

northeast carwasher

**An Interview with NRCC Keynoter
Gov. Chris Christie**



**Private Equity
Growth Threefold**

Entropy at the Carwash

**Score a Victory
with Corporate
Sponsorships**

**Roush on What
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**Venus & Mars Talk
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**Old School Washing
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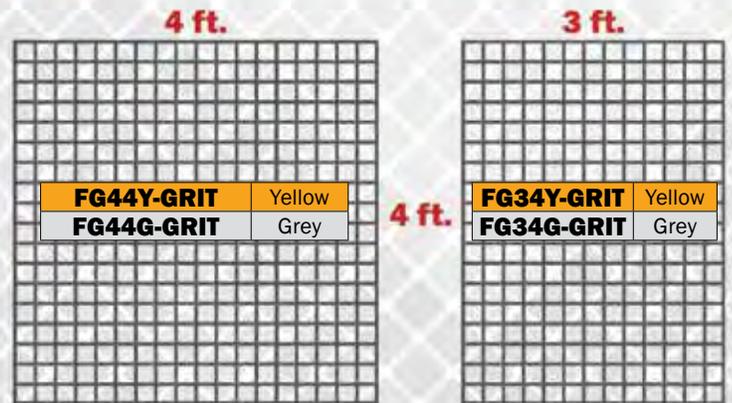
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Fall 2021

Vol. 26 No. 4

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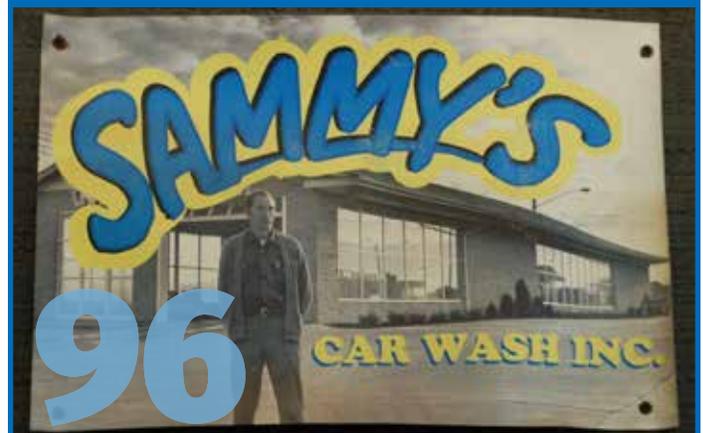
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northeastcarwasher.com

This October it will have been two years since we last convened in person at the Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC). And the road to get back here has been paved with missteps, apprehension, confusion and fear. On the other side of all that we have survived, re-invented, worked together and recovered. We have endured as an industry and people and we have learned a lot over the course of the last two years. It's time now to take what we've learned and do better and be better human beings, small businesspeople, friends, family members and carwashers. Before us, in Atlantic City, we have the opportunity to start on that path.

You've heard me drone on and on about how important it is to become involved and engaged in our industry. You've heard me wax poetic about my love of carwashing and the trade show that I feel unites us, the NRCC. But know that this year's NRCC is going to feel different and also reinvented. Thanks to some inward reflection and some really generous sponsors, we have put a new spin on a classic event. We have secured a high-profile keynote speaker in former Governor Chris Christie thanks to the generosity of Micrologic and InnovateIt. Politics aside, please, I had the honor of interviewing Governor Christie recently and found him as straight shooting and real as he is purported to be. I also read three books on him prior to the interview so I felt like I knew the man, at least a little bit, going into our discussion. If you're not a fan, you might want to educate yourself before his keynote. If you still don't like him, that's your choice, but go into it with an open mind and I am pretty sure you'll walk away more knowledgeable about politics, his beliefs and where our country is headed then you were before you heard him speak. And what's really cool is that he may just run for President in 2024, and you can say you heard him speak.

Also at this year's show is the founder of Big Ass Fans, Carey Smith, who will also motivate and energize you during his program on Tuesday, October 5. There will also be other great educational opportunities including a frank state of the industry discussion led by several "industry titans" on the last day of the show. These leaders will take a deep dive into consolidation, contactless operations and carwashing's future. But there's also several other seminars to wet your whistle. You can see the entire lineup at nrccshow.com

Welcome to All!

Another change to this year's event is that the traditional Welcome Reception on Tuesday has been moved to the Atlantic City Convention Center and starts at the close of the trade show. It is open to every single operator and supplier, no matter your level of registration, thanks to our generous sponsor ICS. It will be a true networking event and opportunity for you to reconnect and reenergize before heading out to dinner or back to our new host hotel, The Hard Rock Casino & Hotel on Atlantic City's iconic boardwalk.

To say I'm just a little bit excited about all of it is an understatement. It's time to get as back to as normal as we can right now, and it's time to look to the future with positivity and optimism. That's my plan.

See you in AC!



Suzanne L. Stansbury
Editor/Publisher

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Turn It Down!

Many operators are faced with vac areas just teeming with loud music while their customers clean out their rides. What to do?

These two operators have taken to signage on two levels of directness. What other options exist? **Share your thoughts at info@northeastcarwasher.com** **NC**



This new Hoffman express exterior in Latham, NY, places simple signage above its vacs to deter excessive noise.



Ryan Robinson with Overflow Express Wash in Tuscaloosa, AL, takes it a step further with poignant signage that is exacting and witty.

WASH VOLUME INDEX

Our Wash Volume Index through June is mixed. Although May was record-breaking, June (and especially July) was a wash out for most. Our New England operator was up 18 percent over the same time in 2019, and our Jersey Shore participant was down 17 percent. The other two operators were up 4.4 percent in upstate New York and down by 4 percent in the Mid-Atlantic. As we move through the fall and into the winter let the carwash gods and goddesses sprinkle just the perfect amount of snow, sand and salt into everyone's future and may one of these days all participants be up.



Thanks to operators Dave Dugoff (MD), Doug Rieck (NJ), Steve Weekes (NY) and Dave Ellard (MA) for their numbers!

Old School Done Right



Read about Sammy's Car Wash & Dog Wash Emporium owner, Sam Cosmano, and his operation on page 96. He is a shining example of old school carwashing done right! **NC**

Splash's Mark Curtis had a mobile vaccine clinic available to his team at their annual family fun day at Quassy Amusement & Waterpark in Middlebury. More than 100 took advantage of the optional clinic.



CORRECTION

In the summer issue's feature on Raccoon Car Wash in New Hampshire, the wall material should have been identified as being from Extrutech Plastics Inc., Manitowoc, WI. It was a custom color for that specific wash. **NC**



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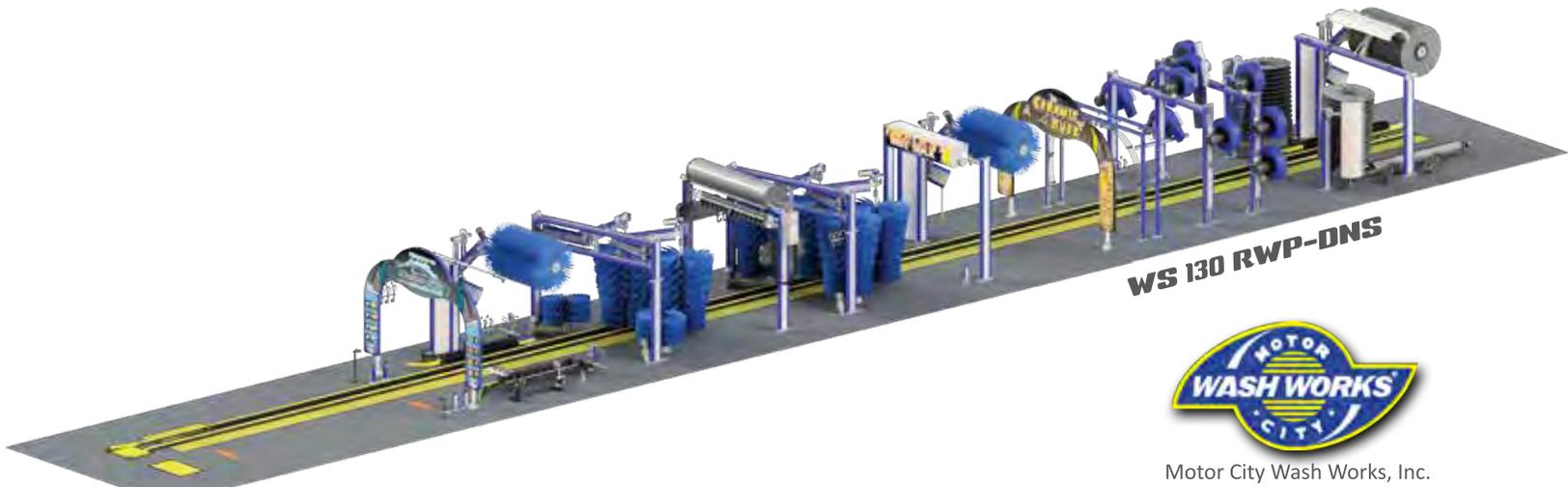
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INDUSTRY LOSES ICON IN JIM COLEMAN

James “Jim” Edward Coleman, Jr., 90, passed away at his ranch in Batesville, TX, on July 5. He is survived by his wife of 69 years, Lorraine, as well as six of his seven children. He is preceded in death by his son Randall Coleman and brother Ed Coleman.



Jim, a pioneer in the carwash industry, was honored many times with awards and praise for his eagerness to help others and share his knowledge and expertise. He received the Family Business of the Year Award from Baylor University in 2004, the Hall of Fame Award from the International Carwash Association in 2003 and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Southwest Carwash Association in 2017. He was also a lifetime member of the Knights of Columbus and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. But it was his faith in God, his desire to live a Godly life and to pass that on to his children that was paramount to him.

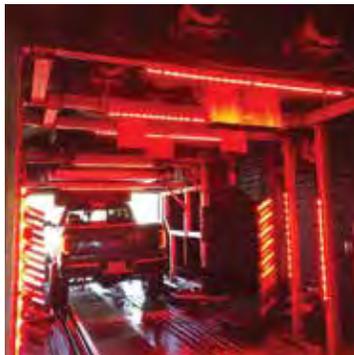
NCS PARTNERS WITH CAROLINE PRIDE

National Carwash Solutions (NCS), Grimes, IA, a leader in end-to-end carwash solutions, is in strategic partnership with Carolina Pride Carwash Systems & Solutions, Timberlake, NC, creating the largest direct installation and service company in North America, according to a company press release. “Carolina Pride has an impressive story and reputation,” said NCS CEO Michael Gillen. “Under the leadership of Dale Reynolds, Carolina Pride has become a premier distributor and serves a nationwide customer base via a top-tier line of proprietary equipment products.”

National Pride is a leading supplier of inbay and tunnel carwash systems, self-service equipment and maintenance and installation services in North and South Carolina. It is also a leading manufacturer of self-service carwash systems and tunnel support equipment including water treatment, motor controls and chemical injection systems with distribution across North America.

NCS brands include MacNeil, Ryko, TSS, Vacutech, Clean-Touch and Lustra. According to Reynolds, who is also a second-generation owner, “We are proud to add our name and line of Industrial Grade Wash Systems to the NCS brand.”

To learn more visit ncswash.com and cpcarwash.com



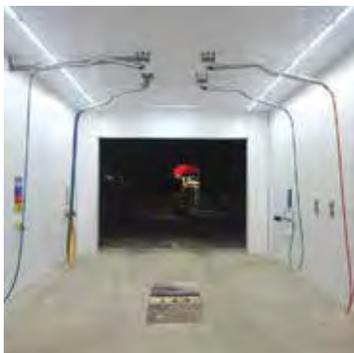
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CLEAN EXPRESS RAISES \$2,800 FOR STREETSBORO COMMUNITY PANTRY

CLEan Express Auto Wash, Cleveland, OH, has donated \$2,800 to the Streetsboro Community Pantry to help further their mission of providing free food to Streetsboro families struggling to meet their daily needs, said a company press release. The donations were collected from CLEan Express Auto Wash customers at the company's fifth Greater Cleveland-area Grand Opening in Streetsboro in May.

"It's always extremely humbling when we have the opportunity to use our Grand Opening to give back to the local community," said John Roush, Express Wash Concepts CEO. "We appreciate the generosity of our incredible Streetsboro customers, and know that the Pantry will put this money to great use to assist so many people and families facing food insecurity."

During the Grand Opening, CLEan Express Auto Wash offered a free signature "CLEan-est" carwash (\$18 value) to every customer in exchange for a monetary donation to the Streetsboro Community Pantry. Throughout the Grand Opening 2,087 free carwashes, at retail value of more than \$37,500, were given away.

For more information visit cleanexpresswash.com

EXPRESS WASH CONCEPTS EXPANDS INTO PITTSBURGH MARKET

Express Wash Concepts (EWC) has expanded into the Pittsburgh, PA, market with the acquisition of CleanTown USA, in Allison Park, according to a company press release. The location will continue operating as is until mid-October, at which point it will be temporarily shut down for 60 days for a \$2 million conversion. Upon reopening, CleanTown USA will be Pittsburgh's premier express carwash featuring two new express wash tunnels, the industry's best wash equipment and free, self-service vacuums.

The company has also announced that it has broken ground on a tunnel carwash in New Kensington and is scheduled to begin construction on a third express tunnel in East McKeesport. Both New Kensington and East McKeesport locations will operate under the Clean Express Auto wash brand.

The acquisition brings Express Wash Concepts' current operating wash portfolio to 45 locations under the following brands: Central Ohio-based Moo Moo Express Car Wash, Greater Dayton-based Flying Ace Express Car Wash, Greater Cleveland-based Clean Express auto Wash, Toledo-based Meyers Auto Wash and Virginia-based Green Clean Express Auto Wash. EWC plans to open more than 50 additional locations by the end of 2022.

For more information visit expresswashconcepts.com

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CLEAN EXPRESS RAISES \$3,500 FOR PARMA CITY SCHOOLS



CLEan Express Auto Wash, Cleveland, OH, has donated approximately \$3,500 to the Parma City Schools Foundation to help further their mission of enriching the education experiences of Parma, Parma Heights and Seven Hills students, according to a company press release. The donations were collected from CLEan Express Auto Wash customers at the company's fourth Greater Cleveland-area Grand Opening in March at 5720 Broadview Road in Parma.

During the Grand Opening, CLEan Express Auto Wash offered a free signature "CLEan-est" carwash (\$18 value) to every customer in exchange for a monetary donation to the Parma City Schools Foundation. Discounted retail gift cards were also offered with all proceeds donated back to the Foundation. In total, CLEan Express gave away more than 2,765 free carwashes at a retail value of more than \$49,770. "We are proud to continue our Grand Opening legacy of improving the communities in which we operate," said John Roush, Express Wash Concepts CEO. "This money will be used to positively impact hundreds of Parma-area students during what has been a challenging school year."

For more information visit parmacityschools.org and cleanexpresswash.com

DRB TO BE ACQUIRED BY VONTIER

DRB® Systems, LLC, Akron, OH, has plans to be acquired by Vontier Corporation, a global industrial technology company focused on transportation and mobility solutions, according to a company press release. The acquisition will be subject to customary closing conditions, including regulatory approval, with an anticipated closing in 2021.

Headquartered in Raleigh, NC, Vontier's portfolio includes market-leading expertise in mobility technologies, retail and com-

mmercial fueling, fleet management, telematics, vehicle diagnostics and repair and smart cities end-markets, according to the release.

DRB is owned by New Mountain Capital, a New York-based investment firm. "DRB's passion to leverage technology to unlock value for our customers became stronger today," said DRB CEO and President Dan Pittman. "Vontier's purpose of mobilizing the future to create a better world, along with its great portfolio of companies, positions DRB's team to continue its growth and better serve its customers," he said.

To learn more visit drb.com, newmountaincapital.com and vontier.com

MISTER CAR WASH GOES PUBLIC

Mister Car Wash (NYSE: MCW), made its public debut on the New York Stock Exchange June 25 raising \$468 million as shares of its stock rallied to \$22.40 or 49 percent above its Initial Public Offering (IPO) price of \$15 per share, according to a company press release. The national carwash chain offered up 37.5 million shares of common stock. Mister Car Wash, based in Tucson, AZ, offered 31,250,000 of those shares while another 6,250,000 are being sold by selling stockholders. The initial offering closed on June 29.

According to its U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) filing, the company washes 59.6 million cars between April 2020 and March 31 of 2021. Mister Car Wash operates more than 340 carwashes in 21 states.

For more information visit mistercarwash.com



EXPRESS WASH CONCEPTS ACQUIRES GREEN CLEAN EXPRESS

Express Wash Concepts (EWC), Columbus, OH, has expanded its portfolio beyond the Ohio market to the East Coast with the acquisition of Virginia-based Green Clean Express Auto Wash, according to a company press release. Green Clean Express currently operates five Hampton Roads locations in Virginia Beach, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Chesapeake and Suffolk.

An additional 20 locations are scheduled to open by 2022 throughout Virginia, Maryland and North Carolina. "Green Clean Express Auto Wash is backed by impressive leadership and vision, and bringing them under the Express Wash Concepts family of brands marks a major milestone in the continued responsible expansion of our geographic footprint," said John Roush, Express Wash Concepts' Chief Executive Officer.

Green Clean Express is also slated to open three locations

Continued...



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Newsworthy ... continued

in Portsmouth and Suffolk this summer. “We are excited to join Express Wash Concepts and integrate their proven expertise in operations and customer service,” said Shawn Everett, Founder and Managing Partner of Green Clean Express Auto Wash.

To learn more about the recent acquisition read our interview with John Roush on page 28 or visit expresswashconcepts.com

SONNY'S MAKES ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

Sonny's, Tamarac, FL, the world's largest manufacturer of conveyorized carwash equipment, parts and supplies, has made some organizational changes to strengthen how it serves clients and to better support the company's accelerated pace of growth, according to a company press release. Kati Pierce has been promoted to President and will continue to report to Paul Fazio, CEO. As President, she will oversee the day-to-day operations of Sonny's Holdings. Pierce most recently served as Sonny's Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing and has more than 25 years experience in the carwash industry as an owner, operator and distributor. Fazio will remain as CEO and will continue to focus on strategic initiatives, mergers and acquisitions, and the growth of Sonny's Holdings. “Internally, we all know Kati has been running Sonny's day-to-day operations for the last year,” said Fazio. “This announcement gives Kati the title to match what she has been

doing. She has a clear view of what Sonny's is and can be, and a persistent focus on the customer. She's been an integral part of growing and strengthening our company and she's brought greater focus and accountability to each of our solutions.”

For more information visit sonnydirect.com

SONNY'S EXPANDS WEST COAST HOLDINGS

Sonnys' Enterprises, Tamarac, FL, has acquired AutoVac Industrial in San Diego, FASTECH in Buena Park and MC GROUP (McGuinness Vehicle Wash Systems) in Burbank, CA, according to a company press release. “AutoVac brings decades of experience and distinct capabilities in vacuum technology and manufacturing,” said Kati Pierce, President of Sonny's.

The acquisition of FASTECH's Carwash Division and MC GROUP affords Sonny's the opportunities to strengthen its relationship with Southern California customers, said the release. “Both FASTECH and MC GROUP are established, talented teams with deep industry knowledge,” said Mike Beuchat, GM of Sonny's CarWash Services West. “I believe adding these distributors to the Sonny's CarWash Services West team will add significant value to our California customers.”

To learn more visit sonnydirect.com, AutoVacInc.com, fastechus.com and mcgroupsales.com



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SONNY'S ACQUIRES PECO

Sonny's Enterprises, Tamarac, FL, the world's largest manufacturer of conveyerized carwash equipment, parts and supplies has acquired PECO Car Wash Systems, Auburn Hills, MI, according to a company press release. PECO is a leading family-owned manufacturer of professional carwashing systems with more than 50 years of experience. "Over the years, we've been approached by other companies but we never felt it to be the right fit," said JR Rietsch, President of PECO. "Like us, Sonny's is a second-generation carwash family with client relationships that date back for decades. By joining Sonny's we now have a full offering in house to make our clients even more successful."

Fazio echoes those sentiments. "I have a great respect for PECO's team, product and culture," he said. "PECO's history in the industry, service-oriented background and customer-focused approach matches well with Sonny's. The combination of our equipment lines offers tremendous benefit to our global network of thousands of carwash professionals."

PECO's management and staff will remain in place with the factory in Auburn Hills, MI.

For more information visit sonnydirect.com and PECOcarwash.com

AMPLIFY CAR WASH ADVISORS COMPLETES THREE MULTI-SITE TRANSACTIONS



Amplify Car Wash Advisors, Scottsdale, AZ, a national mergers and acquisitions and capital advisory firm founded by Bill Martin and Jeff Pavone, recently completed three multi-site transactions in the Southwest, Southeast and Midwest, including the successful acquisition of six Carmel Car Wash locations in the Dallas-market, according to a company press release.

Amplify advised Carmel Car Wash and completed the transaction in early July 2021. Carmel, a full-service carwash that specializes in auto detailing, continues to operate four locations. "Jeff was extremely professional, he and his team

Continued ...



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-Steven Gerring, Owner, Gerring's Car Wash

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Newsworthy ... continued

did a great job and got us the maximum value for our locations,” said John Brodersen, president of Carmel Car Wash. “I’ve been in this business for 30 years and worked with a lot of people buying and selling carwashes, and Jeff is by far the best.”

In addition, Driven Brands acquired Tropic Car Wash in a portfolio of seven locations in Louisiana and Florida. Amplify provided seller representation and completed the transaction in late June 2021.

True Blue acquired eight Extreme Clean locations in the Quad Cities, Rockford, and suburbs of Chicago. This acquisition brings True Blue to 61 carwashes, according to the press release. Amplify advised Extreme Clean on the transaction which closed in late June 2021. “The carwash industry is evolving rapidly, and we are seeing mergers and acquisitions on the rise nationwide as more regional and national brands are looking to scale in a market faster than ever,” said Jeff

Pavone, partner at Amplify Car Wash Advisors. “This means valuations are at an all-time high and now is a great time for car wash owners to consider selling their car wash chain for maximum value.”

For more information
visit amplifywash.com

EVERWASH ATTRACTS T-MOBILE USERS TO ITS PARTNER WASHES



EverWash

EverWash, Philadelphia, PA, and T-Mobile partnered in a promotion that attracted 465,090 T-Mobile subscribers to EverWash partner washes in a 24-hour period, according to a company press release. “We helped many of our wash partners boost their total membership count by 50 to 250 percent in the first two days of the promotion,” said EverWash CEO John Cassidy.

EverWash, a Total Membership Lifecycle™ (TML) company, combines membership sales, subscription management, mobile app and analytics technology, training, sales and marketing support for washes nationwide. “Our mission is to help washes attract, gain and keep more members,” said Cassidy.

In addition to T-Mobile, EverWash has partnered with several employee benefits and perks providers that can exponentially grow memberships for wash partners, said the release. Added Cassidy, “Whether a carwash already has a successful membership program or an underperforming one, or is simply looking to gain new customers, our unique channel partner consumer marketing approach takes our carwash partners’ membership growth to new heights.”

For more information visit everwash.com



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A candid look at politics, business and the future of America

An Interview with NRCC Keynoter Gov. Chris Christie

By Suzanne L. Stansbury

As the 31st Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC) nears, October 4-6, at the Atlantic City Convention Center, the Northeast Carwasher was granted an interview with former New Jersey Governor and 2016 presidential candidate Chris Christie, the event's keynote speaker.

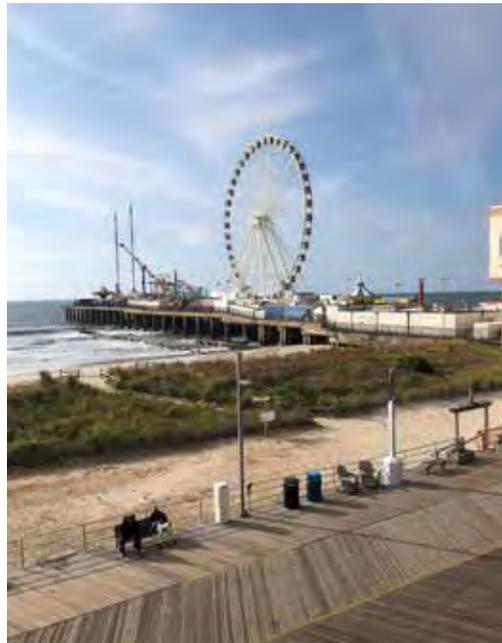
Christie, 58, a former federal prosecutor, politician, political commentator and lobbyist, served as the 55th Governor of New Jersey from 2010 to 2018. He gained national prominence as a moderate voice in the Republican Party and sought its party's nomination for president in 2016. He is noted as a uniting figure capable of transcending partisanship in times of crisis and was praised for his leadership after Superstorm Sandy. He also led President Trump's transition team until soon after the President took office where he then became an informal adviser.

COVID

NE: Governor, we could talk all day about the effects of COVID on our culture and country. Can you share with us what you would have done differently if you had been President or Governor at the start of COVID?

CC: If I had been the president I would have taken it seriously right from the beginning. I wouldn't have said to people that it would just go away and disappear. From the beginning you had to set a much more serious tone about it so people understood the depth of the problem we were dealing with and that you could call them to service.

