduction in whole or in part without express written permission is prohibited.

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