One of the parts of leadership that is so important during a crisis is to give people something to do; to call them to service so that they can be part of the solution. There were a number of problems in the way it was handled on the national level.



The 31st NRCC is October 4-6 at the Atlantic City Convention Center. This year's host hotel is the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino on Atlantic City's iconic boardwalk.

NE: And on the state level?

CC: On the state level, the problem was fundamentally flawed decision making processes. First off, the decision to force nursing homes to take cases in who had COVID or were not yet protected from COVID in any way by being immune to it was an enormous mistake. What we knew from the beginning when it started in Washington state was that the elderly seemed to be vulnerable from this so to expose them in those institutions that don't have a lot of space, that don't have the ability to segregate

people, that don't have enormous amounts of staff to deal with this problem was an awful mistake that cost thousands of lives in New Jersey.

We also kept everything too closed for too long. The governor was overly cautious in that regard doing great distribution to small businesses in the state when on the other hand, we still lost more people per capita than any state in the country. So we were closed for too long with no identifiable benefit for the people of the state. Those fundamental errors on the state level just show a flawed decision making process by the decision maker himself or his staff or both.

NE: Your own personal battle with COVID was front and center. Can you reflect on that experience with us?

CC: I had been so careful March through September in terms of making sure I'd wear a mask and doing all the things that you were supposed to do and then I went to the White House. I was getting tested every day on my way into the White House, as everyone else was, and so I had an incorrect sense of security about the fact that it was safe to go without a mask there. That turned out to be a big mistake on my part. I made a mistake by taking my mask off when I was there.

Second, the experience was scary. I went into the hospital and was put in the ICU for seven days. That was frightening because the disease itself is so random. You don't really know if you'll get better or worse. Your doctors can provide you with no reassurance. It was a very nerve-racking time for me and my family, but I feel incredibly lucky that I got to the other side.

You were isolated. The IV bags were kept on the other side of the door so they could change them without even having to come into your room. You were really by yourself. It's a very isolating time when you can't help but have your mind wander and it doesn't wander to anything positive.

NE: Did you have the "cocktail" the President received?

CC: I had a similar cocktail to that of the Presidents. We both had Remdesivir. I was very fortunate. I had really good, aggressive care and that early intervention was really key in recovering.

NE: Was the tri-state alliance (NJ,CT,NY) a good thing during the initial phases of COVID?

CC: It is always better when Governors try to coordinate things. I think in this particular instance it was a good idea to try to do that. Each state has some different challenges depending on its demographics, so you need to be able to retain some flexibility to be able to make some decisions on your own. In general, I had no issue or problem with the way it worked.

NE: You are known as being a hugger. Obviously, not being able to do that for the last year+ had to be tough. How did you cope with that and the Pandemic in general as an employer, public figure and as a father?

CC: As a father, all four of our children came home at one point or another which made life significantly different for us, but it was a blessing. It was really nice for us to be back around the kitchen table again for dinner as a family.

As an employer we gave people their option in terms of how they wanted to deal with working from home or coming into the office. We had a schedule for people to fill in if they were coming to the office so we would not have more than three at a time. We tried to be really sensitive to that and requiring people to be smart and wear masks prior to the vaccine. We wanted to make sure that what would govern if you came back into the office or not was your particular level of comfort. We weren't going to force anyone to come into the office too soon. Two weeks after their vaccination we had people come back in.

Continued...

Conference Agenda

Monday, October 4

2:00-5:00pm

Registration

3:30-6:00pm

Virtual Wash Tour – NYSCWA

Seminar moderator: Tom Hoffman, Jr.

Join Tom Hoffman Jr. while we expand our horizons for a "virtual" tour of four of the most innovative and forward-thinking washes we could find from the comfort of the Atlantic City Convention Center. *This standing-room only seminar of washes is a must-see!*

Sites Include:

- * **Valet Auto Wash, general manager Ray Cerwinski (Oxford Valley, PA)**
- * **Cool Wave Car Wash, owner Bobby Willis (VA)**
- * **Hoffman Car Wash, owner Tom Hoffman, Jr. (Latham, NY)**
- * **Autorific Car Wash, owner Dale Reynolds (NC)**

The NYSCWA is this seminar's host.

Tuesday, October 5

7:30-8:45am

*Program starts at 7:45am; Breakfast starts at 7:30am

Early Bird/Breakfast

Moderator: Patrick Mosesso

This show favorite is a candid, unscripted panel discussion with seasoned operators who will answer any and all questions relating to carwashing in an informal panel discussion. You will be able to ask and text questions at the event, as well as provide them prior to the event at info@nrccshow.com

Panelists Include:

- * Paul Vallario, Westbury Personal Touch, Long Island
- * Steve Sause, Cloud 10 Car Wash, CT, NJ, PA, FL
- * Tom Halford, Shammy Shine Car Washes, NJ, PA
- * Tom Morris, Chesapeake Carwash, MD
- * Chris Ouimet, Fitzzy's Car Wash, Grafton, MA

The NECA is this seminar's host.

Continued on p. 21 ...

An Interview with NRCC Keynoter Gov. Chris Christie ... *continued*

As a public figure, especially after my own hospitalization, I tried to be a really loud and clear voice on the importance of mask wearing and the importance of vaccines to try to let people know that what can happen to me can happen to them.

NE: You are known as being frank, outspoken, tough but fair. Your leadership after Superstorm Sandy, and your bipartisan-ship, spoke to your effectiveness as a governor. What lessons from “weathering that storm” can you share with our industry of small business professionals.

CC: The first thing is to, in a leadership situation, be yourself. What people saw from me during Superstorm Sandy was who I am and how I care about them and will lead in a way that was very honest, direct and straightforward. Whether you are leading a state, a company or a small firm, being genuine, being who you are gives people a sense of consistency and comfort and both those things are very important in a crisis.

The second thing I learned was not to assume anything at all when dealing with a crisis. You need to ask the extra question and understand all the details and that those things are really important when making good decisions.

The third thing I learned is the importance of being there in person. I spent half of my day in the emergency operations center in West Trenton monitoring things and trying to come up with ways to fix problems that would crop up. I spent the other half of every day out somewhere in the state and being visible. It really mattered to people. People’s biggest fear is that they will be forgotten. As soon as you show up in their community they know that they haven’t been forgotten and that is a really important part of leadership.

NE: Are these some of the same lessons you took away from your time with the Trump campaign and the Trump family?

CC: My support of the president in 2016 and 2020 was based on policy issues and not personality issues. I thought that the policies that he was pursuing were better than those that Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden were advocating for and that’s why I was with him. The President, in particular, and some in his family have a personality of their own and leadership styles of their own which wouldn’t necessarily be mine and so they follow the beat of their own drummer.

NE: You have advocated following the science and not the teacher’s unions when getting kids back to school. How damaging has the past year been for our kids, and what needs to happen to get things back on track?

CC: It’s been extraordinarily damaging. We won’t know for years to come how damaging it was and how much they lost in terms of their education, socialization and all the other things that happen in school like interacting with peers and teachers and administrators. I think they lost an enormous amount. We need to stop with the craziness. There’s no science to support not opening schools for in-person learning in September. There’s no science to support that.

Secondly, we should really consider making the next school

year a 12-month school year across the country. Our children need catch-up time and if we continue to run the same calendar we are running infinitely, we won’t be able to give that catch-up time. I would consider that if I were still governor. The political forces at play here, especially from the teacher’s unions, are looking at this as a way to change how we teach our children and change that curriculum. Parents need to speak out against that. It will be bad for our kids and as a result be bad for our country.

NE: You say you know how to find the “silver lining” in situations; what is the silver lining in COVID?

CC: I think the COVID silver lining is probably three things. First, it brought families closer for the most part; even if not physically closer. I think that families appreciated much more how important those relationships are and it will be a long time before we take those relationships for granted again.

Next, it helped us understand how fragile our economy is and how susceptible we are to these types of disturbances and I hope what that will do is put our government with a real focus toward how things like this can impact the country and build the systems that will deal a little better than the way we dealt with it this time.

And, the third thing it taught us is how incredibly fortunate we are to live in this country with the pharmaceutical industry that we have. To think that the vaccine came together in about eight to nine months is historic, but it’s also an indication of the long-term money that our pharmaceutical industry has invested into research and development. We need to have a greater appreciation for these pharma companies who are often vilified but in the end they are saving millions of lives around the world because they reinvested in research and development and have things on the shelf that are close to being finished and can be used for either a cure itself or as a building block for that cure and we shouldn’t take that industry for granted.

On Small Business

NE: You run your own business. What advice would you give to a small businessman or woman who is struggling with finding and retaining employees, keeping up with technology, staying in compliance with government policies, rules, regulations and taxes?

CC: I have great empathy for them being a small businessperson myself. On the employment front I’d say to hang in there for the rest of the summer because this extra extended unemployment is going to end across the country in September and those people who have been sitting home making as much or more than they used to make will be out there looking for work.

Second, a lot of people learned as a small businessperson how important it is to have a relationship with a bank. We saw this during the PPP that people with banking relationships were able to get those loans; for people who didn’t it was much harder. As you go forward, every business is going to need capitalization and developing a relationship with your banker, big or small, or a

local bank, those relationships when developed well can help lead to easier answers for you on liquidity that you need to keep your businesses open and thriving in the aftermath of the Pandemic.

And don't ever forget that what America is known for is its innovation so continuing to innovate to make your business more successful is something that now seems obvious to all of us, but it bears repeating and if you do it you'll end up being in much better long-term shape than if you don't.

Bi-Partisan Politics

NE: In 2019 in conjunction with Seton Hall University, your alma mater, you established the Christie Institute for Public Policy (CIPP) to tackle the need for thoughtful, bipartisan discussions about key issues facing society on a national and international level.

Continued...

Conference Agenda ... continued from page 19.

Tuesday, October 5 (continued)

9:00-9:45

Breakout Session

Big Ass Fan Founder Carey Smith on "How Embracing a 'Fail Fast' Approach Can Help You Succeed"



Every year, American entrepreneurs start more than half a million companies, but only 200 ever reach \$100 million in revenue. Carey Smith, the founder of Big Ass Fans, knows firsthand what it takes to change promising to prosperous. In fact, it was failure that led him to start Big Ass Fans. He used the valuable lesson

that you can usually tell within a short time if an idea's going to work. If it doesn't, make the conscious decision to fail fast. In this seminar Carey will share his contrarian business practices and discuss how he tells his employees, "If you're not making mistakes, you're not working." That's because growth comes only from taking risks.

Interviewer: Dino Nicoletta, Asbury Circle Car Wash, Quick Lube & Detail Center, Neptune, NJ
The CWONJ is this seminar's host.

10:00-10:45

Breakout Session

How to Turn a Difficult Customer into a Customer for Life

Introduction: Bob Rossini, Torrington Car Wash, Torrington, CT

**Presenter: David Melhorn,
Kleen Mist Carwash,
Shamokin Dam, PA**

Customers who challenge you are the key to your success, not an opponent to defeat. Presenter David Melhorn, a multi-model third generation carwasher, will show you how to change your perspective, address the customer's concerns and build a strong foundation for your carwash.

The CCA is this seminar's host.

11:00-11:45

2021 NRCC Keynote Speaker



Introduction: Dave DuGoff/Mike Ashley

Keynote: Gov. Chris Christie

Christie, a politician, political commentator, lobbyist and former federal prosecutor who served as the 55th Governor of New Jersey from 2010 to 2018, has gained national prominence as a moderate voice in the Republican Party. He sought the party's nomination for president in 2016.

He is noted as a unifying figure capable of transcending partisanship in times of crisis and was praised for his leadership after Superstorm Sandy. His keynote will be candid, colorful and a must-see!

A graduate of the University of Delaware, Christie received his Juris Doctor degree from Seton Hall University in 1987.

*** Sponsors: Micrologic & Innovatelt**

The MCA is this seminar's host.

12:00-1:00

Awards Luncheon

*** Awards and then lunch**

Exhibits: 1:00-6:00pm

6:00-7:00

Welcome Reception

*** Lower Level, Atlantic City Convention Center**

Open to all attendees; "Jersey" snacks, beer & wine.

Cash bar.

*** Sponsored by ICS**

Wednesday, October 6

8:00-9:30

Breakout Session / Breakfast

Industry Titans Talk Consolidation, Transformation & A Bright Future

Moderator: John Shalbey Jr.

Panelists:

Bill Martin, Metro Express Car Wash & Amplify Car Wash Advisors

Bill Gorra, Simoniz USA

John Lai, Mister Car Wash

Eric Wulf, International Carwash Association

The NECA is this seminar's host.

Exhibits: 9:30am-2:00pm

You've covered healthcare and healthcare policy, public safety, and a myriad of other topics. What kind of impact is CIPP making?

CC: First, we've brought really important, prominent people to our community to talk about the issue of bipartisanship. We've had Henry Kissinger, Joe Mansion and Susan Collins so that has been good. We've also had a real impact on the students at Seton Hall School of Law. These are where some of our future leaders of the state will come from. We want them to be thinking this way; not the way politics have become poisoned the last decade or so. We want younger people to be thinking about how they can contribute to create that kind of atmosphere themselves. And we want the community in general to hear from important folks who can talk about all the ways bipartisanship and working together can help bring better solutions.

In today's world there's been such division in the country that started to percolate 25 years ago during the Contract with America where Newt Gingrich was leading the Republicans in the house, and it continued through the Clinton years and the Bush/Gore election and then the Iraq War created some division. Then we went into the Barack Obama era and Obama-care and that led us to the insane election of 2016 where you had two of the most politically unpopular presidential candidates in American history facing off against each other. The campaign was viscous and negative from a candidate's perspective, and from a media perspective, so all those things have led to making bipartisanship more and more difficult. It's wrong. You need to stick to your principles but find areas to compromise.

A Run In 2024?

NE: You have not closed the door on running for President again in 2024. This is your opportunity to announce that, Governor Christie! But seriously, what would you do differently this go around?

CC: You always learn from experiences if you are paying attention. I think that there are a lot of things that I spent time on five years ago that I wouldn't spend time on now. And I think that every election is different so in 2024 presumably there will be a different cast of characters and that different cast of characters will lead to a whole different dynamic and you will have to be ready to adjust to it.

One of the things I learned the first time that I ran for President was to focus on the things that really matter to regular people. You need to be very, very focused on that.

Secondly, you need to understand that much of what happens in politics is a product of timing and you can't always pick your timing so go out there and be the best you can. Be honest and direct, be straightforward and have good ideas and then you'll be in the mix and what happens from there is a product of a lot of things you can't control so don't get yourself too obsessed over them.

NE: And the announcement will happen when?

CC: The announcement would happen after the midterms in 2022.

NE: You also said that the GOP cannot be a party of one person (Donald Trump), but it must be a party of ideas. Can you elaborate?

CC: No party will survive being monolithic, or just about one person whether that person has been president of the United States or not. It's about a set of principles and ideas that excite and challenge people and make them want to get up and support you. If you are not doing that the personality stuff will fade away over time and you won't be left with much to build on.

Continuing to build our base on the issues we really care about, and the issues quite frankly that we are against, are both very important to form the foundation of an effective political party.

NE: You and your mom had a very special bond and relationship. What would she be saying to Chris Christie in 2021 regarding a run in 2024?

CC: My mother thought I was a little crazy for being interested in politics. She never got to see me be Governor and would have been there rooting for me. But she would have said to me, "Christopher, don't do it half way. Go in there and go all in and give it your very best."

My mother always gave me incredible confidence, even as a young child, that you can do anything you want with your life if you are willing to work hard enough.

NE: Your book, "Let Me Finish," which came out in 2019, was eye opening. Governor, you have a book coming out in November titled, "Chris Christie Republican Rescue: Saving the Party from Truth Deniers, Conspiracy Theorists and the Dangerous Policies of Joe Biden." Can you share your favorite part of the book with us?

CC: My favorite part of the book is addressing the issues that are problematic with our party and country right now and telling the reader what I think; no mincing words or hedging. I want to set an example to not be so cautious and thoughtful, but honest.

NE: What is Chris Christie hopeful for today?

CC: I am hopeful that my children and maybe my grandchildren wind up getting all the opportunities that I have gotten in this country, but it's not a given and we have to fight for it and fight for our country's democracy, capitalism and liberty. If they do, they will make the most of it and have a great life. **NC**

Suzanne L. Stansbury is the Editor/Publisher of the Northeast Carwasher magazine and a Northeast Regional Carwash Convention board member.

**Governor Chris Christie is the 31st NRCC
Keynote Speaker, Tuesday, October 5,
at the Atlantic City Convention Center.
To register and learn more about the event
visit nrccshow.com**

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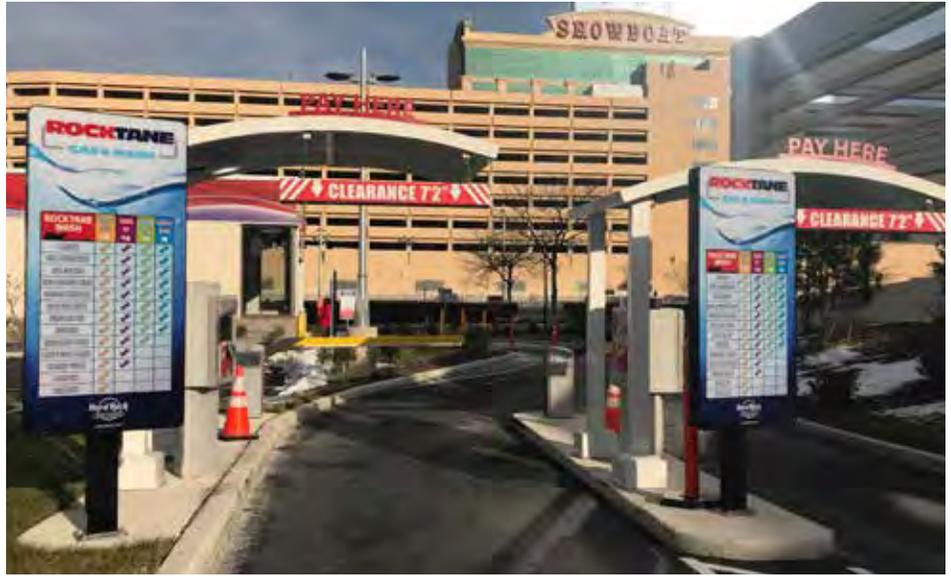
By Alan M. Petrillo

Fancy the idea of shooting craps, playing poker, sitting in at a blackjack table, or perhaps trying your luck at big dollar slots, and then getting your vehicle cleaned to a gleaming shine? It's all available at Hard Rock Hotel & Casino and its Rocktane Gas & Wash in Atlantic City, NJ.

Craig Hanson, director of new business development for Sonny's Direct, said that he worked with Sonny's on the Rocktane project when he was employed by Washtech Vehicle Wash Equipment, which later was acquired by Sonny's.

"The Hard Rock Hotel & Casino wanted to build a fancy express carwash for their guests," Hanson said, "that would be available for their VIPs and others through their concierge service. They also put in gasoline service and a convenience store, and opened it all up to the public. Washtech did the installation of the carwash and supplied the chemicals for the wash."

Frank Lash, equipment salesman at Sonny's Car Wash Services Mid Atlantic, noted the New Jersey project came to Washtech via Sonny's as a lead. "Hard Rock had a carwash in Ohio that was doing well, and decided they wanted a con-



The wash, which is open from 10 am to 6 pm, offers four carwash options.

venience store at the New Jersey casino site, along with multiple gas pumps and a carwash," Lash pointed out. "We met with Joseph Jingoli (Joseph Jingoli & Son, Inc.), the construction company that was a partner in the casino and their estimator, who thought they might want an in-bay automatic like at other sites they had, or maybe a tunnel wash."

Lash said the next meeting included SOSH Architects, where he explained the many differences between inbay automatic and exterior express tunnel carwashes.

"This was January, and they needed the carwash up and running by the summer for their high rollers," he said. "The Hard Rock people decided on a tunnel

Continued ...



The Hard Rock Hotel & Casino's facility features an express wash, an 8,000-square foot fueling area and a 5,000-square foot C-store that is open to its guests as well as the public. Casino customers can earn free carwashes based on various casino promotions.





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Hard Rock's Rocktane ... continued

carwash and had Massett (Building Company) build the wash and the convenience store."

Diane Dixon, Hard Rock's vice president of purchasing and retail operations, said the wash has a 103-foot conveyor in a 110-foot long tunnel. She noted that they are currently averaging 125 vehicles a day.

Rocktane Gas & Wash's gas station is open from Sunday through Thursday from 8 am to 10 pm, and Friday and Saturday from 8 am to midnight, while the 5,000-square foot Convenience Store is open until midnight on weekdays, and 2 am on weekends.

The carwash, which is open daily from 10 am to 6 pm, offers four carwashes. Garage Band is \$8 and gets a presoak, soft touch wash, tire cleaner, high-pressure rinse, surface enhancer, spot free rinse, turbo air dry and Sealtech. The \$12 Record Deal wash adds an underbody flush, while the Radio Hit wash at \$14 adds triple foam polish and weather guard. Finally, the \$16 World Tour wash adds flash wax and tire shine.

Member benefits at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino can be used at Rocktane Gas & Wash's 8,000-square foot fueling area. Premier Wild Card Rewards members can use their comp dollars at Rocktane's 16 gas pump stations to fuel up with regular, mid-grade or high-test gasoline, or diesel fuel, at a 2 to 1 comp dollars ratio. Elite, Rock Royalty and X Wild Card members have a one-to-one comp dollar redemption when fueling at the Rocktane gas facility.

Casino customers can earn free carwashes based on various



The 103-foot express conveyor sits in a 100-foot long tunnel. The gates around the perimeter of the tunnel are put there to accommodate any storm surge from the ocean to allow water to flow through the structure.

casino promotions, according to Dixon. "When they are awarded a free carwash, a voucher with a bar code prints at a casino kiosk," she pointed out. "When the patron visits the carwash, the bar code voucher is scanned to the XP terminal, which is programmed to accept the vehicle and proceed with the appropriate wash."

Lash pointed out that the carwash has gates around the perimeter of the tunnel to accommodate any storm surge from the ocean to allow water to flow through the structure. "The carwash is on a municipal water supply, but there are low-pressure issues," he noted, "so we had to install a variable frequency drive (VFD) to provide constant pressure in the facility." The carwash has two DRB pay stations, and two coin vacuums, Lash added. **NC**

Alan M. Petrillo is a Tucson, AZ-based journalist, a former upstate New Yorker, and contributing editor of Northeast Carwasher. He writes for a number of national and regional publications, and is the author of six nonfiction books, and three historical mystery/thrillers.

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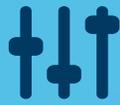
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An Interview with Express Wash Concepts' John Roush

At the time of this interview in late June, Ohio-based Express Wash Concepts (EWC) had expanded its portfolio beyond the Buckeye state east with the acquisition of Virginia-based Green Clean Express Auto Wash with sites in Virginia Beach, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Chesapeake and Suffolk. An additional 20 locations are slated to open by 2022 throughout Virginia, Maryland and North Carolina on top of the existing Central Ohio-based Moo Moo Express Car Washes, Greater Dayton-based Flying Ace Express Car Washes, Greater Cleveland-based CLEAN Express Auto Washes and Toledo-based Meyers Auto Washes topping out the company's current portfolio at 45.

By the end of 2022, EWC plans to open more than 50 additional sites. Let's find out the how and why's of this major growth spurt from EWC's Chief Executive Officer, and all-around great guy, John Roush.

NE: John, first, have you had a vacation lately? EWC's growth is nothing short of impressive. Can you walk us through it?

JR: I think the token answer is every day is a vacation — but in this case I truly mean it. I've never been busier, but I'm living the dream. Watching something that I built from the ground up become as successful as it is is absolutely amazing. So yes, I can still vacation, however it's not a traditional vacation in the sense that I can shut down entirely for a week or two. But I wouldn't have it any other way!

There is a Dr. Seuss character from the book *Did I Ever Tell You How Lucky You Are?* named Ali Sard. His story has stuck with me all these years. Ali has to mow grass in his uncle's backyard and the faster he mows the faster it grows. Despite the craziness that accompanies rapid growth — I think back to the moral of the story and the conclusion is that yes, I'm really quite lucky.

Things over the past couple of years have simply fallen into place. We have a great pipeline coming in, we have money, we have a great team in place working tirelessly to keep our heads above water with managing our existing locations and those under construction. The challenge is making sure we don't implode the people in our organization. So the next obvious priority is hiring great new people who will share in our passion and mission for what we are trying to accomplish.

NE: Despite a Pandemic, you were obviously working on your most recent acquisitions. How did it impact closings and your likely well-thought-out acquisition plan?

JR: We definitely felt the repercussions from all sides — the banks, title companies, municipalities, etc. Everything got inefficient and

Express Wash Concepts CEO John Roush at the Green Clean Express Auto Wash Grand Opening in June 2021. Express Wash Concepts acquired the Virginia-based carwash company in May 2021.



slowed down. We had to be more diligent than ever making sure we weren't responsible for dropping the ball and to keep pushing things along as best as we could. We had to find peace with the fact that some things were beyond our control. But that didn't mean we took a more relaxed approach to the things we could control. I feel like we had to work harder, and smarter, than ever before.

We launched our Cleveland Clean Express Auto Wash brand during the Pandemic, and since August, 2020, have opened or acquired six locations in that market. We acquired Toledo-based Meyers Auto Wash in December, 2020, and took over operations of those three locations. We moved to the East Coast with our Green Clean Express Auto Wash acquisition, and have multiple locations under contract or construction, and an acquisition, in the Pittsburgh market.

NE: COVID was devastating for so many small businesses, but the express model, which you follow, was spared a lot of heartache and long-term closures due to its contactless nature. Talk to us about how EWC fared.

JR: EWC fared quite well. We realized early on that we had to be

Express Wash Concepts CEO John Roush and Flying Horse Farms Executive Director Nichole Dunn. Express Wash Concepts was recognized with the Camp's COOL Award for their successful May 2021 donation campaign weekend.



Express Wash Concepts' Ohio-based Site Managers and Home Office Executives convened in May, 2021, for a daylong retreat prior to the company's Flying Horse Farms donation campaign weekend.



in this constant state of adaptation, as it seemed everyday things were changing. We were fortunate in that we didn't have to shut down for too long, and proactively worked with each of our local county health departments to gain their "blessing" to stay open due to our well documented cleaning and sanitization procedures. We did not want our equipment to sit unused — and we saw a great need to recognize all of our incredible first responders, medical professionals, care givers, educators, and restaurant and retail workers who did not have the choice to quarantine.

We gave away thousands upon thousands of free washes to these heroes throughout the mandatory stay-at-home orders, and although it seemed insignificant in the overall grand scheme of the Pandemic, providing those free carwashes were a welcome respite to so many people who craved anything that provided a reminder of our former, "normal" lives. We donated portions of our wash proceeds to local Food Banks, as it had never been more apparent just how many people were struggling. We proactively reached out to help others, quietly and without seeking credit. It was truly a gift to be in the position to help others. We took that very seriously, and humbly.

NE: What was most difficult during the height of COVID?

JR: For me it was just the mental wear-down and stress of the unknown. Would we get shut down? Would it get worse? If allowed to be open, is that the right choice for our team? Our team members are our family, and would we be faced with the impossible choice of having to make cuts/lay-offs? It was mentally exhausting.

NE: How will it impact operations moving forward, and what have you learned from living through it?

JR: The silver lining in all of this is that we took the time to stay focused, and truly think through how we could increase our operational efficiency and communication processes. ZOOM proved to be an incredible tool — giving us the ability to still be connected to our team members while also being so unbelievably efficient as there was no travel time.

NE: When we first interviewed you in 2019, you had been in the industry for 11 years and had amassed 20 locations across two brands. You got into this industry because your favorite wash had closed and you needed a place to wash your car. You did your research and due diligence and here you are. Why is this industry right for you?

JR: My background is in construction. In the construction industry you pretty much went about your own way, built your stuff, and that's that. From my first site visit, back when I was just researching the carwash industry, I felt this incredible sense of camaraderie and sharing of knowledge like no other. The carwash industry has incredible national and regional trade associations, really great industry-specific publications, enhancement groups and social media groups — all with the goal of sharing best practices between operators and vendors. I've learned so much through some pretty gracious people through the years, and I've always tried myself to be a mentor to pay it forward.

And we can't forget that despite hard work, relationship building and putting in the time — I've had a bit of luck, too.

NE: In 2019, we asked what most surprised you about this industry and you said how difficult it was and that you could not be a successful operator without forging friendships within the industry. As a result, you have mentored your fair share of new operators. What have you learned from those experiences?

JR: The main thing I've learned is that what is easy for us as seasoned operators can be pretty complex to those just coming into the industry. I think it's easy to take for granted that development, construction, operations, marketing, employee relations, etc. is truly a complex process and becomes better defined with experience. I believe that we rise by lifting others, and I love seeing the people that I have or are still mentoring succeed in this industry.

NE: Your company, like many others, is now in a strategic investment partnership. I'm assuming that this partnership with Wildcat Capital Management was critical to your growth trajectory?

Continued ...

An Interview with Express Wash Concepts' John Roush ... *continued*

JR: I can confidently say that I have learned more from Drew and the Wildcat team than they have from us. Their guidance has turned what was previously a successful business into a crazy successful business. They are undeniably smart, helpful and patient, and leave us to do what we do best — manage our washes the way we know how they need to be managed.

NE: What is important to look for, and look out for, when partnering with an equity group?

JR: Talk to references. The vetting should go both ways — this is a marriage and not a divorce. Take the time to truly make sure you both have aligned your goals — from both an operations and growth perspective. You have to be on the same page.

NE: Do you get to pretty much call the shots as long as you continue to be profitable, or how does that work in your case?

JR: A good equity partner shouldn't — or doesn't — want to run your business. That's why it's very important to take the time to research, vet and find the best partner that gels with your goals. While we certainly collaborate often and have an incredible mutual respect for each other's strengths, I know that Wildcat has the confidence that we are managing our washes in the best, most operationally efficient way possible. They wouldn't have chosen to work with us if there was any doubt.

NE: Why is this industry attractive to groups like Wildcat?

JR: The carwash industry is simply attractive to private equity groups because of high margin, high growth, and how fragmented it is. There is really not one truly major player.

NE: Let's change gears a bit. How did you know that Green Clean Express was a good fit for your portfolio? Do you have a formula?

JR: I'm not sure there's really a magic formula — but I can tell you that Green Clean's high-growth potential and margins made them very attractive. Shawn, Craig and the team have an amazing pipeline, and will use our capital to help grow quickly and efficiently. We could also offer them some relief in terms of operations and team member training initiatives. As we know, it's not a small task to open 10+ units in a year, at the same time expanding into new markets. We're a great team!

NE: Did you vet a lot of other environmentally-conscious family-run carwash chains?

JR: We are always looking at great family-run carwash chains, particularly those that share similar values such as high operational excellence, a dedication to enhance team members' lives, and a commitment to environmental best practices.

NE: Do you plan to build ground up the next 50 sites or acquire some as well?

JR: There will absolutely be a mix; however, mostly from the ground up.

NE: Your brands are models in exceptional customer service, and you said that Green Clean Express excels in that as well. Obviously, that is a huge component in any successful carwash business. Has it

always been a mantra of yours, even prior to entering this industry?

JR: We are all using water, soap and varying bells and whistles to wash a car. So how do you truly set yourself apart? Is it really that simple of a concept that it can be done through a smile? A wave? A genuine yet simple question of, "How was your wash today?" We are uniquely positioned in the carwash industry to set ourselves apart from our competition by consistently practicing those three things. Time and time again we hear stories from our customers who praise the genuineness of our team members, and how the small things make such a big difference. It's heartbreaking, yet heartwarming, to read a customer survey from an elderly customer who washes with us because our team provides her with the only human interaction she may have in a day. Customers write in detail how their autistic child delights in the sight and sounds of the wash and asks to visit each time they're out running errands. To me it's such a privilege to have the opportunity to provide such a positive impact on someone.

NE: Part and parcel with outstanding customer service is your brand's commitment to philanthropy in the markets in which you operate. I don't know if I have enough room to list all the groups and organizations you support from Westerville Area Resource Ministry to Neighborhood Bridges to Cleveland's Center For Arts-Inspired Learning to donating back to another 32 non-profits. First, that's outstanding and tell us why it's so important.

JR: We live by a guided principal that we can leverage our carwashes to improve the communities in which we operate. We've been committed to philanthropy since the day we opened our doors — but I have to say it's remarkable how much our efforts have taken off these past several years. We used to raise a couple hundred dollars at our Grand Openings, but through the years this has ballooned as we've refined our processes, and more people have taken notice of just how well executed our philanthropic efforts are.

Our last three grand openings have been record-breaking in terms of collected monetary donations. ChemQuest, our chemical vendor, has stepped in and committed to significant complimentary donations as of late to our grand opening non-profit partners. Other wonderful vendors periodically reach out and make donations to our non-profits as they recognize how much of an impact keeping donation dollars local makes.

We have major quarterly donation campaigns outside of our grand openings each year, and our last one for Flying Horse Farms, an Ohio-based camp for kids with serious medical illnesses, brought in more than \$52,900 in just three days. Three days! I couldn't have imagined when I started this thing that we would be blessed enough to give away literally hundreds of thousands of dollars to local organizations each year.

NE: I know you empower your staff in all aspects of their jobs. Do they help you decide whom to support?

JR: Absolutely. We work with our Site Managers to identify potential non-profit partners surrounding our Grand Openings. Two of our quarterly donation campaigns each year are "Sites

Continued on page 34 ...

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Subscription model drives attraction

Private-Equity Backed National, Regional Chains Growth Continues Threefold

By Jeff Pavone

Just a few years ago, there were only a handful of carwashes backed by private equity. Today that number has dramatically increased with now more than 20 private equity-backed platforms funding chains, all with an appetite for growth. In 2021, we are finding the current aggressive growth is not marginally more than last year it is materially more than last year – threefold more.

The subscription model has dramatically changed the car wash landscape and the ability for chains to scale their business. Because monthly plans offer a consistent revenue stream — finally addressing the variability of demand caused by seasonality or weather incidents out of an owner's control — more funding, be it from financial institutions, strategic partners or private equity groups, is available. And with that funding, the carwash industry has become a very competitive space. The growth and development of new express carwash tunnels is exploding because of the incredible success people are having.

We've seen established national carwash brands like Mister Car Wash and International Car Wash Group (ICWG) grow mainly through acquisitions year after year. And now there are national developers rapidly expanding their footprint with greenfield development (development on a vacant site). Brands like ModWash, Tidal Wave, and Quick Quack, to name a few, are getting in the game of really building out nationwide.

This is All New Territory

Additionally, regional brands are expanding further and further outside of their own markets. In the old days, there was a level of comfort that if you built a carwash somewhere and you were successful, you would be pretty safe and not have a competitor build right next to you. Today, that is off the table. With the emergence of new money entering the space, there are no rules. No market, large or small, is off limits, even if there is a solid, established carwash group there already. In a small Western market with a population of 90,000 and a chain of five highly successful locations, we recently saw a national player announce they are building several washes in the area. The business model before was build it and be as successful as you can be in your neck of the woods. Now national and regional brands are looking to replicate successful markets and scale up fast to fill out their footprint and give customers more access

to their locations; and they are okay with having a few lower-volume locations because they still contribute to the brand.

Customer Demand Continues to Rise

What we've also seen in 2021, despite the COVID pandemic, is that we have no idea how high customer demand will continue to rise. Because it is easy, affordable, and convenient customers are washing their cars far more frequently. With rising demand, we are also adjusting how much volume a carwash can do. It wasn't long ago for us to look at a successful site doing 20,000 cars a month; we are now looking at sites washing 40, 50 or 60,000 cars a month. Memberships have had a huge impact on volume.

Though chains are in a race to get big fast, it's not always a bad thing having a lot of carwashes in your market. Because at the end of the day if the washes are doing a good job the customer will get their car washed, somewhere, once a week instead of once every four months. Now for \$20, for example, a month you can get your car washed every week. It's super affordable.

Consumers are also spending more and more money on their vehicle and prioritizing taking care of it. Take Starbucks, for example. We never knew we needed coffee so much until a Starbucks opened one on every corner. Back in the old days, you made coffee at home before you went to work. Now you stop on your way or make a special trip to go to Starbucks and get a coffee. Why? Because it's convenient, is relatively cheap, and the experience is acceptable or favorable to customers.

But How Many is Too Many?

What we don't know yet is how many carwashes in one market is too many. Take Phoenix, for example. You have multiple chains with 20 or more washes in the Phoenix-area alone — Cobblestone, Clean Freak, Super Star and Raceway — and more are still being built because the demand and the profitability is there. So, we have not seen saturation yet.

There is a difference though in having a market that is responsible, where new guys are staying a few miles away from their competitors, than other markets where new guys are building literally next door to someone. As the platform becomes bigger in a market so does the ability to continue growing through advantages in marketing and sales — as you get scale in a market you are able to flip a switch immediately on opening a new site, and that new location will be in the black in many cases, in 30 days. With monthly plans bringing in immediate cash flow, that timeline to profitability

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Private-Equity Backed National and Regional Chains Are Rapidly Growing ... continued

ity has shortened considerably. When customers are given the option to go to a carwash that has 40 to 50 locations in their general region versus a smaller operator who has four or five locations, they likely go with the bigger brand that offers more options.

This leaves smaller carwash owners without a pathway to growth at risk. These newer players have so much private equity money behind them and will enter a market and build 20 to 30 sites quickly. If it's a good site and good location someone is going to build near you.

The Bottom Line

Here's the bottom line. The carwash business is a different business today. Go back to coffee. In the old days, there was no business of going out and having coffee. Starbucks created that demand by making it fast, easy, and cool to get coffee, and the carwash business has reinvented itself just like coffee did. Changing from a necessity you did occasionally to a convenient thing that you can do every week — because it's easy and cheap. And, because it feels good to drive a clean car.

Coming out of COVID, we've seen that you can make money in the carwash business even in a recession or Pandemic. And that, coupled with the scalability of express carwashes with monthly plans, has not gone unnoticed by private equity and institutional investors. The acceleration of anybody of any size growing is a massive race. We are finding people in a fury to build sites.

For small carwash owners that means there's a good chance someone is going to enter your market in the foreseeable future. So now is not the time to stand still. It's certainly worth considering growing to protect your market, or perhaps selling, and in today's favorable environment multiples couldn't be any higher **NC**

Jeff Pavone is a partner at Amplify Car Wash Advisors, a national car wash advisory firm. With a mission of creating wealth for clients, Amplify helps car wash owners sell, partner or grow using practical industry experience as operators coupled with expertise in mergers and acquisitions and capital advisory. Learn more at AmplifyWash.com, or reach Jeff at JPavone@AmplifyWash.com



Editor's Note: Jeff's partner, Bill Martin, will be participating in a panel at the Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC), on October 6 discussing the impact of consolidation, equity groups, the subscription model and contactless operations in today's carwashing market. To register and learn more visit nrccshow.com

An Interview with Express Wash Concepts' John Roush ... continued from page 30

Choice," meaning each location's team gets together to identify their non-profit of choice for that campaign.

For our recent Flying Horse Farms campaign, we brought all of our Ohio-based Site Managers and Home Office team to camp for a daylong retreat a couple days prior to the donation campaign weekend. This was our first in-person gathering since COVID, so you can imagine how great meeting that milestone felt. We brought in a magician as a keynote speaker, had the best "town hall" style, unscripted Q & A session I've ever been a part of, listened to the Flying Horse Farms Executive Director provide an empowering overview of the impact camp has on both children with serious medical illnesses and their families, and finally broke off into teams for a memorable camp tour and scavenger hunt. While on-site, we had each Site Manager pledge a goal for their site to meet during the upcoming campaign. We know that each Site Manager bottled up the positive energy and enthusiasm from that day and took it back to their sites — as evidenced by our record-breaking \$52,900 in donations collected during just three days!

NE: Will there be a point when you say you have amassed enough locations or is the sky the limit for you and EWC?

JR: As a pilot, of course I'm going to say the sky is the limit, but with the following caveat — we have to open the next wash better than we did the last one, and at the same time we have to maintain the highest level of operational excellence for all of our existing washes along the way. We finally must keep our team members at the heart our business, which we are very cognizant of. So yes, the sky is the limit! **NC**

To learn more about John Roush and EWC, visit northeastcarwasher.com and click on the "to view past issues click here" link for the Summer 2019 cover story.

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Equipment Financing - The Easy Way

By Michael Ford

When it comes to acquiring equipment, equipment leasing can be the quickest and easiest way to get the equipment you need to properly operate your carwash business. Leasing offers advantages that buying does not, including low monthly payments, which are typically spread out over the course of months or years, rather than delivered in a lump sum.

What is Equipment Leasing?

Equipment leasing is a type of financing in which the small business owner rents the equipment rather than purchases it. The equipment is leased for a specific time period (typically three to seven years). Once the contract is up, the business owner either renews the lease for an additional term, returns the equipment or purchases the equipment (normally for \$1 or 10 percent of the original purchase price). In most cases, carwash operators treat leasing just like a loan. They pay for the equipment over the term and then purchase it for a dollar at the end.

Why Lease Equipment for Your Business?

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Standard bank loans require the applicant to provide full financial disclosure. This can mean providing at least two years of business tax returns, two years of personal tax returns, year-to-date business financial statements, personal financial statements and more.

Equipment leasing is different. For qualified candidates, getting approved can be as simple as providing a single page credit application along with some bank statements and a copy of the equipment proposal. **Borrowers can get approved for equipment leases up to \$400,000 with a single page credit application!**

Conserve Capital

Equipment leases generally require just one or two payments at closing. On the other hand, bank loans frequently require 20 percent to 30 percent down. Obviously, buying equipment outright means you'll be paying cash for the entire purchase price up front. The lower down payment associated with leasing gives operators the opportunity to conserve cash reserves and/or allocate those resources to other projects.

Time is Money

When equipment breaks beyond repair or just needs to be replaced, waiting a couple weeks for a bank to approve your loan can be devastating and costly. Equipment leases can be approved in less than a day and funded in just a couple days. Being approved immediately allows operators the comfort of knowing they can place the equipment order now and get the

replacement equipment quickly. The expedited approval process associated with equipment leasing can save both time and money.

Less Collateral

When it comes to financing carwash equipment, many traditional banks require additional collateral for conventional loans. This can come in the form of the business/personal real estate or other assets. Equipment leases are normally secured with just a UCC filing on the equipment financed. Not having other personal or business assets tied to the equipment financed is a significant advantage to equipment leasing.

Fixed vs. Floating

Equipment leases are fixed payments over a specified term. Many conventional loans have floating rates with the potential for variable payments. Equipment leases give you the comfort of knowing what you're going to pay and what to budget for overhead.

Tax Savings

Acquiring equipment, whether leased, financed or purchased outright can give the operator much needed tax deductions. Most leases used in the carwash market have a specified purchase option at the end (\$1 or 10 percent of the original equipment cost). These are called capital leases. In most cases, up to 100 percent of the cost of the equipment can be written off in the first year with a capital lease. In addition, the yearly interest paid is written off for capital leases.

A lease with no stated purchase option or fair market value purchase option is called an operating lease. It is common to see 100 percent of the annual payments deducted for income tax purposes when a company has operating leases.

Off Balance Sheet Financing

Operating leasing can be off balance sheet financing. In most cases, these leases do not have to be listed as a long-term liability on a balance sheet. Therefore, the appearance of lower leverage (less debt) makes the financial statements appear to be more attractive to lenders in the event you want to secure other types of financing.

Is Equipment Leasing Right for You?

Early Payoff

In general, leases are not intended to be paid off early. Leasing is an agreement that commits the lessee to make payments on equipment for a certain time period. This can be an issue if you are looking to flip a location. While leases can be transferred

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Focus on Finance ... continued

in most cases, the new buyer will have to be approved. If they don't qualify, the leasing company may require the seller payoff the sum of the payments due on the lease.

New Business Owners and Leasing

If you own a brand-new business, you may run into some difficulty obtaining an equipment lease for \$30,000 to \$50,000. In many cases, this holds true even if you have a solid credit history and an otherwise good financial track record. Leasing companies like to limit exposure to new operators.

There can always be exceptions, but if you are a new business owner and need an equipment lease for more than \$30,000

to \$50,000, you may have to pay more upfront to get the deal done. Due to this, it might be worthwhile for you to pursue other types of financing like an SBA equipment loan. If possible, new operators should try to finance the equipment needed with the initial funding used to purchase the business. Business acquisition funding, especially if real estate is involved, is going to be your lowest cost of funds and longest terms.

The Final Decision

The final decision on whether equipment leasing is right for you should be discussed with your CPA and/or trusted financial advisor. Equipment leasing can be a good tool for existing carwash operators to get the equipment they need quickly with limited financial disclosure. The down payment, terms and closing costs for leases can be better than conventional bank loans. For those of you looking to finance your next equipment purchase the easy way, equipment leasing may be an option to explore.

NC



Michael Ford

Michael Ford is the Managing Director of Coast Commercial Credit, a firm specializing in financing for the carwash industry. You can reach him at 800/400-0365 or MikeF@CoastCC.com

“Acquiring equipment, whether leased, financed or purchased outright can give the operator much needed tax deductions.”

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Score a Victory with Corporate Sponsorships

By Beth Martin

The roar of the crowd as your favorite sports team scores at the last second to secure the victory. Your company's logo on display in the arena. The stadium announcer enthusiastically mentioning your name as part of an in-game promotional activation. Your company's mascot alongside a professional sports team's mascot as they compete in a silly dance-off for "likes" on social media. Employees texting the Group Chat enthusiastically sharing screenshots of your logo in the background of the game on television. Corporate sponsorships, particularly those surrounding professional or semi-professional sports teams, are a great way to build company brand recognition.

As stadiums and other sports venues are returning to full spectator capacity, now is a great time to explore a corporate sponsorship with your local sports teams. Coming off the Pandemic (hopefully!), many of these sports organizations are looking for ways to recover lost sponsorship revenue and could provide the flexibility to negotiate a sponsorship that may not have been possible for your organization in the past. While I'm not suggesting you go all out and invest millions in full naming rights (fun fact: more than 2/3 of MLB, MLS, NFL, NBA and NHL stadiums have sold their naming rights anyway) there is plenty of data available (both measurable and anecdotal) that sports teams, stadiums and athletes all directly drive sales.

Pre-Game Warm-Up

The best way to start the process is to identify which local sports teams in which your brand would like to be associated. Poll your employees as well as they may have additional recommendations outside of traditional sports teams that you haven't thought about (e-sports, anyone?) that are emerging and can be quite lucrative in terms of ROI if you get in near the ground level. Don't forget to check in with your customers, as the sport with the widest reach to your customer base may not necessarily be your preferred sport.

Determine a budget that you are comfortable allocating toward this marketing function. While there are some professional sports teams that won't accept partnerships below six figures, thankfully they are typically the exception. Reach out to the sponsorship contact (if they haven't already reached out to you) and start the brainstorming process. In the essence of time, be



CLEAN Express Auto Wash's partnership with the Cleveland Guardians (formerly Indians) includes digital home plate signage during the bottom of the 9th inning at all home baseball games.



Car Wash logo scoreboard feature and in-stadium LED ribbons (not pictured) were part of the Columbus Crew SC's sold-out inaugural game at the new stadium.

upfront with your budget so they can make the best recommendations to fall within your tolerable spend level. It's not fun for either party when you go in with champagne expectations on a beer budget. Ask for tiered or ala carte recommendations so you can pick and choose which elements matter most to you based on your budget. There will always be time to build in higher-value elements once you've proven ROI on your initial program.

When the proposal is on the table, don't be afraid to negotiate. Some organizations will accept a partial barter arrangement, so you can make the financial commitment a bit more palatable when combined with a retail value trade of free carwashes, for

Continued ...



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example. If possible, make sure that you are contracted with logo rights so you can legally use the team's logo and mention your affiliation in your marketing efforts. Negotiate the rights to be a "named partner," meaning you can say you are either a "Proud," "Preferred" or "Official" Partner of the xx team or organization.

Finally, if possible, avoid signing a multi-year contract if you are a new sponsor. You'll need some time to test out what works and what doesn't, and you'll want some flexibility to make changes to your program without being locked into a multi-year deal.

In-Stadium & At-The-Wash Experience



While the initial sticker shock of a corporate sponsorship may have you hesitant to sign on the dotted line, think about this: where else can you guarantee hundreds, thousands, to potentially millions of eyeballs in one place with the potential to have exposure to your brand?

Workin' at the Car Wash: Dayton Dragons mascot "Heater" loads cars during a Flying Ace Express Car Wash Grand Opening.



Moo Moo Express Car Wash partnership with the Columbus Clippers features a "Clean Inning" in-game activation where designated fan sections receive a free car wash or prize pack.



A cow on skates? Moo Moo Express Car Wash mascot Johnnie Moo during an on-ice activation at a Columbus Blue Jackets hockey game.

Does print advertising guarantee that? Can your social media advertising deliver that? The answer is emphatically no — particularly on the social media front as the ripple effect from Apple's new data privacy opt-outs continue.

One of the biggest advantages of a corporate sponsorship is the opportunity to not only build positive brand association, but also to activate and enhance the fan experience. Depending on your team, you will have access to a potentially massive audience. There will be a correlatively high ROI — particularly if your team excels at fan engagement. Explore ways to reach in-person fans with creative activations either before, during or after the game. This can include budget friendly pre-game stadium plaza activations where fans line up for a chance to win a prize, to in-game LED scoreboard takeovers with your logo and messaging, to post-game coupon handouts of free washes. This is your chance to shine with creativity!

Remember to tie in your partnership onsite at the wash — this can be as simple as creative onsite signage denoting your affiliation, discounts on game days to customer/fans, to ditching the standard team member uniform shirt for a team jersey. If you are opening new locations, plan for the team's mascot to be on hand for Ribbon Cuttings, Grand Openings, donation campaigns, and other events.

Finally, incorporate your team sponsorship into a portion of your overall advertising to help drive home your affiliation. Have a regular radio ad program in place? Come up with a creative commercial that ties in your partnership messaging. Post or share related content on your social media channels on game day. Host onsite contests with game tickets bundled with free washes or other team gear — customers will love it! Most professional and semi-professional sports teams will also have a Foundation, so consider tying in a donation campaign at the wash to raise money for the team's preferred cause, or donate retail items and washes for their fundraiser initiatives.

Continued ...



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The Online Experience

It's probably not a surprise that more than 80 percent of fans use social media during live sporting events — both at the actual event and while viewing at bars, home, etc. Always include some sort of digital strategy in your overall sponsorship program so you can reach this excellent fan base. With paid social media partnerships you gain access to typically hundreds of thousands of fans who follow that team's social media platforms. By sponsoring and placing your logo on the team's repetitive social posts like upcoming schedules, play-of-the-game videos, affiliated contests, etc. those followers have the strong potential to become your followers. Backlinks from those posts as well will help drive traffic to your website, and ultimately the wash.

Another benefit to an online component is the ability to collect customer data for future outreach. Most teams will have some sort of e-news blast to their fan base which you can economically leverage as a periodic sponsor. Consider hosting a contest for "Free Washes for a Year," and ask permission for access to the collected customer data. Brainstorm ways to target season ticket holders, for example, by offering exclusive discounts or free washes to push these customers to your location.

It's No Accident

There's a new term on the block — accidental endorsement. Accidental endorsements occur when an athlete uses your carwash, for example, instantly boosting its popularity. Your customers will see this as more genuine than a paid endorsement, as the perception will be that the athlete prefers your carwash over your competitors — as opposed to being paid to appear that they do.

Part of your partnership agreement can include gifting (if allowed) free washes or Unlimited Wash Club memberships to players, coaches and organization executives. Seeing a local sports celebrity washing their (often very nice!) vehicle at your wash will without a doubt bring a big boost when it comes to employee morale and customer confidence. A word of caution, however, as it's important that your team members not draw what may be unwanted attention when an athlete is onsite. Additionally, if an athlete or team becomes involved in a scandal and you've invested heavily in the endorsement route, accidental or otherwise, you run the risk of your business being negatively impacted.

Bringing Home the Victory

You don't have to be the official carwash sponsor of the New England Patriots, the Philadelphia Union, the NY Yankees, or even the Washington Capitals to benefit from a corporate sponsorship. Establish relationships with minor league teams, local colleges, high schools and even youth sports organizations before taking the professional plunge as it will give you some background knowledge on what works and doesn't for your brand. It's okay to start out small while dreaming of the major leagues!

Remember that aside from a financial investment, there can be a positive employee engagement and morale component to corporate sponsorships. Your team members will be proud to see their company logo affiliated with a prominent local sports team. Working for a brand with a logo featured at high-profile sporting events will make most employees feel like they're part of a prestigious company. Most sponsorship packages will include some sort of hospitality component — whether it be season tickets, access to a game day corporate suite, behind-the-scenes partner engagement events with players, to access to hard-to-get non-sport related stadium events like concerts. All of these can be used to incentivize employees and their families, or for customer appreciation initiatives. It's a win-win situation! **NC**



Beth Martin

Beth Martin is the Vice President of Marketing at Express Wash Concepts, the 45+ location parent company of Central Ohio-based Moo Moo Express Car Wash, Dayton Ohio-based Flying Ace Express Car Wash, Greater Cleveland Ohio-based CLEAn Express Auto Wash, Toledo Ohio-based Meyers Auto Wash and Virginia-based Green Clean Express Auto Wash.

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Finding The Leader Within

By JoAnna Brandi

A while back, on a fine summer day, I took a walk at the beach. It wasn't just any walk, it was a walk with intention, a walk with a purpose. I call these "Wisdom Walks."

That day while walking, I was asking for guidance from my Higher Self and the better angels of my nature.* It's the first step I take with any project I take on.

When I'm hired to come and do a workshop or a speech, or help people hold their vision, or move past their obstacles, or if I'm hired to be a presence or advocate for the customer in a company, I start the project off with a walk at the beach. It clears my mind of the daily "chatter" and what I call the yada-yada-yada of repetitive thinking.**

It's my intention, while walking like this, to tap deeply into my intuition. It's my prayer that I can have the ability during this time to remove myself (and my ego) so I might be able to deeply understand what my client, or my project needs.

My goal is to get out of my own way. It's a great thing for a Positive Leader to do, and in my experience it's a s-t-r-e-t-c-h to accomplish!

It was during one of these Wisdom Walks that I was seeking the next evolution of the message that I wanted to take out into

the world. As I walked north in the late afternoon light, I heard these words in my head, "Get real, be real and stay real."

Wow. Succinct. Powerful and clear. Now, the question, "What did it mean?" My Wisdom Walks on the beach often open up the proverbial can of worms for me and give me much to think about. So that's what I did — I thought on it. Two things happened: I got a strong, clear message for an article I needed to write, and I got much food for thought on what that "Get Real" message meant for me personally. This thought and these questions arose:

Real positive leadership begins with the courage to go within and find your truth.

- ▶ Are you walking the path of mastery yourself as you encourage others to do the same?
- ▶ Are you taking "time-in" to reflect on how you are feeling and how you are showing up in the world?
- ▶ Have you created the image in your own mind of the positive leader you aspire to be?
- ▶ Do you have an idea of what attitudes, beliefs, values,



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behaviors and habits you need to acquire, or get rid of, to support the image of who it is you want to become?

- ▶ Do you frequently check your own alignment with your own values compass? Are you walking your own talk?
- ▶ Do you need to have a "Get Real!" chat with yourself and make some adjustments? (Oooh, I got a big YES to that one.)

I told you what happens on my walks — sometimes the can of worms opens and consciousness just pops out of the can going in different directions all at once — what an image! And what a gift!

My insight for you this month is this:

Leadership begins inside. Breathe deeply, walk slowly, notice what you notice and get out of your own way.

Positive Leadership isn't the opposite of negative leadership — it's a deliberate, intentional and science-based way of leading that energizes and elevates others. It encourages people to bring their best selves to work. It creates a high-performance culture.

As a former client of mine, CEO Graham Edwards said, "This is not a program, this is a way of life. And the best part is you make it so simple to understand and easy to implement."

Hope to see you on the beach one day!

*The better angels of our nature — a phrase used by Abraham Lincoln in his Inaugural Address on March 4, 1861. "We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained it must not break our bonds of af-

fection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

Communication specialists say we think 60,000 thoughts a day. 90 percent of those thoughts are the SAME as the thoughts we had yesterday and 80 percent of those are negative. **NC

JoAnna Brandi is a certified Chief Happiness Officer and Coach helping you keep employees and customers happy by creating more positive cultures and practices. She is the author of three books including the illustrated "54 Ways to Stay Happy in a Changing, Challenging and Sometimes Negative World." Available online. Find her at ReturnOnHappiness.com and PositiveLeadershipCoach.com and if you are interested in her online leadership course, "The Practice of Positive Leadership" you can sign up at PositiveEnergizer.com ©2021 JoAnna Brandi - ReturnOnHappiness.com, PositiveEnergizer.com

If you want a copy of my **BE Attitudes (for Positive Leaders in Difficult Times)** send me an email, "Be Attitudes" in subject line, and I'll get it to you! JoAnna@ReturnOnHappiness.com



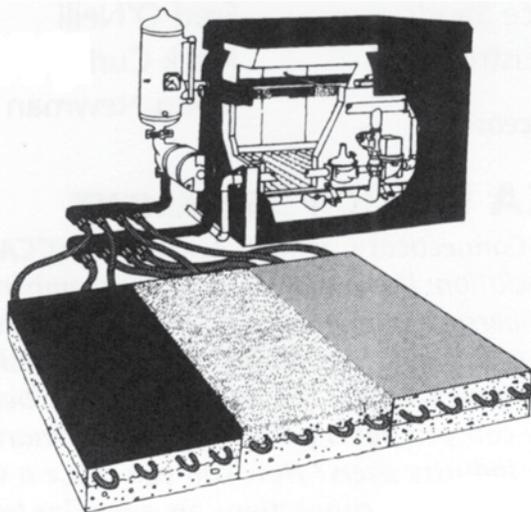
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Entropy at the Car Wash

By Doug Rieck

It's been years since my high school and college science courses, so please do not use my definition for any final exam. Entropy is what happens to any system when you leave it alone without any input of energy. There is a descent into chaos and disorder. This is the second law of thermodynamics. Brutal, but realistic.

This term seems to apply to carwashing. If you leave a piece of equipment alone and just run it until it stops, you get rust. If you take a carwash business and just run it, however conscientiously, you end up with less, ultimately back to that pile of rust.

It is not that you are intentionally trying to sabotage yourself, or stop maintenance, however. Customers come in the door, cash flows to the bank, employees get paid. The business just runs but it has stopped growing. We all have personal and business circumstances. I certainly have had them. Hurricane Sandy was affecting me for about five years.

The past year has seen COVID affect all of us in one way or another. We are in a people-pleasing business. We are not selling a commodity like gasoline, we are selling ourselves with every car we wash.

My Personal Case Study

One of my washes has become a personal case study. I was bright enough about five years ago to realize that my in-bay was old. So I went ahead and installed



At What Cost?

The question that most will have is what did it cost to do this work, to date, at my carwash? I started out this compilation as a spreadsheet and that was useful for me, but would be of little value to others. The project cost, as always, is more than what was budgeted. I tend to undervalue my time commitment and then once involved increase it further by making it perfect.

Outside contractors cost about \$5,000. I spent about \$3,500 in materials, equipment rental and debris removal. My manager spent about 10 days of time, including his stint at the jackhammer, for an internal cost of about \$1,800. Additional employee time was about six days or \$720. I choose not to calculate my time. So, the cost to date, excluding my time, is about \$11,000. You can add to that the cost of the three bay boxes, new credit card system and six vacs. The current pricing on those is better obtained from your favored equipment supplier. **NC**



my third new inbay automatic (IBA) to replace the existing. It was a great decision that I could just barely afford to make so soon after Sandy, (Our house was a total loss in the storm and for two years my family was without our house fighting with the insurance companies and contractors to rebuild.) This wash I built in 1987 as a four-bay self service with an IBA. Of course, I have upgraded it over the years. Many times, in fact. The bay coin boxes were the third set and 15 years ago were state of the art with membrane switches and credit card and bill acceptors. They still worked ok, but were troublesome and boring at best.

Since January, I have been involved in a makeover at this wash. The first project was to install new coinboxes and a new credit card system. Simple enough to say, but not as simple to accomplish. The coinboxes and the card system were identical to what I had installed at my primary location the prior year. I went with dumb rotary selector switches and an industry-standard digital display. Simple, effective and beautiful. The color and MAGIC WASH logo and function labels sell the wash experience. I love the card system and am waiting to turn on more features in a few months. There were several months of work and disorder during this retrofit, and only one or two bays was open at a time. Fortunately, it was completed and tested before our great washing run in May. The work involved rewiring and demolishing the old brick vaults and coinbox enclosures, as well as wall blisters. Vaults are not needed with tokens, credit cards and bill acceptors.

I was very appreciative of the card system being wireless with just WiFi access points for bays and vacs. The wiring was a spaghetti picnic, since the old coinboxes were digital with equipment room circuit cards, and I had done the wiring more than 15 years ago and had to puzzle it out. It was literally weeks of changeover wiring for me.

The middle and the most visible project started in February with the delivery of six new post-mounted 3-motor vacs with LED lit overhead booms. The easy part was having my contractor install six concrete vac pads in the grass during March. The hard part was the removal of the three vac islands. I found out after stripping the railroad ties off the first pad that I had a big problem. In 1987 when the wash was built, my contractor installed the 6 x 6 lumber island, then he made a solid pour of concrete all the way to the pavement. The answer was rental of the biggest electric Jackhammer Home Depot had and

Magic Wash owner, Doug Rieck, feels the time and aggravation of a renovation is money well spent.

over a day's hard labor on each island. Then, a two-man job carting the debris in wheelbarrows to the Roll Off 20-yard dumpster. The islands filled it.

Electrical Concerns

One of my worries in planning this was the electric. I had six wire circuits running under the pavement, but my old vacs were 2 motor 110 VACs. The new vacs were 3 motor units which draw more current. The solution turned out to be easy; buy the new vacs as 220 VAC units. Because the current draw was less at the new higher voltage, I could reuse the existing wires under the pavement. I had used the same concept the previous year at my other location.

The vacuum project was far worse than the bays because of all the demo work, and as a result I was well into June and still hooking up vacuums. Each vac stall is 15 feet wide x 22



feet long. One of my vanity touches (marketing) was installing a 18-gallon stainless steel trash can with the MAGIC WASH laser cut on each vacuum. The Specs: six pedestal mounted 3 motor vacuums, bill acceptors and coin mechs that take quarters and tokens. I am installing credit card

acceptors on three of the vacs and I have never taken card on vacs so it will be a trial. My card will be count up with a \$2 start and a \$15 max.

As a self-service operator, I am aware that trash is always a problem. I am trying to limit it by moving to these smaller cans. So far at my other location it has worked.

The vacuum part has been the public relations blessing. They look great, they work great and the vac area is spread out on the frontage road. Everybody passing by sees them. Customers like the new bay boxes, but non customers see the vacuums and they are lured in for vacuuming and washing. This winter when it gets dark early, I hope to get a revenue boost from the LED overhead booms.

Stage Two Has Begun

I am at the start of the next stage, adding a second IBA. I have thought and worried endlessly because this part is not simple and definitely not cheap. My concept is to take the existing truck bay, which is next to the Laserwash, and convert it. My



problem is that the bay is 16-feet wide and 12-feet high, but only 28-feet long. Curse those short 1987-era bays! I would prefer 40 feet in length, but can't get it easily. I can extend the bay to 35 feet which will let me put in a full feature friction IBA. I run one friction inbay at another location and the current touch free at this location. Customers like the friction because it gets the car clean. There always will be a market for touch free, however, but it is a subset.

Last summer I started talks with my architect who designed the wash and he found my old plans (still damp from Sandy flooding) and he digitized them. Last October I talked with the engineer who did my original site plan. Finally, after Christmas the engineer upgraded the surveys and did his drawings. Right now the Jersey shore construction COVID boom is in full force amid the building craziness which is why I had to wait months for my minor stuff to get done. I only need a 112-square foot addition, but I still must secure a site plan. During my career in carwashing I have gotten more than eight different site plans at my three carwashes and properties, the last one being more than 15 years ago. I had forgotten what a pleasure they are. In any case, this summer I may have approval and then I may get to start the next part of the project. Welcome to the world of \$80 a sheet CDX plywood and \$10 2 x 4's. A friend who is a longtime roofer said that his material costs have increased 60 percent in the past six months.

I am delighted with what I have done so far. If I go no further I will be ahead of the game and far better off. I do believe that replacing a beat-up truck bay with a new friction inbay is the way to go. What I have been trying to do is to think about what my customers want, desire and will enable them to spend more money washing with me. I think that with my changes I am hoping and trying to defeat the carwash law of entropy.

NC



Doug Rieck

Doug Rieck operates Magic Wash in Manahawkin, NJ, and is the President of the Car Wash Operators of New Jersey. He was the recipient of the 2018 Northeast Regional Carwash Convention's Most Distinguished Person Award. You can reach him at 609/597-SUDS or dougriec@gmail.com

Technical Support May Require A Phone Call!

By Gary Sokoloski

Do you wonder who will answer your next technical support call question? Unfortunately, now I do. In a recent installation and start up I was introduced to this "New Way" of handling technical support calls by some companies. While we all understand the stress the past year has put on the "in office" work environment, the move to remote working has been difficult, to say the least. What has come out of it, in my opinion, needs to be addressed and hopefully adjusted to a more balanced blend between the old style of conducting business (especially technical support), and this new style.

Please indulge me as I tell my tale. While the overwhelming majority of tech support is terrific, and we could not be happier with the support given by the companies and manufacturers we represent, it was interesting to look on the other side.

We were about a week into a month-long retrofit/install and one of our techs was handling the interface between our equipment and the existing pay station (auto cashier). Being of a different generation technician, a modern piece of equipment, and a new way of Technical Support for most companies, the conversation started with an introductory email. Then there were some photos and explanation of what we hoped to accomplish. The reason for our interaction with this manufacturer was that one of the major complaints from the operator was that the auto cashier did not go out of service when the old wash did. This caused all sorts of issues with customers paying for a wash when a bay was closed or being serviced. We wanted to make sure there were no issues with the new equipment we were installing.

After receiving pictures and instructions on what was needed, the instructions were that there should have been a CAT V cable (only) between the auto cashier and its interface box in the equipment room. Then there was standard THHN wire between our control box and their interface box. When we found out what cable was needed to make it work, we were informed that the company no longer stocked that part and to try and find it on Amazon.....!!

This is where things started to go downhill, fast. After finding, ordering and installing the cables per the manufacturer's instructions, it did not solve the problem. Now, having followed their directions we had to ask the question, "What voltage should we have on the new cable we purchased and installed"? Once the crickets stopped, the "tech support" person we were emailing checked with their coworkers via email since they were all teleworking and told us we needed 3vdc. They could not answer where this voltage would come from since neither our system, nor their system, have a 3vdc circuit. They were sure it had to work because it was on the paperwork they had.

We went back and forth for another week, it seemed, (in email time). Try this or jump that and a whole lot of, "Let me check with my superior."

After getting one bay running, the auto cashier would still not go out of service when it should. While starting up the second machine, and trying to finish the job, it seemed as if we would never get beyond this level one tech who answers emails. Support was now stuck on this picture they received from their supervisor of an "Ice Cube" relay and said we needed to install that type of relay (not the style we use on every other job), and everything would work the way it was intended. It was beyond us how that type of relay would matter on a 3vdc circuit. Watching the clock tick and my tech starting to really get frustrated at the lack of credible information he was getting, I could not help myself and picked up the phone and called them.

Once speaking to this person, it became clear he had no idea what electricity was, where it came from or how to control it. He luckily admitted they were just reading from a manual but, they still insisted we had to install this "Ice Cube" relay before our call could be moved up to the next tier of their tech support. So, we installed the relay and when it still did not work, we were moved up to their next tier of support and were told, "There is no 3vdc circuit and the new instructions from the next level tech is that THHN wires needed to be run to the auto cashier from our control box." After getting this done and figuring out what was needed for voltage on our own, we finally got the machine to work the way it was intended. (Interesting how talking to someone is so different than electronic communications sometimes.)

There are issues with every product and of course, there can be delays in response times depending on the issue but, to be put in a calling queue and made to go through the paces with people less familiar with the equipment than you are, is truly upsetting. It turned out being about three weeks of emails and no progress and about three hours from phone call to resolution.

As stated earlier, most companies provide excellent customer service to their customers and they try extremely hard to make every interaction a success. It is when the exception happens that we appreciate them even more. Thanks again to all those dedicated, hard-working, innovative and creative tech support people who keep our industry running.

NC



Gary Sokoloski

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

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Dear Venus and Mars,

As we gear up for the winter washing season, what is the single most important thing you do to prepare for increased volume (hopefully)?



Venus Says

As we get ready for another season of car-washing, we are looking forward to skipping on to a winter when they call for snow, salt the roads but then it does not snow and so on. We love the salt and slurry! But first, we must make our way through the fall.

In our part of rural Virginia, we expect fall to be the slower season. While April, May and parts of June gave us lots of pollen and therefore plenty of customers, we enter this period of low activity which we consider August, September and October.

Fall is a time for cleaning up what damage the sun has done to the landscaping and painted surfaces on our sites. We will be cleaning debris and dead grasses from our lots. In some cases, we might powerwash and do some touch up painting while the weather remains warm.

In addition, we are taking inventory of our supplies now. It is time to change out the vending products we used in the summer and order enough to last us through the winter season.

My favorite thing to do in the fall is to reestablish connections with other carwash owners. Now, more than in previous years, I am really looking forward to doing this. With the Pandemic and skipping at least a year or more of in-person activities, it is time to get back to connecting with people.

We take a few moments to plan to attend a few carwash meetings and we are hoping to get back to our Mid-Atlantic Carwash Association (MCA) meetings. We also have plans to attend the Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC), October 4-6, at the Atlantic City Convention Center (nrccshow.com).

And speaking of connecting, I think we all need to take a few moments to reconnect with our customers using personal conversations. If you have been vaccinated, get out there and say a little bit more than a "hello" to the people who have kept you and your family afloat these past months. Show you are grateful to

Mars Says

To be honest, here on Long Island where my washes are located, the winter historically is not our busiest season. The weather is tricky here being so close to the ocean, so a lot of the storms that bring snow to areas just north of the city and beyond bring rain or mixed precipitation to Long Island. We do occasionally get lucky and will get short bursts of high-volume days. But, our busiest seasons are usually the spring and first half of summer.

However, with the winter does come a lot of preparation to keep the wash running on those very cold days. Tunnel preventative maintenance would be the single most important thing we do to prepare. First off, keeping the heat going in the tunnel is always a challenge with all the water and chemicals it gets exposed to. We typically don't need to turn the heat on before December 1, but want to make sure all the heat is working by the beginning to middle of November.

The conveyer would be the next thing that gets the most abuse, so we want to make sure everything mechanically is up to par. We will check for any worn out links which are usually right before and right after each roller and replace them. Worn out rollers is something you'll want to check for also.

With the salt and sand falling all over them they tend to wear out quicker this time of year. Check the entire tunnel also for worn out hoses and leaking air lines. When it is cold these things tend to be more brittle and will burst more easily. Late fall would be the time to turn up the speed on your blower VFD's if you turned them down for the summer. Also, the chemistry in the tunnel doesn't work as well when it gets cold, so you may notice the cars not coming out as dry as they were in the warmer temperatures.

Lastly, make sure you have a stockpile of ice melt for those



Paul Vallario

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

If you have a question for Venus & Mars please send it to: Media Solutions, 2214 Budd Terrace, Niskayuna, NY 12309 • Suzanne.Stansbury@icloud.com

Venus ... continued

have them as customers and that you care enough to stop what you are doing to talk with them. It is amazing how many people need that connection right now.

If you are reading this article, join me in connecting to each other right now. Find me on Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and scan this QR Code with your camera to take a one question survey on how you pledge to communicate with other wash owners in the near future!



May you stay safe and may your business prosper.

NC

Mars ... continued

below-freezing days. The runoff water will create an ice rink if not treated properly on those days. Also, make sure you have someone lined up to do snow removal. We have our own snowplow so that is not an issue for us, but you don't want to be scrambling at the last minute to find someone as you will end up paying a lot more or worse, not be able to find someone at all.

The winters can be lucrative when the weather cooperates. But many times, it is the most difficult and most expensive time of year to operate a carwash. Either way, it is best to be prepared before the cold temps, snow, salt and sand arrives.

NC

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A Picture Can't Always Do a Towel Justice

By Valerie Sweeney

With each passing week, we are finally getting back to our regular schedules. Kids are back at school, people are back at work and life is getting back to the normal that we know and love. What COVID taught me is to appreciate the in-person interactions I have with people. Sure, ZOOMING with an old friend was novel, but we are all sick of being in front of the computer. I really missed making those personal connections, whether it be with my family, my group of friends, co-workers or even total strangers.

Purchasing products for your business over this past year was mostly done over the phone or online. In-person visits from a sales rep were few and far between. As we get back to normal, we can finally get back to in-person social interactions. And with that comes the return of trade shows. From speaking with our customers, we are hearing an excitement to get back to this old format.

Trade shows are a unique opportunity to not only meet a current vendor or a new vendor, but they give you the

“

At a trade show you can really touch and feel the product and find the one that works for you.

”

opportunity to compare many products at once. The Internet is great, but sometimes even the best pictures and descriptions can't show you the true quality of a product. At a trade show you can really touch and feel the product and find the one that works for you.

What type of characteristics are important when purchasing towels? It differs from person to person. For some, it's purely a price determination. Perhaps the cars come out virtually dry, and you really just need an inexpensive towel to spot dry several areas. There's no need to pay for a top-of-the-line product if it has limited use in the overall process.

For others, the thickness of the towel is most important. Lighter weight towels weigh less and are easier to handle. They also wash and dry much quicker than a thicker towel, along with also breaking in fairly quickly. The downside is that you have to switch out towels more frequently and may need to have more on hand. Heavier weight towels will hold more, so you can dry more cars at a time. Usually, towels are described by their weight per dozen. If you touch the product in person, it gives you a better sense of what you really want at your carwash.

What style towel do you want? Terry or microfiber? Huck or bar towel? Microfiber towels are available in many sizes, thicknesses, colors, etc. What's the different between waffle, terry microfiber, glass etc.? For the veterans in the carwash

business, they know all their options very well. For those who are fairly new to the industry, feeling each of your options can be extremely beneficial. Trade shows are a perfect format in which to do this in a short amount of time.

How plush do you like your towels? Once again, sometimes a picture can't do a towel justice. Holding a towel in your hand and feeling it is the best way to judge if you are going to like it or not (aside from actually trying it out).

You have the opportunity to touch and feel all these types of towels at the 31st Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC), October 4-6, at the Atlantic City Convention Center in Atlantic City, NJ. It's an easy drive and a great opportunity to meet back up with fellow operators, meet new ones and see more than 350 exhibits and touch a lot of towels! You can learn more about the show and register for it at nrccshow.com. I will never again take a trade show for granted! I hope to see you at the NRCC! **NC**



Valerie Sweeney is a towel consultant with ERC Wiping Products. You can reach her at 800/225-9473 or erc@erwipe.com

Valerie Sweeney

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Over the last several months, the Carwash Association of Pennsylvania (CAP) has been busy planning exciting events this fall. We are so excited to be gathering as groups again and feeling a sense of normalcy as we enjoy networking, sports, food and industry expertise! Everyone is welcome to join us at these events; members, non-members, PA professionals, and people from well beyond Pennsylvania's borders! For more information on all our upcoming events, visit our website www.pacarwash.org.

September 15 - Annual Dinner & Tabletop Show

This year's Annual Dinner & Tabletop Show is going to be an exceptional experience with renowned carwash industry expert, Tyler Slaughter coming in all the way from Nashville to be our Keynote Speaker! This is a great opportunity to network with key industry professionals while gaining valuable knowledge from an industry leader. The dinner will take place in Hershey on Wednesday, September 15, with the CAP Golf Outing following the next day. This is a *FREE* benefit for members, or a modest investment from non-members. See our website for more details.

September 16 - CAP Golf Outing & Picnic Fundraiser

The CAP Golf Outing & Picnic Fundraiser is our most popular annual event. This year it will take place in Carlisle on Thursday, September 16, the day after our Dinner & Tabletop Show. This makes it the perfect opportunity to visit Central PA overnight and enjoy two back-to-back days of networking and professional interaction that will set your business up for success for years to come. Attend solo or bring a group! All the details you need are on the CAP website.

CAP Scholarship!

We need your help spreading the word about CAP's Scholarship! A new \$500 annual scholarship fund has been established to support the carwash community. Any student in/or entering higher education, and who is either employed by or the relative of a carwash professional, may apply. We've extended the deadline! Visit www.pacarwash.org today to learn more!

Wishing you a fun and productive season with many "perfect" carwash days!



Keith Lutz

President, Carwash Association of Pennsylvania

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Brent McCurdy, Son Operate Three Red Rhino's

By Alan M. Petrillo

Brent McCurdy has had an interesting life in the carwash industry. He's owned one of the biggest carwash chemical businesses in the United States and moved into owning a carwash as a means of testing chemicals for their car-cleaning abilities.

These days, McCurdy is a full-time carwash owner/operator, with his son Blake, working out the ins and outs of carwashing at three Red Rhino Car Wash locations in Pennsylvania, with a fourth under contract.

Blendco Start

Brent McCurdy started Blendco Systems in 1998, after purchasing a small company called Blendco that was founded in the 1980s. McCurdy built Blendco Systems up to one of the leading carwash chemical businesses in the country, then sold it 11 years later in 2009 to a private equity firm and continued to run the business for 10 more years.

"I worked for DuBois through each private equity firm ownership cycle. By the time I left, I had worked for four different private equity owners," McCurdy said. "My role remained the same, but some new businesses were added in to become a "Transportation Division." I was the president of the Transportation Division and left in mid-2020 to pursue my next dream."

McCurdy pointed out that he missed being out on his own and making decisions for his own business. He had purchased a carwash in Bristol, PA, in 2006, when he still owned Blendco, to serve as a test center for the chemicals he was developing there.

"When we bought it, Bristol was a tired and worn out four-bay self-service carwash with a broken down tunnel. We fixed up the self service and added tunnel equipment to make my first Express tunnel," he said. "The wash grew and became profitable until a key employee stole money and a four-year highway project in front of the wash destroyed the business.

But McCurdy persevered. "Over the years we would fix it up, run it down, then fix it up again. Each time we learned and re-learned that a carwash business needs constant investment and when you do it bears fruit. Now that we are full-time carwash operators, we've really invested it in, improving each of our washes all the time, and giving them a fresh, clean look and feel."

In December of 2019, McCurdy purchased a carwash in Fairless Hills, PA, which had been a customer of Blendco. "We had done testing at that site too," McCurdy observed. "It has four self-service bays, and two Washworld touch free inbay automatics," he said. "This location is one of the "special ones" with customers washing regularly and often, and sometimes we have difficulty keeping the lot from spilling onto the road in front.

"Then in July of 2020, we took on our biggest challenge. This is when my son Blake moved from Pittsburgh, PA, with his wife



A larger than life sized rhino is cleverly used to help promote the wash's club plan.

to join the carwash team. We purchased our Bensalem location, the largest of our three sites. It literally needed all new equipment, and the wash itself barely had any clientele left. It currently has four self-service bays, a Washworld touch free inbay, and an 85-foot exterior express friction tunnel with twin ICS entry gates and ICS tunnel equipment, lights, tire shiner and air blowers."

McCurdy noted that one of Blendco Systems' products is Red Rhino wax. "Red Rhino wax dates all the way back to the late 1980's with the prior Blendco before my ownership. Blendco Systems used that strong name with washes allowing them to advertise that they use Red Rhino Waxes and Protectants. The marketing package included a giant inflatable Red Rhino, banners, cones, pennants, Windmaster signs and more. It was a powerful marketing option for washes that needed to freshen up the wash premises and give the customers confidence in the quality of the products used to clean."

One of the locations where this approach was used was in Bristol. "We went so 'overboard' with the product marketing that it almost looked like the location was called Red Rhino," he said. "That spawned the idea to just go the next step and name the wash Red Rhino Car Wash. And with the permission of DuBois, we launched the name at our locations and became Red Rhino Car Wash.

McCurdy added that the carwash he purchased in Bristol was originally called Bubbles Car Wash. "We used the Red Rhino marketing package on that wash, and it worked so well that we changed the name to Red Rhino Car Wash," he said. "We already had the logo and marketing materials, and people were identifying with the big blow up animal. In Bristol, we had a 20-foot tall red rhino stolen, filed a police report that was picked up by a Philadelphia television station who interviewed us. We never found the \$4,000 rhino, but it became a joke in the area about the missing rhino and we received a lot of free marketing exposure. We replaced it, then chained all our rhinos down."

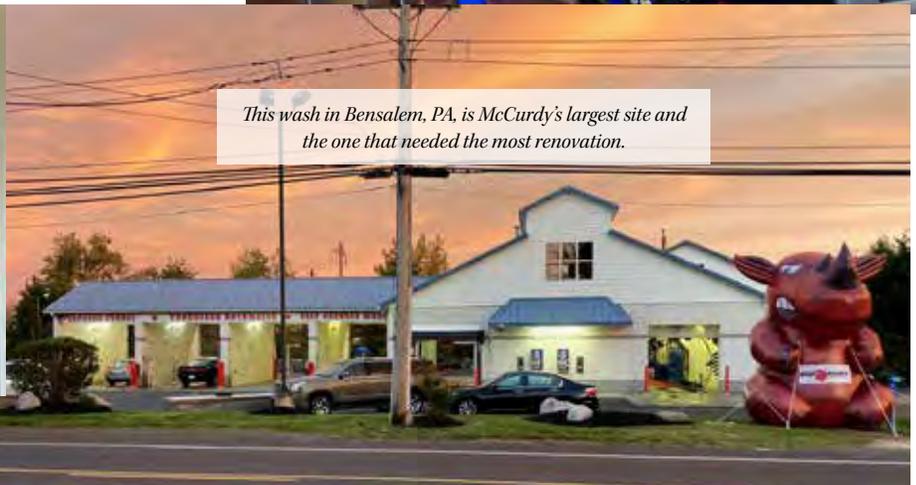


Bristol, PA, location

The Red Rhino name stems from the name of a wax used by chemical manufacturer Blendco. McCurdy uses the marketing plan that goes along with this product to make his site stand out. Here the Red Rhino name is evident on the ICS tunnel equipment and over the first arch.



Brett and his son Blake, who moved from Pittsburgh to work along side his dad in 2020, right at the time of the Bensalem remodel.



This wash in Bensalem, PA, is McCurdy's largest site and the one that needed the most renovation.

Continuing to Grow

McCurdy said that he's fortunate to be able to purchase additional carwashes with the financing he received from the sale of Blendco.

"I'm also pleased that when Blake moved back to Philadelphia I got the opportunity to purchase the second carwash," McCurdy noted. "We were prepared for him to get involved in our carwashing business, but needed a third carwash to support both of us. That's when we bought the Bensalem location."

McCurdy laughs at those individuals who think carwashes are cash cows, waiting to be milked. "The notion that a carwash owner can come by and simply pick up the money is hogwash," he said. "A carwash is a giant machine waiting to break. I don't think we've had a day without something broken in one of our washes, from a vacuum on the back of the lot to something big inside one of the bays. All of our locations are 24/7, except for the exterior tunnel, so we have to carry a huge inventory of spare parts. We don't like to see a machine down for any length of time."

McCurdy also reflected on the image he presents to customers, vendors and the general public.

"People used to think of me as a sports coat kind of guy," he observed. "Those sports coats are now getting moth-eaten in my new world. I traded them in for work shorts during carwash remodel-

ings. I had not been used to getting my hands dirty because I always had worked in an office. During reno, my office was a table and stool in a room with a lot of dirty work going on around me."

Now that the Red Rhino Car Wash locations are completely renovated and up and running well, McCurdy is enjoying a bit of office life again.

"Now that our business is built and successful, I'm getting into the old style of running a business that I remember," he said. "Blake is very happy being the operations guy because he doesn't like sitting at a desk. He has become super proficient at running and managing carwashes in a very short time. He's a huge asset and I couldn't be doing this without him. As for me, I don't mind sitting in the air conditioning, looking out and seeing our lot filling up. It's a very satisfying feeling."

McCurdy said that expansion is definitely on the horizon for Red Rhino Car Wash. "We're in negotiations now for several other sites," he said. "It's not easy finding the right sites, and it's a pretty big investment, but we are looking to locate within a manageable distance of between two to 15 miles from our current washes." **NC**

Alan M. Petrillo is a Tucson, AZ-based journalist, a former upstate New Yorker, and contributing editor of Northeast Carwasher. He writes for a number of national and regional publications, and is the author of six nonfiction books, and three historical mystery/thrillers.



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CCA MISSION STATEMENT

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

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

I just returned from an exceptional vacation on the West Coast. I played some golf, drank some wine, looked at some really big trees and took a breath and relaxed. There's a lot to be said for winding down and regrouping; smelling the chardonnay, you might say. It was a bucket list trip for me. I wish you all one as well after the year we have had.

As the fall approaches, though, I am looking forward with excitement and anticipation to the 31st Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC), October 4-6, at the Atlantic City Convention Center. I cannot wait to reconnect with fellow suppliers and carwashers and reenergize my love for the industry as well. This show, 31 years young, affords me the opportunity to represent the company I work for and it also provides me with an array of great educational programming that the NRCC board toils over for many months prior to the show. Each participating association is responsible for putting a seminar together and this year the Connecticut Carwash Association (CCA) has asked David Melhorn with Kleen Mist Carwash in Shamokin Dam, PA, to do a seminar on "How to Turn a Difficult Customer Into a Customer for Life." He will share what he has learned over the years to educate and turn around challenging customers with a smile. It's not always easy to do, but David will make it seem easy.

In addition to David's program we will also hear from Big Ass Fans founder Carey Smith. Carey has a great story to tell and worked his tail off to build his company and then sell it for a whopping \$5 billion. His entertaining and educational program will be terrific.

But this year, we have pulled out all the stops and secured former New Jersey Governor Chris Christie as our Keynote Speaker. We all know him and he just might jump into the next Presidential campaign. He is a proven politician, political commentator, lobbyist and former federal prosecutor who served as New Jersey's 55th Governor. Whatever your political stance, Governor Christie will be frank, real and entertaining!

On top of all of that we have a Welcome Reception open to all attendees and vendors and a show floor with more than 350 exhibits to touch and feel. It's been a long time, folks. Register before September 2 and save. By all accounts, this should be our biggest NRCC to date and hey, we need it! See you in Atlantic City with a smile on my face and skip in my step.



Bob Rossini, CCA President

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An Interview with Rapid Car Wash's Noah Levine

CCA



Noah Levine

For 60 years, Rapid Car Wash in New London, CT, has provided its customers with express car care services, professionalism and a friendly smile. Owner Noah Levine, whose father built the wash, works next to his wife Linda, to exceed his customers' expectations and give back to the community he holds dear. Let's find out a little more about the Rapid Car Wash story.

NE: You literally grew up in the business, Noah. Did you ever picture yourself doing anything other than washing cars?

NL: Even though the business was started when I was two and I worked there in my teens, I didn't get fully involved with running the business until after I went to college for geology and spent several years in that field.

When my parents were getting ready to retire they approached me and asked if I wanted to help run the business with my younger brother David who was already working there. That drew me back to the business and I worked with my brother for several years until he went back to school. In 2001, Ron Mathieu, the longtime manager, and I bought the business from my parents. I continued to work with Ron until he retired in 2012.

My wife, Linda, started at Rapid in 1994, a year before my return. She started out as the bookkeeper for the business and eventually learned all phases of it. In fact, she ran the business with my son for several years while I was sick. The business would have failed without them.

NE: Give us a sense of the wash's history and its evolution.

NL: The idea of the business started when my grandfather passed and left a truck body business and property to my uncle and father. The truck body shop was a long, narrow building and somebody came up with the idea of opening the first automatic carwash in New London at that site. They retrofit the building and ran it there until 1969. Back then, they had steam guns to clean the chrome hub caps and conveyerized the vehicles using chains attached to the front bumper.

In 1969, they opened a new wash building on a parcel of land next door. This building was designed specifically to be a carwash and the business runs there to this day.

NE: Whose equipment do you have in your tunnel and how long is your conveyor, Noah? And, are there any other profit centers on your site?

NL: We have a mishmash of equipment. We have a Sonny's 100-foot track. The wraparound and side wheels are from Belanger. The cars are dried with a World Blower. We still use a dynamitter built by Herman Berk. We have J.E. Adams vacs and Cat Pumps at the self-serve bays and Sonny's and Spencer Turbine vacs at the unlimited vacuums. We also do off-line car detailing.

NE: What have been the biggest challenges you have faced running a carwash?

NL: The occasional drought has made us look like bad neighbors, but that was only a short-term problem. For years, Colman Street in front of the wash flooded every time we got heavy rains until the city finally fixed the drainage.

The sales tax was levied on carwashes in the 1990's but then it was repealed after heavy lobbying by the Connecticut Carwash Association (CCA) and others. But in 2015, the tax was snuck back into the State's budget. That's an obvious negative affect to the bottom line.

The downturn in the economy in 2008 and 2009 really put a lot of stressors on the business. It took several years to start to recover from the hit. Meanwhile, my health was deteriorating and my son and wife had to take on a greater role in running the business. In 2015, I went on dialysis and was practically absent from the business for three years until my wife was approved to donate a kidney to me. The transplant saved my life and allowed me to return to the business slowly. We wouldn't be having this discussion if my wife and son didn't pick up the slack and run the business when my kidneys failed.

Then the Pandemic hit and that threw us for a loop again. Business is rebounding this year, though. Lately, the struggle has been getting workers! Good workers, bad workers, lazy workers, any workers.

NE: How were you able to adapt during COVID, and do you feel like your volume is getting back to normal?

NL: The Pandemic shuttered us in March of 2020. But with the help of the CCA, carwash businesses were granted essential business status by the state which allowed us to re-open only weeks later. I only lost one employee during that shut down. I also recovered the tunnel walls while we were closed. In May 2020 Rapid began an unlimited subscription program which I feel also helped us recover from the effects of the COVID downturn.

NE: Your involvement in the Connecticut Carwash Association (CCA) over the years as its President, as a board member and as its current Vice President has obviously been very important to you. Tell us why.

NL: By being involved with the CCA I get to interact with other carwash operators and vendors. We bounce ideas off each other on how to handle issues that arise in the business. I also was able to further our efforts to improve the business environment in



Connecticut through my involvement in the CCA. The camaraderie cannot be understated. I never feel animosity from other operators in the CCA even though we are competitors. Members share their ideas and fixes, so we benefit from each other's experiences.

NE: On your wash's Facebook page you talk about how important giving back is to you and the business. What groups have benefited and how do you decide which organizations get a little something?

NL: Nearly any organization or fundraiser that comes to Rapid Car Wash for support of their cause is given gift cards for washes or gift baskets to auction. We have a carwash program where school groups can sell discounted wash tickets to raise money. Police and fire departments are supported as well. Active and retired military personnel always get discounted washes year round.

NE: You have also participated in the annual Grace for Vets event that provides FREE washes to servicemen and women on Veterans Day. Why is this so important to you?

NL: My wife's family is military. This topic is particularly important to her because of the sacrifices her family has made in this

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area. It's also a way for our business to give back to this community to show that we appreciate their effort and service. With the Coastguard Academy, the Naval Submarine Base, and General Dynamics Electric Boat in our area, Rapid is keenly aware of their contribution to the town and us.

NE: What does the future hold for Rapid Car Wash? What, if any, upgrades or changes do you have on the drawing board?

NL: We've recently installed a new Simoniz hot wax system which has been well received. Rapid recently got a variance to erect an extension to our existing building which would cover the car prep area. This addition will protect our staff and equipment from weather extremes.

NE: How do you keep your employees motivated to follow your principles of putting out the cleanest car you can with a smile on your face?

NL: Hiring people who love cars is critical. Personable people give the customer a positive experience. I can teach people to wash cars. I can't teach people to be nice, affable and caring. I constantly teach by example. I can't get motivated, happy workers if you're always grumpy and surly yourself. NC

**Editor's Note: In July Noah had one of his native kidneys removed because of a growth that turned out to be a carcinoma. The surgery was a success and according to Noah, "Life goes on and the future looks bright."*

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2021 Connecticut General Assembly Session Adjourns



By P.J. Cimini & Nicole Tomassetti

The Connecticut General Assembly, which convened January 6, 2021, adjourned the regular session on June 9. A week after adjourning their regular session, the CT General Assembly convened again for a special session to adopt legislation implementing the biennial budget and legalizing recreational cannabis use and sales in the state.

The Legislature will meet again in mid-July for another special session where legislators extended Governor Lamont's executive powers until September 30, 2021. The State Legislature may return for another special session some time in the fall.

Final Status of CCA's High Priority Bills

Several bills that the Connecticut Carwash Association (CCA) were monitoring were not taken up but will be considered again in the 2022 General Assembly session. Among the measure that did not make it before the end of session included: SB 1031 (AAC The Use Of Sodium Chloride To Mitigate Ice And Snow Accumulations, HB 5515 (AAC De-icing Alternatives), HB 6497 (AAC Concerning Stormwater Authorities and SB 733 (AAC Sales Tax On Truck Wash Services).

Historical State Budget Passes

On June 23, Governor Ned Lamont signed legislation enacting a biennial state budget for fiscal years 2022 and 2023 that was approved by the Connecticut General Assembly with bipartisan support and makes significant investments in education, healthcare, childcare, workforce development, cities and towns, and nonprofit social service providers while not raising taxes. The budget remains \$58 million under the spending cap while investing an additional \$1 billion toward paying off Connecticut's unfunded pension debt. No new taxes were implemented in the budget, but it does rely on \$1.75 billion in federal Coronavirus relief grants to stay in balance.

High points from the 2022 and 2023 biennial budget include:

- **Invests the most local government aid to towns and cities in state history**, including an additional \$525 million over the next two years through a combination of increased Payment-in-Lieu-of-Taxes (PILOT) and Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grants.
- **Increases the state earned income tax credit for working families** from the current 23 percent of the federal income tax to 30.5 percent, which will provide an additional \$40 million in income — \$158 million overall — to nearly 195,000 Connecticut households.
- **Expands access to quality, affordable healthcare** to working families by covering out-of-pocket and premium costs for approximately 40,000 individuals through Access Health CT. This innovative approach to expanding Medicaid will maximize federal support, minimize taxpayer costs, and allow the state to help tens of thousands of families that otherwise struggle to afford doctor visits and medicine.
- **Expands access to affordable childcare** by providing \$5.3 million to cover three months of parent fees in the Care4Kids program and \$3.5 million to cover parent fees in state-funded childcare centers.
- **Expands workforce development support** through the investment of \$110 million over the next three years in short-term workforce training programs designed to help unemployed or underemployed residents earn high-paying jobs in high-demand industries such as healthcare, IT, manufacturing and clean energy.
- **Supports nonprofit health and human service providers** through an additional \$50 million in support from the FY 2021 surplus, plus an additional \$30 million in FY 2022 and FY 2023 that will be matched by another \$30 million in federal funds.
- **Does not include any increases in income tax and sales tax rates.**

Changes to Small Business Express Program

As part of the FY 22-23 budget implementer, the Legislature passed various changes to DECD's Small Business Express program (EXP), generally increasing flexibility in the department's administration of the program and allowed for increased participation by private lenders. Among its changes, the act does the following:

1. Expands the types of assistance that may be provided from the revolving loan fund and eliminates related requirements on the uses, amounts, rates and terms and prioritization of these loans;
2. Allows the DECD commissioner, in consultation with Connecticut Innovations (CI), to establish a new EXP component;
3. Eliminates the job creation incentive and matching grant components;
4. Removes the requirement that there be no more than two minority business revolving loan funds, instead requiring a minimum of one, and increases the maximum size of loans these funds can provide;

5. Makes changes to the administration and funding allocation of the EXP component operated in collaboration with Connecticut-based banks; and
6. Establishes a goal for the department that by July 1, 2026, EXP (a) will be self-funded and (b) have a default rate of 20 percent or less for small businesses receiving assistance (SB 1202, JSS, as amended, §§ 317-320, most provisions effective July 1, 2021).

Regulators Order New Small Business Electricity Rate

Small businesses could see lower electricity costs under a change ordered by the state Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA). PURA made the change to help small businesses that saw dramatic reductions in revenues during the Pandemic.

The change, approved unanimously in late June by PURA's three commissioners, directs Eversource Energy to develop an optional tariff rate that consists of a volumetric kilowatt-hour distribution rate and a reduced demand charge component. PURA officials said the optional tariff will help small businesses control their energy costs and promote energy efficiency and renewable energy programs.

Some Eversource commercial customers are charged a fixed monthly rate of \$44 for the first two kilowatts (kW) of capacity needed, after which they pay another \$14.52 per kW of additional capacity needed, based on the highest 15 minutes of electricity usage over the past year. In addition, the utility assesses a demand charge on commercial customers for providing a constant electricity supply. That meant electricity costs remained high

for many small businesses despite the Pandemic-related restrictions and slowdowns cutting usage. Small businesses have the option of using their current rate or switching to the new rate, which will go into effect November 1, 2021.

Legislature Drops Workers Comp Proposals

The Connecticut General Assembly considered several costly workers compensation proposals during the 2021 legislative session. CBIA and allied groups successfully advocated against three comprehensive measures — SB 1002, HB 6595, and HB 6478 — that significantly raised employer workers compensation costs.

The bills included the following sweeping changes to current state law:

- A presumption that an employee who contracts COVID-19 during the period of the public health and civil preparedness emergency will be presumed to have contracted it in the workplace, regardless of where the employee contracted COVID-19.
- A 400 percent increase in benefits and expansion of the maximum number of weeks of discretionary workers compensation benefits for partial permanent disabilities that may be awarded.
- A private right of action if an employer deliberately misinforms/dissuades an employee of the right to avail themselves to workers compensation benefits.

Continued...

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Lobbyist Update ... *continued*

- An increase in the workers compensation death benefit from \$4,000 to \$20,000
- Expansion of post-traumatic stress injury benefits
- Extension of workers compensation benefits during COVID-19 for mental and emotional impairment for police officers, firefighters, EMS workers, correction officers, dispatchers and healthcare workers.

Essential Workers Fund

In the place of these proposals, it appears the Legislature intends to create a Connecticut Essential Workers COVID-19 Assistance Fund administered by the state-run Second Injury Fund. Funding would come from federal American Rescue Plan Act funds and the death benefit would be increased to \$12,000. Advocates intend to establish the fund through the state budget implementer bill during the upcoming special legislative session.

Finally, HB 6397, which required employers that self-insure workers compensation to submit such claims to the all-payer claims database, failed to advance. The collection, retention and submission of this data to the state would be costly and overly burdensome to employers.

Unemployment Insurance Reforms Win Approval

With less than 23 hours to go in the 2021 General Assembly session, the state Senate gave final legislative approval to historic unemployment reform legislation. The Senate passed HB 6633 on a 34-0 vote early in the morning of June 9. The bill, designed to improve the long-term solvency of the state's unemployment trust fund, was approved by the state House 146-0 last month.

The bill makes a variety of reforms to the state's unemployment system that will take effect in 2024, including:

- Raise the taxable wage base from \$15,000 to \$25,000, then index it to inflation
- Reduce the maximum solvency tax rate from 1.4 percent to 1 percent

- Reduce the minimum and expand the maximum experience tax rate, from 0.5-5.4 percent to 0.1-10 percent
- Increase the minimum base period earnings required to qualify for unemployment benefits from \$600 to \$1,600, then index it to inflation, except when the federal government is providing additional benefits to UI claimants
- Freeze the maximum weekly benefit amount for four years
- Defer unemployment insurance benefits until a claimant's severance payments are exhausted

Fiscal Impact

The Legislature's nonpartisan Office of Fiscal Analysis projected that when the bill takes effect, the reforms will save the unemployment fund \$84.25 million annually while generating \$130.9 million in new annual revenues. The reforms will help reduce the likelihood the state will need to again borrow from the federal government during the next economic downturn to pay unemployment claims. The bill also requires businesses that heavily use the unemployment fund to shoulder a bigger portion of the tax burden, likely resulting in employers modifying their compensation policies to reduce future use. The reforms will save the unemployment fund \$84.25 million annually while generating \$130.9 million in new annual revenues. However, the reforms mean 73 percent of all Connecticut businesses will pay lower unemployment taxes.

The unemployment fund was in desperate need of reform. Even prior to the 2008-2010 recession, the fund was only a fraction of the way toward meeting its solvency goal. The state was forced to borrow more than \$1.2 billion from the federal government during that economic downturn and will borrow more than \$1 billion to meet Pandemic-related unemployment claims.

DOL's Westby to Retire

State Department of Labor commissioner Kurt Westby retired in June, and Gov. Ned Lamont nominated former Democratic state legislator Danté Bartolomeo, the agency's deputy commissioner, as his successor. Westby was named commissioner in 2018, succeeding Scott Jackson, who was moved from

Continued...

Current \$15,000 Wage Base					New \$25,000 Wage Base				
Experience Rate	Solvency Tax	Combined Rate	Employer Tax (\$45K salary)	Employer Tax (\$70K salary)	Experience Rate	Solvency Tax	Combined Rate	Employer Tax (\$45K salary)	Employer Tax (\$70K salary)
0.5%	1.4%	1.9%	\$285	\$285	0.1%	1%	1.1%	\$275	\$275
2.7%	1.4%	4.1%	\$615	\$615	2.7%	1%	3.7%	\$925	\$925
5.4%	1.4%	6.8%	\$1,020	\$1,020	10%	1%	11%	\$2,750	\$2,750

How the changes to the taxable wage base and solvency tax will impact an employer's per employee unemployment taxes. Source: HB 6633.



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the agency by then Gov. Dannel Malloy to lead the Department of Revenue Services.



Kurt Westby will retire from the Department of Labor this month, with Gov. Ned Lamont planning to nominate former state legislator Danté Bartolomeo as his successor.

Westby, a former consultant with the Service Employees International Union who also held leadership roles with the SEIU and Connecticut AFL-CIO, was appointed DOL deputy commissioner in 2016.

Bartolomeo, who served two terms in the state Senate representing the 13th District, was appointed deputy commissioner in January 2019. The CCA worked closely with her and her staff when she was in the State Senate. Lamont praised Westby's leadership at DOL, noting the expansion of the agency's apprenticeship program, stronger partnerships with the state's workforce development boards, and administering the historic level of unemployment claims during the height of the pandemic.

Small Business Revenues Hit Hard by Pandemic

COVID-19 pummeled the smallest of small businesses, according to a new study that views the Pandemic's impact through the lens of bank deposits. Intuit QuickBooks commissioned an economist to see how the Pandemic has affected the finances of small businesses across the country. The study looked at the bank deposits of one million businesses, each with typically 10 or fewer employees, from every major sector and industry. Among the findings in the study were:

- The Pandemic's biggest impact on small business revenue was in April 2020 when revenues fell by 22 percent nationwide, equivalent to \$4.6 billion for that month alone
- Overall small business revenue was down 28 percent in Connecticut in April 2020
- Revenues increased for 61 percent of industries during the Pandemic after a largely sustained recovery since April 2020
- The top performers over the past year are home improvement and real estate businesses. The annual revenue of mortgage bankers increased by 30 percent compared to pre-pandemic levels — an average increase of \$147,000 per business.
- The recreation industry had some of the hardest hit small businesses. For example, annual revenues at bowling al-

leys were down 33 percent by the end of March 2021, an average drop of more than \$250,000 per business.

- Small businesses in high density, urban areas — especially in states located on the East and West Coasts — experienced a greater financial impact from the Pandemic. Areas hit the hardest include New York City, especially Brooklyn, and San Francisco.

Turnaround Happening

The study did find some encouraging news. Even some of the worst hit businesses were back to pre-Pandemic levels the study showed. The study also found that the small businesses that suffered the greatest drop in revenue are oil and gas (down 20 percent), recreation (down 20 percent), local transport (19 percent), movies (15 percent), hotels and lodging, (12 percent), education (11 percent), and museums and attractions (11 percent).

But some businesses and industries were able to increase revenues during the Pandemic. These included financial and insurance (up 14 percent), agricultural services (up 11 percent), fishing and hunting (11 percent), building and garden materials (10 percent), utilities (10 percent), forestry (8 percent), and crop production (8 percent). The study also found that sustained recoveries in every industry started after the Pandemic's low point in April 2020. It noted that by March 2021, monthly revenue in the construction industry was up by 30 percent, retail by 22 percent and manufacturing 20 percent.

Despite the revenue gains of many small business sectors, the study said small businesses still needs help recovering. The study recommends expanding access to COVID-19 relief funds to more small businesses, guaranteeing government support for the smallest of businesses, and making it easier for small businesses to go digital.

New Report: Small Business Optimism Grows

A different report shows increasing optimism among small business owners in Connecticut and nationwide as the country emerges from the Coronavirus Pandemic. More than half the respondents — 56 percent — in a recent Bank of America's 2021 Small Business Owner Report expect their local economy will grow. Exactly half of small business owners surveyed expect improvements in the national economy, up from 37 percent last fall, and 60 percent expect their revenues to grow compared to 37 percent last fall. One in five small business owners, or 21 percent, plan to hire, a significant increase from 13 percent in the fall of 2020.

In the study, 79 percent of owners believe a vaccine or herd immunity locally will expedite a return to normal while 15 percent report that normal business has already returned. While business and economic outlooks are on the rise, entrepreneurs in industries like the carwash profession are keeping a close eye on macro factors that may impact their day-to-day operations. These include:

- The country's political climate, a concern for 71 percent of small business owners, down from 78 percent in the fall of 2020

- Commodity prices, a concern for 59 percent of small businesses, up considerably from 42 percent last fall
- Interest rates, a concern for 45 percent of owners, up from 35 percent in fall 2020.

Forty-three percent of small business owners in the report say they tried to hire during the Pandemic, and of them, nearly half (47 percent) reported difficulty finding qualified candidates. One in four said the Pandemic caused a shift in employee roles and skills that was necessary for success. While only 33 percent of small business owners said they received a PPP loan, many (48 percent) were forced to dip into personal savings. Only 33 percent of surveyed small business owners said they received a PPP loan while 48 percent dipped into personal savings, and 34 percent relied on business or personal credit cards.

Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination Policy Upheld

In what is believed to be the first court decision on the issue of mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations, the U.S. District Court for Southern Texas upheld a hospital's policy requiring that all its employees must be vaccinated to remain employed. The hospital suspended almost 200 employees after they failed to get vaccinated by the hospital's deadline and announced that it would terminate their employment if they continued to refuse the vaccine. Approximately 117 employees filed a lawsuit challenging the policy.

The court, in *Jennifer Bridges et al v. Houston Methodist Hospital*, easily dismissed the lawsuit, finding that the hospital had the right to require all of its employees to be vaccinated in order to continue working there. In her complaint, the lead plaintiff posited the oft-cited argument that individuals cannot be forced to be vaccinated against COVID-19 because, at present, the vaccines have only received emergency approval from the FDA. The court held that the plaintiff was not being coerced to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Offering a choice between vaccination and termination of employment does not amount to coercion. The hospital's decision to require its employees to be vaccinated was made to keep staff, patients and their families safe. While this case was decided in Texas, it may have persuasive value for similar cases in Connecticut and surrounding states. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's most recent guidance makes clear that employers can require employees to be vaccinated so long as they make reasonable accommodations for disabilities and sincerely held religious objections to vaccination.

Carwash employers must be careful not to implement the policy in a way that would discriminate against any protected class of individuals. While mandatory vaccination policies are most likely to be upheld in situations where employees are working with vulnerable populations such as hospitals and nursing homes, if crafted properly they are likely to enjoy broader application as well to other industries and small business like the carwash industry.

Carwash employers should be careful not to implement any policy in a way that would discriminate against a protected class of individuals and may want to ensure that all employees have a way to easily access the vaccine. They should also have a procedure in place to assess requests for reasonable accommodations due to disabilities and/or sincerely held religious beliefs.

New Workplace Smoking Restrictions

Workers in Connecticut will not just have to step outside for a smoke break beginning October 1 — they will have to step far outside, away from any doors or windows. And smoking rooms employers provide for employees also will be prohibited beginning July 1. Tucked into the text of the new law legalizing marijuana are several changes to workplace smoking laws.

Smoking bans will now apply to cigarettes, electronic cigarettes, marijuana, and any electronic device that delivers cannabis to the user — not just tobacco smoke. The new law generally bans smoking or the use of e-cigarettes in any area of the workplace, regardless of the number of employees. So, smokers who used to step outside the office or factory door for a smoke will no longer be able to smoke within 25 feet of a doorway, operable window or air intake vent. That means someone walking down a sidewalk within 25 feet of the doors to restaurants and other businesses can no longer smoke.

Exemptions Eliminated

The law also eliminates current exemptions, meaning smoking bans will apply to correctional facilities, up to 25 percent of guest rooms in hotels, motels, and similar lodging, and designated smoking areas in psychiatric facilities. In addition, hotels and motels will be required to prohibit the smoking or vaping of cannabis anywhere on their grounds. Smoking will also be banned in any area of a retail establishment accessed by the public, rather than just a retail food store.

The law also expands smoking bans on the grounds of any state or municipally owned or leased building, instead of only inside the building, as well as anywhere on school grounds, not just inside the school. The ban will also apply to any bus shelter or rail platform operated by the state. Landlords and building managers can ban tenants from smoking cannabis but they cannot prevent them from possessing legal amounts under the new law. Exceptions to the smoking ban will include public housing facilities, and any facilities exempted from the Clean Air Act, such as a tobacco lounge.

Flexibility Added to Small Business Express Program

As part of the FY 22-23 budget implementer, the Legislature passed various changes to DECD's Small Business Express program (EXP), generally increasing flexibility in the department's administration of the program and allowing for increased participation by private lenders. Among its changes, the act does the following:

- Expands the types of assistance that may be provided from the revolving loan fund and eliminates related requirements on the uses, amounts, rates and terms, and prioritization of these loans;
- Allows the DECD commissioner, in consultation with Connecticut Innovations (CI), to establish a new EXP component;

Continued ...

Lobbyist Update ... *continued*

- Eliminates the job creation incentive and matching grant components;
- Removes the requirement that there be no more than two minority business revolving loan funds, instead requiring a minimum of one, and increases the maximum size of loans these funds can provide;
- Makes changes to the administration and funding allocation of the EXP component operated in collaboration with Connecticut-based banks; and
- Establishes a goal for the department that by July 1, 2026, EXP (a) will be self-funded and (b) have a default rate of 20 percent or less for small businesses receiving assistance (SB 1202, JSS, as amended, §§ 317-320, most provisions effective July 1, 2021).

New Law Bans Discrimination Based on Hairstyles

A new law makes it an illegal practice to (1) discriminate based on a person's hair texture or protective hairstyle in employment, public accommodations, housing, credit practices, union membership, and state agency practices or (2) deprive any person of any rights secured or protected by either the state or federal constitution. It does so by specifying that the term "race" under the state's human rights law includes ethnic traits historically associated with race, including hair texture and protective hairstyles. Under the law, "protective hairstyles" include wigs, head wraps, and hairstyles such as individual braids, cornrows, locs, twists, Bantu knots, Afros, and Afro puffs (PA 21-2, effective upon passage).

Felony Convictions and Employment

A new report by the Office of Legislative Research www.cga.ct.gov/2021/rpt/pdf/2021-R-0049.pdf?t=1626302500956 (2021-R-0049) describes the consequences of a felony conviction on employment. With limited exceptions, the law prohibits the state from disqualifying a person from engaging in an occupation, profession, or business that requires a state credential (such as a license or permit) solely because of a prior criminal conviction. Similarly, a person may not be denied state employment solely because of a prior conviction. The law allows a state agency or board to deny employment or a credential only if it finds a person unsuitable after considering certain factors. The limited exceptions to this rule include (1) law enforcement agencies, (2) certain mortgage licensees, and (3) long-term care facility service providers who are convicted of certain crimes with direct access to patients. The bar described above does not apply to these entities or people (CGS §§46a-81, 7-294d, 36a-489& 19a-491c). In addition, public and private employers, like carwash employers, may not (1) use criminal histories to discriminate against a potential employee in violation of federal law or (2) deny employment to or discharge an employee because of a conviction for which the person received a pardon. The Board of Pardons and Paroles may also issue a provi-

sional pardon or certificate of employability to a person to relieve him or her of certain barriers to employment or to obtaining a license or permit. A provisional pardon, for example, could make someone eligible for a credential that might otherwise be denied due to a felony conviction. The law (sometimes called "ban the box") prohibits employers, like carwash employers from asking about a prospective employee's prior arrests, criminal charges, or convictions on an initial employment application unless (1) state or federal law requires it or (2) the prospective employee is applying for a position for which the employer must obtain a security or fidelity bond, or an equivalent bond (CGS § 31-51i(b)). **NC**



P.J. Cimini

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

July started out slowly, with the weather being rainy and threatening, unlike the prior two months. I can live with clouds and rain for a while. What is important is that New Jersey as a state is doing well with COVID cases, and we are mask-free. Looking forward to the fall it appears that schools will be back in session for in-person student attendance, which is wonderful for many reasons. Professionally, in the case of carwashing, traffic patterns and driving should increase which will make cars dirtier.

I would like to believe that in New Jersey we are starting to put the Pandemic behind us and seeing the light of our new normal. As a July 12, 56 percent of New Jerseyans were fully vaccinated. That puts the state in the top 10, which is a good place to sit.

May was exceptional but much of the summer has been, let's say, soggy. At the Jersey Shore we have been fighting our normal summer enemy, thunderstorms. One of the parts of the "new Normal" is a shortage of employees. Here at the shore, many, if not most of the restaurants are closed one day or night a week this summer. Next to the open sign, there is a "Help Wanted" sign. The good news is that all are surviving, adapting and emerging. Change can be good.

Meet Jack Ciattarelli!

Your association is having its first General Membership Meeting since November of 2019 at the Salt Creek Grille on Tuesday, September 14, in Rumson. Our speaker will be Jack Ciattarelli, the Republican candidate for Governor of New Jersey. This is a tremendous opportunity for each of us to come out and meet him. Don't miss this unique opportunity that our lobbyist, Al Gaburo with PPAG secured for us. The location is awesome, riverfront dining at its best. We can again gather as an association and fellow carwashers for a great meal and to meet a high-profile politician in our state.

Register for the NRCC!

The next event happening this fall is the annual Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC), October 4-6, in Atlantic City at the Convention Center. Our host hotel this year is the spectacular Hard Rock Hotel & Casino, right on the iconic boardwalk. I know all of us have suffered from a severe carwash show deficit during the past 18 months, and this is the perfect time to catch up with suppliers and fellow operators. I specifically know of three pieces of equipment I need to see before purchasing them. Despite the COVID hiatus there has been a lot of change in our industry. The snows of December are approaching and it is time to get ready!

One of the television networks use the phrase, "Must See TV." In our case, we have two "must see events." The first being our September 14 General Membership Meeting and the second being the 31st NRCC at the Atlantic City Convention Center where you can see and touch more than 350 exhibits, attend superb educational programming and hear Governor Chris Christie, who may be entering the race for President in 2024!

Make the time to attend both events. You will be glad you did!
I guarantee it! See you at both events!



Doug Rieck, CWONJ President

CWONJ Foursome Plays in the 5th Annual Children's Specialized Hospital Golf Open

Car Wash Operators of New Jersey Past President Doug Karvelas of Broad Street Car Wash in Hamilton, brought a foursome to play in the 5th Annual Children's Specialized Hospital Foundation Golf Open at Metedeconk National Golf Club in Jackson on June 21.

Karvelas teamed up with Jack Kemler, Mike Giannacio and Wayne Irons in support of the exceptional work the hospital provides. Children's is the largest pediatric rehabilitation hospital in the country and an entity that the CWONJ has been supporting for 21 years. **NC**



Jobe Co-Founder Jack Weinstein Honored with Posthumous Pioneer Award



The Car Wash Operators of New Jersey (CWONJ) will honor Jobe co-founder, **Jack Weinstein**, at its September 14 Membership Meeting at the Salt Creek Grille in Rumson. Weinstein's grandson, Jacob Rosenberg, will accept the posthumous award on his behalf. Weinstein passed away in November of 2019. **NC**

Look for a recap in our Winter 2022 issue!



Congratulations, Sam!



Congratulations go out to Sam Weinstein with Princeton Public Affairs Group (PPAG), the CWONJ's lobbying firm, on being named to the 2021 Insider 100: Cannabis Power List. This list recognizes the Top 100 influential voices in the cannabis debate. Sam works with lead Lobbyist, Al Gaburo, at PPAG on our account. **NC**

Styles Owner Marcella Reinhart Sees Carwash Industry in Transition

By Alan M. Petrillo



Marcella Reinhart rose up the ranks at Styles and is now the company's Chief Executive Officer.

Marcella Reinhart, the president, chief executive officer and owner of Styles Manufacturing Company, which was founded by Allen Edward Styles, believes the carwash industry is in transition, moving from flashy and splashy presentations to more conservative, functional designs that people seem to be seeking.

"At one time, carwash customers wanted a 'wow factor,' something with fancy lights and a flashy design," Reinhart said. "Now people are looking for quality and functionality, as well as a better-produced carwash experience, and that's something that Styles Manufacturing Company will always be able to supply."

Styles Manufacturing Company started life in 1932 as A.E. Styles Manufacturing Company Inc., when Styles, a chemist who blended soaps and waxes, developed a bar top coating for saloons, Reinhart pointed out. "After John Criscuolo, who was working for 3M Company, met Styles, they decided to merge, and John started the carwash supplier part of the business," she said. "A.E. Styles was one of the first distributors for Hanna (now Coleman Hanna Car Wash Equipment Systems) when Dan Hanna was one of the few people in the country manufacturing carwash equipment."

Reinhart said she grew up in Point Pleasant, NJ, where A.E. Styles Manufacturing was located, and began working in its accounting office in 1987. "I developed a love for the carwash industry," she said. "John (Criscuolo) would teach people everything he could about carwashing. He respected people who wanted to become educated in the business. Despite the fact that carwashing is traditionally a man's business, he didn't think it was unusual that I wanted to learn more and more about it."

When Criscuolo retired in 2012, he tapped Reinhart to run the business, handling all the banking and making all financial decisions, she said.

"This was at a time when the industry was going through a transition, so we thought it was a good time to transition away from our chemical product line, and into a sales and service company," Reinhart noted. "We continued to produce our chemical product line, and continued to distribute Coleman Hanna equipment, but also became a distributor for Innovative Control Systems (ICS), PECO Carwash Systems, Washworld in-bay au-



The Styles team was all assembled at the recent Southwest Car Wash Association trade show in Fort Worth, TX.



An oldie but goodie of Bob Howland, Service/Installation Consultant, and John Criscuolo working out of their modest office in Point Pleasant, NJ.

tomatic equipment, and PurClean™/PurWater™ water recovery systems."

Reinhart said that when Criscuolo died in November of 2017, he wanted the business to continue, but his sons didn't want to run the business, which is how she came to the helm of Styles Manufacturing Company, since relocated to an industrial park in Brick, NJ.

"I think we are going to see more women in the carwashing industry," she observed. "It's not only being a mechanic any more, but being a marketer, knowing how to sell to customers, and building an image that means something to them."

Reinhart pointed out that when Styles Manufacturing began distributing for more carwash equipment makers, competition was fierce to get equipment into new carwashes.

"As new investors started putting up carwashes, they needed all new systems for them," she said. "It was cutthroat competition and we had to show these investors not only that we had great equipment, but also the service to back it up if they needed us late on a Saturday afternoon.

"We showed them we are here for them 24/7, and gave them that old-time customer satisfaction that we've been practicing all these years," she added.

Reinhart said Styles Manufacturing doesn't want to eliminate its chemical product line which it has blended off-site and shipped directly to customers, but rather wants to add products

2022 NJ Budget to “Move State Forward”

By Sam Weinstein

After 18 months of legislative activity in response to COVID-19, on Wednesday, June 29, 2021, Governor Phil Murphy (D) was joined by legislative leaders to sign the fiscal year 2022 (FY2022) Budget. The appropriations act totals \$46.4 billion and is supported by better-than-expected tax revenues, \$6.2 billion in federal funds, and \$4 billion of bonding. The budget according to Governor Murphy, “...moves our state forward,” and endorses many of the Governor’s legislative priorities including the largest pension payment in the state’s history, new tax deductions for college savings, tuition and loans, a small boost for property tax relief and tax rebates of up to \$500 for more than 760,000 New Jersey families. Following the signing of the Fiscal Year 2022 Budget, Governor Murphy and his legislative counterparts will break from regular legislative activity and head to the campaign trail.

Politically, New Jersey’s gubernatorial elections are held in the year immediately following a presidential election and the Garden State, in addition to Virginia, is one of two states with a gubernatorial election this year. In November, Murphy will look to erase a 44-year drought where no Democratic governor has won a second term in New Jersey. Governor Murphy will square off against former Assemblyman Jack Ciattarelli (R-Somerset) in his re-election bid.

In addition to the gubernatorial election, all 120 seats of the Democrat-led New Jersey Legislature are up for grabs. The Democrats outrank their Republican counterparts by 25-15 in the Senate and 52-28 in the Assembly. In addition to holding the majority, Senate President Stephen Sweeney (D-3) and Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin (D-19) have secured commitments from their respective caucuses for another term in leadership. The Republican caucuses will meet after the November election to determine their new leadership in both chambers, with Senate Minority Leader Thomas Kean, Jr. (R-21) deciding to run for Congress, and Assembly Minority Leader Jon Bramnick (R-21) seeking his former running mate’s seat in the Senate.

NC



Sam Weinstein

Sam Weinstein is a lobbyist/strategic advisor/government affairs for Princeton Public Affairs Group (PPAG) in Trenton, NJ, the association’s lobbying firm. You can reach Sam at sam@ppag.com



Bob Howland and Marcella Reinhart at a Car Wash Operators of New Jersey bus tour in 2017.

and services that give it more choices and opportunities to diversify the company.

“We plan on looking at the innovations in the industry that we want to be a part of,” she said. “We also want to do more marketing and put our company out there as a more well-known entity, and plan on getting noticed more on the Internet for those people who do their shopping on a computer. And, we will continue, as we always have, to be loyal to our suppliers and our customers.”

NC

Alan M. Petrillo is a Tucson, AZ-based journalist, a former upstate New Yorker, and contributing editor of *Northeast Carwasher*. He writes for a number of national and regional publications, and is the author of six nonfiction books, and three historical mystery/thrillers.

**Look for a recap of our
Fall Membership Meeting
at the Salt Creek Grille in Rumson
featuring Jack Ciattarelli,
Republican Nominee for Governor,
in our Winter 2022 issue!**



“New Normal” Thoughts

By Doug Rieck

The past 18 months living with the effects of the Pandemic at my business has been an interesting ride, one that equals the best of roller coasters in revenues and changes.

I think the essential survival factor throughout all of this has been flexibility. You just can not do business as you used to do any more. Every process seems to have been affected by COVID. Looking forward to the future, I see flexibility as the most important factor. There are so many changes happening on almost a daily basis. I am reminded of Ben Franklin’s version of an old proverb, “For want of a nail, the shoe was lost. For want of a show, the horse was lost. For want of a horse, the rider was lost. For want of a rider, the battle was lost. For want of a battle, the kingdom was lost, and all for the want of a horseshoe nail.”

Ask any of the automotive and industrial manufacturers about that today with the chip shortage. The supply issue is bigger than just chips. Like many of us, I grew up, went to college and started a career in the Post World War and VietNam Era, where and when American industry ruled. When Ford or GM built or bought a part, millions were made or bought and were on site. All of this was the result of industrial models. In the past 25 years, all manufacturing and most activities shifted to the lean “Just In Time” model which is good but everything is much more connected.

I live on LBI, a vacation resort island. This is lonely in the winter, crazy busy in season and allows for many interesting observations. We grow from a year-round population of perhaps 2,500 to well over 150,000 plus. Last summer in May, nobody really knew what would happen, but rentals were up. By July we knew the whole state was coming for the summer. It was good but many were the unintended consequences. As we remember, restaurants and bars had severe capacity limitations. Local grocery stores were running out of food. Every place selling lunch and dinner was thriving on takeout and tent cities flourished at the restaurants. This was prior to vaccinations, so when my wife and I went out, we had a rating scale of how open and airy the tents were. Never mind food quality, it was the breeze quality that mattered. My point being that the restaurants survived and thrived because they changed.

This summer the Island is again crazy busy, all the bars and restaurants are being slammed but they have no help. Not a server to spare. Some restaurants are now including the kitchen in the Tip split. Cooks start at \$18 an hour. Again the hospitality industry has been flexible and smart. Many restaurants are closed one day a week. Reservations are required at many. I have heard that one popular seafood restaurant is reservation only and is completely booked up through Labor day.

All of us know the ongoing chip saga with cars and trucks. I have run into the chip stonewall in our industry. I bet you never thought boats and watercraft would have their own shortages. Their issue is demand, everyone wants a new boat. I was talking

with one watercraft dealer and they are still waiting for 60 boats to arrive from their order due this spring. I have a friend who is a sales manager at a different store and currently they are taking deposits for next spring. I have a nice three-year old boat and have been told I can sell it for more than I paid, but I cant replace it though.

There is a new normal arriving in business and it can be different. You need to change your thinking and be flexible. It is still all about taking care of your customer, but terms and conditions may change. **NC**

Doug Rieck operates Magic Wash in Manahawkin, NJ, and is the President of the Car Wash Operators of New Jersey. He was the recipient of the 2018 Northeast Regional Carwash Convention’s Most Distinguished Person Award. You can reach him at 609/597-SUDS or dougrieck@gmail.com



CWONJ Loses Longtime Friend, Jerry Muscio

Car Wash Operators of New Jersey (CWONJ) Past President and longtime supporter, Gerald E. Muscio, 92, passed away peacefully on July 21.

Born in Newark to Ciro and Rose (DiMizio), Jerry graduated from the General Motors Institute in Flint, MI, and earned degrees in mechanical and industrial engineering. He then served in the United States Army as a corporal in Aberdeen, MD, where he worked as an engineer. Jerry went on to become plant manager at General Motors in Linden, NJ. In 1966, with his brother, Ciro, and sister, Mary, Jerry co-founded Auto Kleen Car Wash in East Brunswick, NJ. Years later, they opened a second business at Brunswick Circle Car Wash in New Brunswick. He went on to become the president of the CWONJ and treasurer of the International Carwash Association. His colleagues viewed him as a pioneer in the carwash industry and an incredibly generous and kind man.



Jerry is predeceased by his wife, Gerlinde Zechmeister, his brothers, Ciro and Peter, his sisters, Mary, Theresa and Helen and many cousins. He is survived by his daughters, Arlene Fitzgerald and husband John of Gladstone, NJ, and Andrea Muscio-Palazzo and her husband Mark of Greenwich, CT. Jerry also leaves behind grandchildren John Jr. and Michael Fitzgerald and many cousins, nieces and nephews. **NC**

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that you consider a contribution to the American Heart Association via [Heart.org](https://www.heart.org)

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If you have an MCA story idea or wash you think we should feature, drop us an email at:
Suzanne.Stansbury@icloud.com

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

We have had a great opportunity recently to contribute to Fox News. They contacted Mid-Atlantic Carwash Association (MCA) to get assistance with a piece about cicadas and asked a few questions about getting them off the cars. I asked Past President Dave DuGoff to help with the piece as he was closest to the reporter in College Park, MD. He had a great cicada population in the back treeline area of his wash. Their chorus, combined with cars being washed, made for a great piece. I have a small cameo from my remote location in Virginia where we barely saw the cicadas. Scan the QR code with your camera to see us in action.



Fox must have gotten great feedback about our video because we were contacted by Fox International to answer written questions for an article that will go out to all of their news stations. While we did not get a lot of input, we did mention that washer fluid is not near as good as the carwash chemicals for removing those baked on cicada carcasses.

We appreciate the relationship with a news station and have kept their contact information for the future. They talked with us about doing additional industry stories as the seasons change.

MCA Reinvention

The MCA has been looking for ways to "reinvent" themselves so that we can stay relevant and useful to our members moving ahead. MCA leaders have been sharing many phone calls and Zoomed a few times during these months when we have had no in-person meetings to brainstorm. We see the future as a great new beginning and look forward to reconnecting with those we have not seen in a while.

We did a survey a while back and from those results we have come up with a new plan and a new vision for the MCA. We look forward to sharing the details in person, but if you miss it, check back here next time for a written synopsis of how the MCA will be working for its members!

In an effort to share our plan, we will host an in-person meeting, picnic style in Annapolis, MD, at Chesapeake Car Wash and Detail. It is a family event, members and non members were all welcomed. Printed details will follow on our website soon at www.mcaacarwash.org

MCA Hosts the NRCC!!!

We are looking forward to the Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC), October 4-6, at the Atlantic City Convention Center. We really feel like this will be a show for the record books and we're very proud to be this year's host association. The MCA leaders are looking forward to reconnecting with our members, as well as meeting all those in attendance. To register and secure your hotel rooms visit nrccshow.com. See you at the Hard Rock Hotel in New Jersey soon!



M.H. Ashley

Mike Ashley, MCA President

**VISIT MCACARWASH.ORG
FOR FUTURE MEETING
DATES AND VENUES!**

Fighting City Hall – At Your Own Risk

By Dave DuGoff

As described in our last installment, we won our case in Court in October 2020, and the City immediately served another noise violation citation on us.¹ That was followed by two more citations in December and January. The courts were closed until recently. This spring, the City tried a slightly different tactic. We were hauled in front of the Noise Control Board on the complaint of a neighbor who lives across Route 1 from us and can see us from their back yard.

That arose from an incident in March when a wild Hookah party (what's a hookah?) disturbed the tranquility of life along Route 1. It takes two complainants to enable the City to spring into action. Mr. & Mrs. Unhappy Neighbors, signed off.

We were given about a week's notice to show up, on ZOOM, before the Noise Control Board. The Board is a group of citizen volunteers who hear complaints and try to mediate between neighbors. The Board members are well-meaning and take their role seriously, but they are not sophisticated nor well-trained in running a legal proceeding. "Fairness" is in the eye of the beholder. The Board members are completely reliant upon the City Attorney. (The City Attorney is the same lawyer who lost the cases in October 2020.) That makes it a kangaroo court run by the City Attorney who controls what the members know and tells them how to do it.

The Board heard from Mr. and Mrs. Unhappy and the City Director of Public Services. Mr. and Mrs. Unhappy recounted the numerous instances of noise coming from the carwash: loud music and engine revving.

The car racers use the wash, then make a lot of noise as they exit and turn onto Route 1. They also exchange revving greetings to one another and seem to enjoy the echo effect in our bays. They are annoying — no question about it. However, as we pointed out, they do not typically "rev" for more than a few seconds at a time. When we see someone doing it, by the time we approach them, it is over. The revving on their exit is technically not on our property — it is in the state right of way. When they are exiting there is really nothing we can do about it. Once they enter the street, they leave it in low gear to maximize the loudness for a block or two. Try this sometime: run after a loud car and yell, "SHUSH!"

The minutes of the meeting contain many inaccuracies both as to what was actually said and where people grossly misrepresented facts. The City Director of Public Services presented a report, that we had never seen, and could not see during the hearing, that counts the number of police calls to the property. He said that all were noise complaints. In fact, half were totally unrelated — traffic stops, traffic accidents, etc. Our lot is a convenient place for the police to pull someone over. He said that most of the noise complaints were in the middle of the night. In fact, only one instance was after 1 am. Most of the noise complaints are in the early evening, but the board members all "knew" that it was

all night long. How they can distinguish between racers revving on the carwash property or in the street when they are tucked in their beds, I do not know. Noise is NOISE and it is all our fault.

The Noise Control Board went into private session to confer with the City Attorney and returned after 20 minutes. We were told to fix the problems within a month, report to the Director of Public Services and return for a follow up hearing.

The problem with fighting City Hall is that they always have a way to get you, even when they are wrong and are overstepping their authority. In our case, the State Highway Department is going to widen Route 1 and took a strip of our property that includes our pole sign. We need a permit from the City to replace the sign in a different location. Gotcha! This is not the time to challenge the City's grasp of the law or rationality.

So, we engaged off-duty police officers to be on-site for four hour shifts, five days a week, that line up to the times when complaints actually come in. Most complaints are between 7:30 pm and 1 am. Some shifts run 7:30-11:30 pm, some run 9-1 pm. It is fairly random, depending on the officer's other duty obligations. The going rate for "secondary employment" of police officers paid "on the books" is \$50/hour. This is running \$1,000 a week. It could be 20 percent less if you don't mind going to jail for tax evasion. Orange is not my best color.

At the second hearing, the Noise Control Board was impressed that we have taken this step. They also mentioned that they realized there is a difference between noise in the street and noise from the carwash. In recognition of our efforts, they reduced the fine from \$1,000 to \$200.

By the way, the three cases that were pending in Court were finally set in for hearing on July 14. We were then advised by the City Attorney that she would not prosecute the cases. She added, "The City appreciates your client's cooperation helping to control the noise levels from the carwash." End of the story? Well, not quite.

In mid-July, the City Council had a work session and discussed the noise on Route 1 from cars with modified mufflers. A police major and captain talked about how this is not just a City of College Park problem, it is everywhere in the County and everywhere in the State. Council members wanted reports on how many citations have been issued and how many repeat offenders there are. Suddenly, somebody realized that if they don't address the problem on the street, it is never going to go away. In case you are wondering, the fine for a modified muffler, that costs \$3,500 to install, is \$70.

How long are we going to keep paying \$1000 a week in protection money? I do not know. What would you do? **NC**

Dave DuGoff has been "picking up after people" for more than 50 years in this industry. He has been on the Mid-Atlantic Carwash Association board for 20 years, and the Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC) board for 15 years. He has spoken and led panels at the International Carwash Association conventions and the NRCC. He is also a recovering lawyer. You can reach Dave at dave.dugoff@gmail.com

1 Northeast Carwasher Winter 2020, "You Got Noise and Its All Your Fault" <https://northeastcarwasher.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/NCv26n1.pdf>

Cool Wave WashPlex a Featured NRCC “Virtual Tour” Site



Cool Wave WashPlex, the brainchild of Bobby Willis, a noted industry innovator, will be one of the carwashes featured in the Virtual Tour at this year’s Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC), in Atlantic City, October 4-6. The Virtual Tour will include four washes and WashPlex will be front and center.

Just a Tease

Willis started his career in the carwash industry selling and installing equipment. After 10 years, and visiting many sites, he had built a reputation for creativity and attention to detail. In 2003, he founded Cool Wave Car Washes and opened his first location in Newport News, VA.

From there, Willis conceived the WashPlex model that incorporates theme park entertainment with automotive vehicle care. WashPlex uses all six senses to create a one-of-a-kind experience for each customer. **NC**



If you want to learn more about Willis and the WashPlex evolution, register to attend the NRCC and the “Virtual Tour” at nrccshow.com.

This seminar is Monday, October 4, at 3:30pm at the Atlantic City Convention Center.

In the News

College Park’s Dave DuGoff and Virginia Carwash Industries’ Mike Ashley had their 15 minutes of fame recently when they were interviewed by Fox 5 for a piece on the cicada infestation of 2021 called “Cicadas Giving Car Wash Business a Boost.” DuGoff was quoted in the piece as saying, “Whatever makes a mess, the people want to get it cleaned up, and it helps us.” Ashley echoed those sentiments in the piece as well, “The cicadas have helped bring in those extra cars because when they hit they hit hard,” said Ashley.

For the first time since 2004, Cicadas (Brood X) and their shells were out en masse as far north as the Adirondacks of New York state this year. In Maryland and Virginia, their reach was like a blanket of snow and their sounds deafening, but it did help business, according to both operators. The next time these pesky insects will emerge will be 17 years from now in 2038. **NC**



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It is hard to argue that this past year or so has been the most disruptive in the history of the carwashing industry. Operators, manufacturers and distributors have been put to the test to manage their businesses against obstacles never seen before. Despite the challenges, the carwash industry is experiencing record growth on many levels, and the industry continues to be stronger than ever.

There are many sides to the robust growth in our industry. We have seen record numbers of cars washed, new carwash sites opening (and more planned), record valuations and consolidations and technology continues to blaze new trails. The consolidation of many of the manufacturers, suppliers and distributors may have a positive effect for our industry as companies join forces to become bigger and stronger. Does this leave the operators with less choices? Will this new environment breed new, smaller and more nimble companies to fill a void left by the new larger companies? Time will tell as the market is never wrong when opportunity creates itself.

The New England Carwash Association (NECA) had a "virtual," live streaming bus tour this past June. There was a camera person at five different locations, streaming live presentations, that showcased carwash systems and operations, and several sponsors at each carwash site. The program highlighted tunnel equipment, pay stations, back-room support equipment, chemical suppliers, touchless carwashes, vacuum systems, POS software solutions and a selection of site layouts. Participants were able to text questions directly to an onsite volunteer. The tour started in Westerly, RI, jumped to West Springfield, MA, rocketed to Cleveland, OH, Freeport, ME, and ended in Salem, NH.

The NECA is very thankful to the many volunteers who planned this event. It took a team effort to organize and put together all the pieces of a live presentation in five different locations and five different states. This also was made possible due to the generosity of the many sponsors and the carwash operators who let us film at each of their locations. There is a recording of this event posted on the NECA website.

During this past year, despite my 30 years of experience, I have valued the New England Carwash Association higher than ever. I have collaborated with many operators to change my operations and adapted as we navigated the changing market during COVID. I have made permanent changes to my operations and feel I have emerged stronger and more efficient as we exit the COVID era. Like many, I have a very positive outlook for the future and am looking forward to the many industry events that will take place in person: the NECA board meetings, the NECA golf outing, the Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC), our region's three-day convention with an educational track and expansive trade show floor with more than 350 exhibits, and Car Care World Expo just before Thanksgiving in Las Vegas. Nothing can replace the relationship building that occurs at an in-person event. For more information on the NRCC, October 4-6, at the Atlantic City Convention Center visit nrccshow.com or call 800/868-8590.




Patrick Mosesso, NECA President

NECA Tours Washes “Virtually”

On June 2, the New England Carwash Association (NECA) defied geography by presenting a “virtual tour” of carwashes, similar to what is done at the Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC) annually. If the group had traveled by bus, the motor coach would have been on the road for days. Instead, at each stop, professional video camera operators allowed our hosts to provide comprehensive tours of multiple facilities, all in one afternoon, from the comfort of each participant’s office or home.

The first stop, **Westerly Car Wash** (Westerly, RI), was hosted by owner Kevin Yorio and presenting sponsors **Washify Systems**, represented by Matt D’Souza, and Simoniz USA. Kevin walked us through the wash from the entrance through the 80-foot tunnel as well as the site’s chemical room. Highlighted features and products included Simoniz Prime pack chemicals and Washify POS pay stations.

The tour then traveled north to **Balise Riverdale Car Wash** (Springfield, MA) which was completely renovated this spring. Tony DeBarros, carwash manager, Chris Zona of **AutoWash Technologies** and Jason Hayes from **Petit Auto Wash Equipment** walked us through the site pointing out all the new equipment. According to the tour guides, Petit Auto Wash Equipment was perfect for this shorter tunnel proving to be a real solution in a tight labor market.

Next, attendees ZOOMED to Rainforest Car Wash in Cleveland, OH, where Chris MCFadden of **DRB** demonstrated the company’s newest POS systems.

From there, the tour returned to New England to visit **Casco Bay Car Wash** (Freeport, ME), a new inbay facility. The proud new owners, the Dotin family, Drew Dressler of D& S and facility designer, Mike Snow of Maintenance Tech Inc., walked attendees through the complex which features both a **D & S IQ Touch Free Machine** and a **D & S IQ Soft Touch Machine**. A 3rd bay has been prepared for an automatic expansion but currently serves as an express detail center.

The last stop was **Klemm’s Express Car Wash** (Salem, NH), a 125-foot conveyerized tunnel installed by **Autowash Maintenance Corporation**. Bob Keane of Autowash Maintenance Corp. interviewed Tom Klemm, the enthusiastic owner of the new wash, as they walked through it. The design and all the features which included touch-free bays with on-board dryers, **XRS Air Lift Doors**, a central vacuum system with 10 free vacuums spots were highlighted.

November Tour Set



As much as attendees enjoyed the spring “virtual” carwash tour, there’s nothing like traveling together in person and enjoying a meal. Thinking outside the box, our November 9 Fall Meeting & Dinner will feature a mid-afternoon mini tour of carwashes followed by dinner and networking. **NC**

Visit newenglandcarwash.org for more details.



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An Interview with the Funny, Fabulous and Frank, Patti Kaplan



We last interviewed Starlite Car Wash's Patti Kaplan in 2009 when she shared with us the history and evolution of the iconic carwash (named after an outdoor theatre). Patti, whose father bought the one-year-old wash in 1971, took it over in 1993, and oversaw a massive remodel in 1994 before expanding its services in 2001 to include three self-serve bays. Now, after 28 years as the face of the customer-oriented brand (but she really started getting her hands wet there when she was 16), Kaplan, 67, has sold the wash to Prestige Car Wash owner Nir Drory, and is not retiring, but "letting her brain rest" before taking on her next adventure.

We wanted to catch up with her and thank her for her years of service to the New England Carwash Association (NECA) as a board member and president, and to the Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC) as a board member and ardent supporter, and to me, personally, as a friend and ally.

NE: So, they say that timing is everything and as I watch many smaller operators sell to larger entities it appears it was the right time for you to do that as well. Tell us how bittersweet it was, or wasn't, after so many years as a carwasher, and why this is the right time to make a change.

PK: I have been thinking about it for quite a while now, especially after COVID. Honestly, I still put out a clean, dry car, but it is no secret that Starlite needed to be updated. At this stage of my life, I just did not want to take that challenge on – "again." I applaud those who are remodeling and giving the customer a better experience and continuing to professionalize the industry dispelling the myths of dark and dirty carwashes. Carwashing has become much more sophisticated.

NE: And as for being bittersweet?

PK: As far as bittersweet, I will miss the people, my customers, the boys who worked with me, and an incredible carwash community who always had my back. The sweet part is that I have an arsenal of stories and memories that I will always cherish.

NE: Over your tenure in the industry, you have witnessed a lot of change. What stands out?

PK: Two things – equipment and technology. The progress in these



Patti Kaplan played hard and she worked hard during her tenure at Starlite Car Wash where she left her mark and impression on many.



Patti and Dennis Kaplan enjoy a day at the ballpark while attending a New York State Car Wash Association event at CitiField.

two areas has helped reduce the human error factor contributing to a more consistent product. Additionally, both have helped the bottom line by trimming payroll and delivering efficient quantities of soap, water and power to the tunnel. Remote monitoring as equipment ages will become important going forward. Qualified "eyes on site" will not be present. ZOOM support, anyone?

NE: You were a successful single-location operator for many years. With the climate of the industry shifting, and more and more consolidators moving in, what will be the impact to the "little guy/gal" moving forward?

PK: Personally, I think it is going to be difficult for the smaller operator to compete financially. Reinvestment, frequent site updates, reputation management, and creative marketing are just as important as the quality of the carwash. A larger operator has the advantage of a central infrastructure to help defray those costs. They can also implement various testing strategies to find optimum results to keep improving. The concern for me is the repair and maintenance of the carwashes for the mega operator. The smaller operator has the edge here because they almost never close down no matter what, even if it means spraying the cars with a garden hose.

NE: What were your takeaways from living through COVID as an operator? Did this also weigh in on your decision to sell?

PK: In my opinion, the carwash, due to the nature of our business – exterior and self-serve – was safe during COVID and we provided a welcome distraction for many of our customers. The worrisome side of remaining open was my team's health. The prospect of a member of our pod getting sick and bringing it to others weighed heavily on me. Fortunately, we had no incidents. Yes – the load is lifted.

NE: You mentioned that what made Starlite stand out was its personal touch and customer connection. How important is that culture, at any sized wash, and how do you cultivate it?

PK: My philosophy was to make customers feel special. A "Cheers" environment prevailed where everyone knew your name. If we did not know your name, we knew your car and exactly what your preferences were. I cultivated that by employing local guys



The late Tom Rando, Patti Kaplan, Ron Bousquet and Steve Scharmett of Key Road Car Wash in Keene, NH, at an NECA bus tour when Kaplan was president.

from North Reading who worked and socialized together. It was regarded by many as a rite of passage to work at the “Wash.”

Our world is very automated today. That type of service is nice, but not necessary. Today’s consumer is self-sufficient. Larger high-volume washes should have some staff on hand to provide customer support when needed.

NE: You told me that not living in the town in which you operate has made life a little easier for you over the years. Can you explain and was that intentional?

PK: It was a personal preference to keep my career and private life separate. I think that choice helped me to sustain a professional demeanor in the community and still maintain my fun-loving side with friends and family. For me that helped separate my worlds and provide better focus for each. It must have been intentional. I have not moved for 41 years!

NE: In our last interview you noted that the wash had a garden on site and that it made the carwash “homey.” Is it still there and how did that come about?

PK: The garden and the gazebo are part of an outdated model. By the time this is in print the area will probably be dotted with vacuums. Bobby Paisner (of ScrubaDub Car Washes) once gave me excellent advice. He said, “Pave and maximize the use of your land.” He was right.

NE: What advice would you give to anyone entering the industry today?

PK: Carwashing is not an easy business. We have a lot of moving parts in our industry, and they are changing faster than ever. Be sure to look carefully before you leap and know with whom you are leaping.

NE: If you could tell your 20-year-old self anything, what would it be?

PK: Embrace the unexpected. Understand that life sometimes

Continued ...

Starlite Car Wash, built in 1970, was a right of passage for many in the town of North Reading, MA. Kaplan’s father purchased the site in 1971 and turned it over to Patti in 1993 while overseeing a massive remodel. The site was sold in 2021.



Kaplan added bays to the wash in 1999.



The gazebo, according to Kaplan, is part of an outdated model that the new owners will likely remove and replace with vac islands.

An Interview with the Funny, Fabulous and Frank, Patti Kaplan ... continued

does not unfold according to plan. That is okay. It is the way you view and deal with the surprises that matters most.

Carwashers are a crazy bunch. I am so lucky to have had the privilege of being part of that bunch. Thank you all for looking out for me in every way possible over the years.

From the Editor:

Patti Kaplan has been a true force and guiding light in this industry. Her wit, wisdom and levity for tackling life has left an impact on me, and no doubt the hundreds of other carwashers she has touched. We wish Patti, and her husband Dennis, a happy and healthy second act.

I'm sure it will be anything but dull!

NC



A definite blast from Starlite's past. When was the last time you priced "The Works" at \$6.50?





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Congratulations to This Year's NECA Scholarship Winners!

The New England Carwash Association (NECA) is so pleased to introduce its 2021 Scholarship recipients. Since 2011, including this year, the association has awarded \$30,000 in scholarships to deserving member company employees or their children.

Each year, the association awards one scholarship in memory of Tom Rando to an applicant who embodies the values and talents of Tom Rando, an entrepreneur, innovator and respected industry leader. The 2021, the Thomas Rando Scholarship recipient is **Danny Rodriguez**, whose father Albeiro, works for ScrubaDub in Woburn, MA. Danny will be entering his senior year at UMass-Boston, graduating with a degree in Exercise Health Science. Upon graduation, he plans to take the physical therapy (PT) assistant exam and enter a PT doctoral



program. In high school, Danny was a high honors student and a three-sport athlete, as well as a member of other student organizations. During his junior year, he was chosen by Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center to be part of their summer health corps volunteer program. Currently, he is working full-time as an operating room attendant for the Medical Center while maintaining his high academic standing.

Samantha Snow is the daughter of Michael Snow, owner of Maintenance Tech Inc. (MTI), Portland, ME. Sammi dreams of becoming an FBI Special Agent and to that end, she will enter the University of New Haven's Criminal Justice-Investigative Service Program this fall. The University recognized her exceptional scholastic, athletic (lacrosse, field hockey and competitive rifle shooting) and community service by presenting her with a Distinguished Scholar Award.



Michael Connolly, who has worked for Sandwich Car Wash, Sandwich, MA, since high school, will be entering his senior year as a business management major at UMass-Amherst. For the first time, he will be living on campus. If his name sounds familiar it is because Mike, when a Cape Cod Community College student, was our 2019 Thomas Rando

Scholarship recipient. He again impressed our committee by his work ethic, maturity and determination to reach his goals.

The NECA Scholarship Committee is confident that these outstanding young people will be successful, and is pleased to be of some small assistance. **NC**





Together Again!
Tuesday October 26, 2021
Fall Event
Beginning & Celebrating
at Patriots Place, Foxborough, MA

Mini Bus Tour of Car Washes 1:00 p.m.

Hall of Fame Tours 4:00 p.m. (optional)

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All the details and registration: www.newenglandcarwash.org



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NECA's Mini Tour and Social Event - Let's Get Together!

On October 26, the New England Carwash Association (NECA) has planned a special event that combines so much of what the membership enjoys: touring carwashes, football, food and conversation. There's nothing like getting together "in person," something we've sorely missed.

At 1 pm, a luxury motor coach will depart from Gillette Stadium to take attendees on a mini-tour of the RoJo location in Norwood and its newest wash in Walpole. At 4 pm, we will return to Patriot's Place where we secured a Patriots Hall of Fame tour for all to enjoy. At 5 pm, our annual awards presentation and social gathering will begin at CBS Sporting Club. At 5:45 pm, a buffet dinner will be served. All are invited to enjoy the ambiance and company of this special location until 9 pm.

Join the membership for the full event or just the evening social gathering. Register through the NECA website at www.newenglandcarwash.org

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| | Mark Kubarek |

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

As we begin to return to "normal," I have been wondering about the Pandemic's lasting effects. The initial weeks of the Pandemic were a chaotic time, filled with uncertainty for all of us personally and professionally. Businesses were forced to close and employees furloughed, laid off or terminated, and schools were shut down and college campuses were left deserted while millions learned what WFH (working from home) meant.

Looking back, it was all surreal. In late March of 2020 my oldest son was in the second semester of his senior year. He was returning from a volunteer project with Habitat for Humanity to his college campus in Rhode Island when they called and said, "Come pick him up, and we will see him again in two weeks." That two weeks turned into a month and then in mid-May we were told that he would not be going back.

Returning to his college dorm room mid-summer to collect his "stuff" was a bizarre experience. It was as if they vanished into thin air, dishes in the sink, food in the fridge and books still on the desks. His graduation was "virtual," sitting in the living room we watched and listened to pre-recorded speeches from his professors and waited for his name to scroll across the screen — not exactly the same as walking across the stage collecting your diploma, shaking hands and being congratulated by the college president.

Several weeks later his diploma unceremoniously arrived in the mail.

Fast Forward

Now that things are heading back to "normal," what "COVID precautions" will remain? It's clear that things will never be quite the same again, and they shouldn't be. Thousands of lives have been lost and problems up and down the supply chain have been exposed. Businesses, especially small businesses, had to be flexible and continually adapt to meet seemingly unending, and often confusing, regulations just to stay afloat. To survive they had to change and look at new ways of doing business just to survive.

The Pandemic, coupled with the increases in minimum wages and other regulations, increased the push toward more automation and forced operators to review their business models. It's clear that things will not ever be exactly the same.

As the summer comes to an end, my youngest son will be heading off to start his college career. There are new health and safety protocols that he will need to follow that were not in place when my oldest son started. Things will be different for him, as well. I'd encourage all of us to look at what we were doing, what we did to survive and what we can do next to thrive.

One of my favorite movie scenes is from "Cannonball Run" a 1981 comedy based on a cross-country car race starring some "A" list celebrities of the day. In one scene a driver rips off the rearview mirror of his car saying, "We don't need a rearview mirror, we've already been there and we don't need to see it again." I agree! We should rip off the mirror and look ahead to better and brighter times.

I hope all the members of the New York State Car Wash Association are safe, healthy and here's to a robust "recovery."



Walter Hartl, NYSCWA President



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Sammy's is a Shining Example of Old School Carwashing Done Right

By Suzanne Stansbury

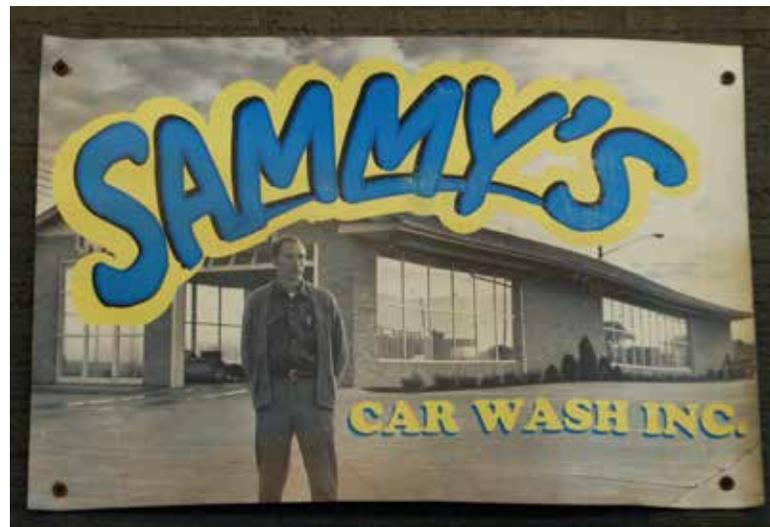
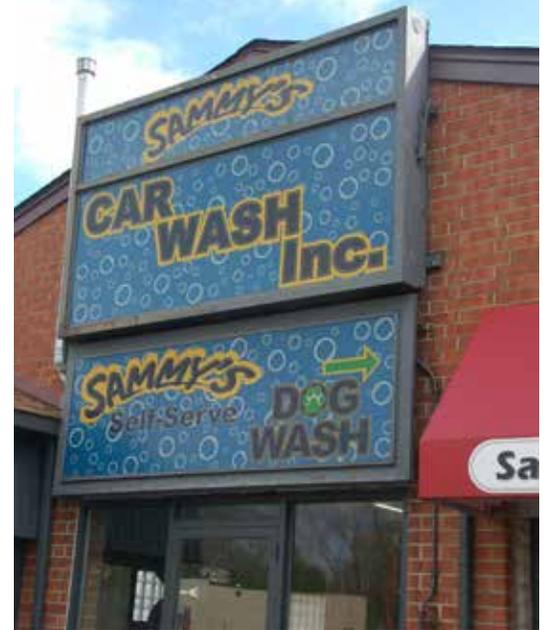


Sam Cosmano literally knows every one of his customers. And that was abundantly clear to me on a warm spring day in the Buffalo, NY, suburb of East Aurora. I spied some pictures of Sammy's Car Wash & Dog Wash Emporium on the Facebook group TalkCarWash and knew that on my next drive through western New York I had to meet Sam and learn more about the wash, its history and his legacy. I'm so glad that I did!

As I teased in the last issue, Sammy's is not a high-tech multiple-site operation with fancy signage and an abundance of free vacs. It is a single exterior wash in the hamlet of East Aurora, about 20 minutes from Buffalo, home to approximately 6,000. But what Sammy's might lack is new swag, it more than makes up for in its finished product and the attention to detail the owner and his staff give to each and every customer. "I try to greet each customer I can," said Cosmano, 54. "And I encourage my staff to do the same. I encourage them to grab a towel, look to see where a spot might have been missed, and talk to our customers. Customers love the attention, and trying to make them laugh or smile goes a really long way," he added. "Our detail buffet creates that opportunity and I'll also



An additional profit center at the wash is its detail bay where Sam does detailing services including ceramic applications.



bring out a mini buffer and buff out minor scratches for our customers. Personal attention is something that's hard to come by."

Going the extra mile with his customers was something his dad, Saverio (Big Sam), taught him well.

"Working side by side with my dad was an education I couldn't buy," recounted Cosmano. "I learned about business relations and public relations from him."

Cosmano added a dog wash bay to his profit centers and hasn't looked back.





This East Aurora, NY, exterior was run for many years by the father and son Team of "Big Sam" and Sam Cosmano.



The team from Sammy's: Joe Wagner, Matt Norcia, Sam Cosmano and Trey Spaun.

Wash History

Sam's dad, "Big Sam," was a Second Lieutenant in the US Air Force from 1952-56. At the end of his service he met his wife, Marie, in Niagara Falls. Although he never graduated from high school, he worked in the construction business, and for some extra cash at a carwash. Eventually, he became the manager of eight locations and the part owner of two of them. He purchased the wash in East Aurora, then named Aurora Car Wash, in 1974 and opened with the help of his nephew Mike Mctigue. His motto was "hard work and customer satisfaction," something Sam strides for daily.

So, it's a given, really, that Sam would follow in his father's footsteps. "I would come to work as a kid, and than when I could drive it was weekends and then I was invited into the business in 1987," he said.

The two worked side by side into the 2000's before Dementia set in. "Big Sam" stopped working at the wash in 2006, and passed in 2013. Sam's mom, Marie, who did all the wash's books, passed in 1996. Sam's dad remarried after his mom's passing, which complicated business matters a bit before Sam's dad passed, so in 2012 Sam basically had to start over. It was at this point that the wash name changed to Sammy's Car Wash & Dog Wash Emporium.

"Just before dad died, I had to basically start from scratch and had to depend on experience and take some chances (implementing a club plan, for one), said Cosmano, "while raising two

The tunnel features Motor City and Belanger equipment serviced by WNY Car Wash Systems.



small kids with my wife Stacy. She did the books, like my mom did. I remember starting a savings account with \$50 in it."

Diversification

Cosmano kept saving and working hard and eventually added another profit center to his site, a dog wash. "It was another way to meet the public and interact with them."

Although "Big Sam" was never a fan, Sam saw the potential revenue stream and thought the added profit center might just work. After visiting many locations with dog washes in western New York, Sam tweaked what he had seen and designed a warm water operation that was bigger, cheaper and easier to clean. He even added a number of specific options to the menu including hypoallergenic shampoo, cream rinse, as well as a de-skunk, oatmeal and flea and tick selection. A plain water rinse and blow dry completes the service for \$8 for 15 minutes. "The only thing we suggest bringing is a towel," he said. "But in case you forget, we have some extras."

Cosmano credits his club program, a monthly Express pass for \$24.99, a 90-day Deluxe unlimited pass for \$99 or his 6-month

Continued...

Sammy's is a Shining Example of Old School Carwashing Done Right ... continued

Deluxe unlimited pass for \$199, with providing another steady stream of revenue he can rely upon. He also recently added a \$12 upgrade to his pass that includes a ceramic coating from Quest Car Care Products. "When club washing came around I jumped in and haven't looked back," he recalled. "The side effects began to pop up, such as chemical costs (minor), chain wear and staffing, but as dad's words were telling, he said, 'Always be able to run this place alone if you have to.' (I worked alone here at the wash before they finally shut me down for COVID.)"

About the Wash

But even though Sammy's isn't a super long tunnel, its equipment package packs a punch and produces a really shiny, dry car. The 70-foot tunnel houses an 82-foot conveyor that extends out of the building. The tunnel equipment features Belanger side wraps and Motor City cotton cloth, Belanger mitters and a 70-hp Motor City Dry N' Shine unit. The rinse arches are being changed over to Motor City while ZEP and Quest provide chemical. The tunnel controls are Compuwash and Washify, and parts and supplies are from Dultmeier Sales. Cosmano said WNY Car Wash Systems' Joe and Nick Muscarella will be installing a new Motor City conveyor this fall as well as some new tunnel wall material. They have been servicing the wash since "Big Sam" ran the ship. "Sam is a lot like his dad," recalls Joe Muscarella. "He's very hands on with the customers, but he's conservative and takes his time changing out equipment. He's not a gambler. He likes to be able to afford the equipment he buys."



Although the signage may be a bit "old school" it reflects the personality of this exceptional facility and its owner.

Sammy's owner Sam Cosmano greets each customer and literally knows their name!

The relationship runs deep as one of Sam's first forays into the industry was working with the WNY team and building some washes. "I literally watched him grow up," said Muscarella. "He is extremely involved in his community and that shows at the wash."

Wash Options

Sammy's Regular wash is \$10, the Deluxe is \$13 and the Comeback is \$15 and that option includes a "rain check" where you can "come back" in 10 days and get a free wash if it rains. The site also features one self-serve bay for oversized vehicles and four stand-alone Monorail vacs which are \$1 for five minutes. At the conclusion of both the tunnel and bay wash customers can take advantage of the Detail Buffet that includes towels, window cleaner, all-purpose cleaner and trim shine for final touch ups. The site also features a detail bay where Cosmano will complete a full detail or ceramic polish by appointment. "I learned to buff a car when I was 15," he recounts. "We work on one car at a time. There is no assembly line at our wash. Every car has its own time to be brought back to its potential."



Community Involvement

Cosmano, like his dad, is extremely involved in the East Aurora community. "Being at the wash for 40 years (starting when I was 14), I have gotten to know our community," he said. "Being Dyslexic also has given me good people skills. That is what sets Sammy's apart from other washes."

Although not far from a Delta Sonic location in either direction (about 15 miles), Sam doesn't look at the multi-chain carwash leader as a threat or competition. "My dad sold a few washes to them and I give Ron Benderson (Delta Sonic's founder) huge credit for the dynasty he has created. I give him the utmost respect. He and my dad knew each other well, but there's no competition as I see each company providing a different experience."

Sammy's supports the local economy as an employer providing a lot of high school aged kids with their first jobs or in fundraising for youth organizations and schools through hot dog sales or guest bartending. "You don't see those attributes in some of the washes today that are just looking to make a profit for their investors," he said. "Our small town means a lot to my family. I'm in the volunteer fire department, and I play hockey three times a week at our local rink in the winter."

"We love supporting our local Boys & Girls Club of East Aurora just as my dad did. It just comes down to giving back. People notice. Embrace your customers and they will return the favor!"

COVID Struggles

Despite the struggles of the last year due to the COVID shut down, Cosmano didn't let it get him down. "COVID visited my house and my community last year," he said. "The government shut down at my business was a first, but after sleeping in the first day of the shut down, I spent all the days after at the wash alone and cleaning, welding, fixing and preparing to start up again. Not a day was wasted."

During the shutdown Cosmano installed a new Dry N' Shine unit from Motor City. "In a way it was a vacation of sorts. I'm glad I had a savings account, though! And I'm glad I got my PPP loan!"

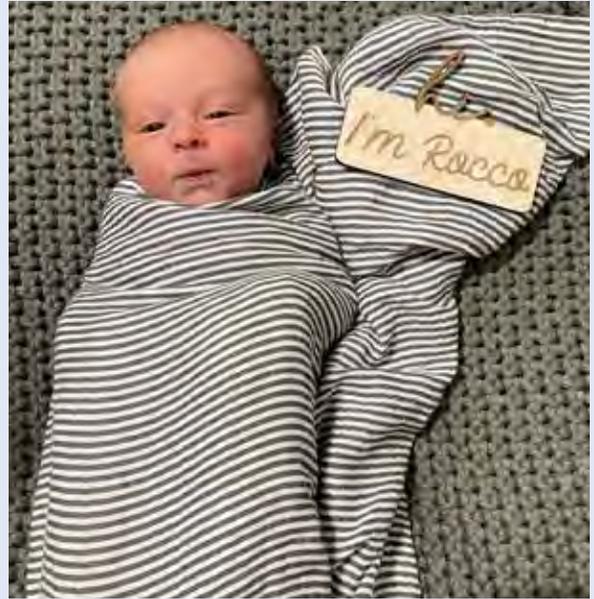
Future Looks Bright

Thanks to continued blood, sweat and tears and a real connection with his customers, Sammy's future looks bright. "I hope to have my son, Saverio, 17, (named after "Big Sam") or my daughter, Eliana, 15, see an opportunity in carwashing," he said. "It's a commitment and a lifestyle which demands time and effort. I hope they see that. But I also won't force the issue."

For now, Cosmano says he enjoys opening the doors every morning. "I enjoy the constant challenges of equipment failures and customer challenges. I like when I say, 'Well, I've never seen that before.'" NC

Suzanne L. Stansbury is the Editor/Publisher of the Northeast Carwasher. You can reach her at suzanne.stansbury@icloud.com

It's a Boy!



Congratulations to NYSCWA Board Member Mackenzie Wilock and her husband Justin on the birth of their first child, Rocco Steven Wilock. Not-so-little Rocco was born on June 23 at 3:38 pm and weighed in at 8lbs 1 oz. He was 20 inches long. Mackenzie and Rocco are doing well!

Congrats to all!

NC

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An Interview with

Hoffman Car Wash's Tom Hoffman Jr. on Wash #22

With ambitious growth goals of reaching 31 washes in the next two years, Hoffman Car Wash's Tom Hoffman Jr. is bullish on his company's upstate New York growth and position in an ever-changing market. Here he shares some insight on his newest location in the Albany suburb of Latham.

NE: Mid-Pandemic (late fall 2020), you opened your 22nd wash on Troy-Schenectady Road in Latham. What were the challenges to getting that 160-foot express exterior open for business other than the obvious?

TH: The first big challenge was losing the construction crew during COVID which delayed our opening by a few months. Next was the wash water. We had to dig two wells or pay an impact fee of \$300,000 to connect to the water line in the town of Colonie. We decided to drill two wells 200 feet deep with two 20,000 underground storage tanks to buffer the water we need daily to wash cars (planning for our busiest day).

The quality of well water here is really good so that hasn't been an issue. Just a little bit of water hardness so we have water softeners. We were also fortunate that it was low in iron and fairly low in dissolved solids. We run the well water through an RO unit (reverse osmosis) for the final rinse.

NE: Are there any other issues you have had to overcome with this site?

TH: Another issue is that although we are near a lot of office space with a high traffic count, that traffic was reduced dra-

The new site, which opened mid-COVID, is the company's 22nd wash.



matically due to people working from home and not being fully staffed. We should have been busier initially, but things are looking up now.

NE: What kind of investment did it take to purchase the land, overcome the environmental issues and equip and build the wash?

TH: It was approximately \$6 million.

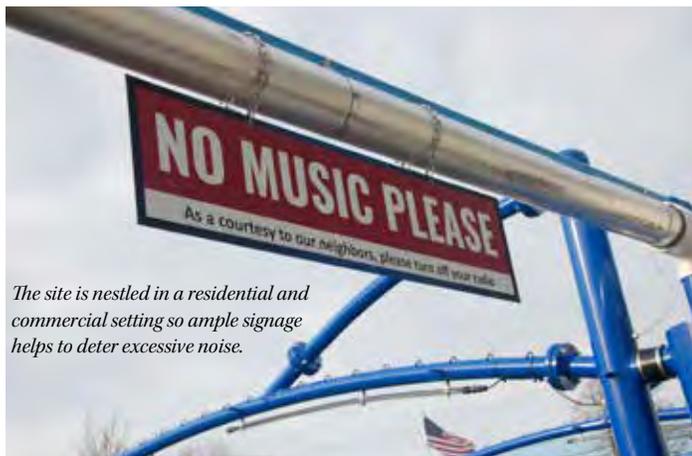
NE: When your company builds a wash they literally build it themselves and much of the equipment you also now manufacture. The cost savings must be significant and a big reason you started your equipment company, InnovateIt?

TH: We wanted heavy-duty equipment that wasn't available in the industry. We wanted to reduce labor and improve production and quality so our focus is on robotic equipment so we are able to stop prepping cars. That was the driving force.

Our wheel blaster, high pressure blasting arches and chemical dispensing, as well as our advanced control systems help us wash cars faster, better and safer.

NE: Can you share some of the site's unique features with us?

TH: Our foam wraparound brushes are cleaning better and safer than ever using advanced controls. We are feeling the vehicles now 200 times per second over Ethernet with the VFD's which helps get the brushes around the front corners, lightens up around the mirrors preventing mirror flipping, and gets around the rear ends aggressively to clean better than normal. All this is



The site is nestled in a residential and commercial setting so ample signage helps to deter excessive noise.



An abundance of landscaping is always a staple at a Hoffman site.



The \$6 million express exterior uses an array of G & G LED Lighting to make it stand out.



done with one simple valve and a typical air cylinder. It's the best innovation we've created going forward.

NE: Your closest wash is five miles away, and the new \$6 million Knockout Car Wash, also an express, just opened another 8 miles from this site. How did you market this latest wash to set it apart?

TH: We haven't done anything exotic or new, really. Direct mail, social media, passed out free washes and washed for free from time to time right after opening.

NE: There appears to be some new competition creeping in to some of the markets that have been dominated by your company for many years. What are your thoughts on that?

TH: We are always looking. Building at Rt. 7 helps protect our neighboring Rt. 9 facility from someone else building in this area.

We are aggressively pursuing locations in our market and have nine sites planned in the next two years.

NE: You do a lot of the build inhouse which I assume saves you time and resources.

TH: It takes 90 days for us to erect, plumb and do the electrical. We have the ability to build four to five sites a year thanks to our construction crew, electricians and manufacturing some of our equipment and building our own motor controls. We are also a UL (certified control) panel shop.

NE: You recently built a new \$4.8 million corporate office facility in Albany. Tell us about that.

TH: We have created the infrastructure to expand more rapidly. We are leveraging our talent, creating opportunities for our staff and continue to expand our footprint.

NE: How do you know when a site is a good one?

TH: Location, location, location. If you put your wash in an A or a C location, we think you are still going through the same amount of effort with the municipality, planning board, etc. You might as well try

Continued...

An Interview with Hoffman Car Wash's Tom Hoffman Jr. ... continued

to build in an A location to maximize your potential to be successful.

But you also need to be looking at traffic count, population, big box retail, competition (even from your own locations). There are so many factors.

NE: Despite all the struggles associated with COVID, the contactlessness of an express model has been a godsend to many operators. How much has it helped your business come out of the Pandemic?

TH: We were closed for 35 days. After that, our unlimited and credit card transactions have increased significantly. People still don't want to touch the screen or press anything.

Comparing 2019 to 2021 we are up substantially, and favorable weather in the first six months of this year helped with that too.

NE: Would you ever contemplate building a full serve again given the increasing employee regulations and increase in the minimum wage?

TH: Not likely in New York state. With the threat of possible scheduling regulations and rising wages we were forced to automate and wash cars with fewer employees.

NE: What is next on the Hoffman Development drawing board?

TH: We have nine washes on the drawing board and are looking forward to more growth.

We have great talent and a strong infrastructure so we are going to capitalize on that. **NC**



The company does much of the build internally. It takes roughly 90 days to erect, plumb and run the electrical for a site like this.

IT TAKES MORE THAN POLICIES TO KNOW



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The site features 23 Vacutech vacs.

The express exterior site features attractive, welcoming signage and happy and helpful greeters!





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Businesses Must Protect Employees Against Airborne Exposure at Work

By William Y. Crowell, III

New York State has enacted new mandates on businesses to protect employees against occupational exposure at workplaces in the event of airborne infectious diseases. The New York Health and Essential Rights Act (New York Hero Act) was signed into law by Governor Cuomo on May 5, 2021. A subsequent chapter amendment was signed into law on June 11, 2021.

As required by the New York Hero Act, the New York State Department of Labor (DOL), in consultation with the New York State Department of Health, has published the following: a general model prevention standard, a model airborne infectious disease exposure plan and various industry-specific model plans. The foregoing information is posted on the New York State DOL website at dol.ny.gov/ny-hero-act. The general template may be used by the carwash industry.

The model standards and plans establish minimum requirements for preventing exposure to airborne infectious disease. The model plan does not go into effect until the Commissioner of Health designates an airborne infectious disease as a highly-contagious communicable disease, which presents a serious

risk of harm to public health. The employer is required to adopt standards and a plan within 30 days of publication of the model plans and standards by the DOL. An employer may adopt an alternative prevention plan that exceeds or meets the minimum standards as set forth by the DOL standards and model plan.

“Employee” is broadly defined to include any person providing labor or services for remuneration. The plan adopted by the employer applies to all employees. It includes part-time workers, independent contractors and other temporary and seasonal workers.

Employers are required to provide copies of their adopted prevention plan to their employees as follows: within 60 days after the DOL publishes the model standard relevant to the employer’s industry, within 30 days after adoption of the plan, within 15 days after reopening after closure in response to an airborne infectious disease and to newly-hired employees upon hire. The plan must not only be provided in English but also in the employee’s primary language. The prevention plan must also be posted in a visible and prominent location.

This statute also prohibits retaliation or discrimination against an employee exercising their rights under the employer plan including a refusal to work where the employee believes in good faith that such work exposes the employee to unreasonable risk of exposure to the airborne infectious disease. The statute provides the employee with a private right of action against the employer to enforce the statute. An employee is authorized to bring an action and seek an injunctive relief. Prior to commencement of a civil action against the employer, the employee has to provide the employer with a notice of the violation. The employer has 30 days to correct the condition. If the condition is corrected the employee is prevented from bringing the action. There is a statute of limitations of six months from the date of knowledge of the violation. Penalties are prescribed for non-compliance with the requirements of the plans, which are investigated and enforced by the DOL.

This statute also permits employees to establish and administer joint labor management workplace safety committees where employers have at least 10 employees. This section of the law does not take effect until November 1, 2021.

The clock has started to run out for employers to establish an airborne infectious disease exposure plan by adopting the appropriate model standard plan. The DOL website should be consulted on this as additional information and updates including rules and regulations may be posted. Consult legal counsel if you have any specific questions.

William Y. Crowell, III, Esq. is a partner with Dickinson, Avella & Vidal in Albany. You can reach him at 518/369-7961 or wcrowell@dickinsonavella.com



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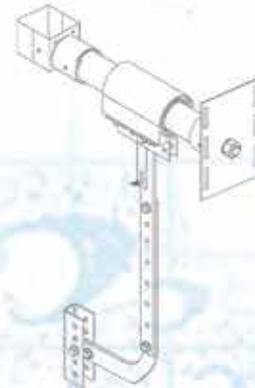
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Kaboom! What Do We Do Now?

By Dave Snyder

Three O'clock Saturday afternoon and the sun is out after several rain-filled days and there is a line of cars at the wash. The money is rolling in as fast as the next car being washed. What a perfect day to be in business. Five minutes later, from inside the wash, you hear an engine revving and tires squealing just before you hear the crash from a sudden impact. As you turn to look you see a red Subaru Forester which just hit a silver Lincoln Navigator exiting the wash. There is heavy damage to the Subaru, and you hear someone screaming and crying for help. Emergency services has been called, there are injuries; you have managed the incident in the best way possible while waiting for help to arrive. But your work has just begun. It's time to investigate what just happened.

It's Not Over Yet

Some may say emergency services came and handled the situation and the police took reports, so I am done other than making sure everything is cleaned up for reopening. Unfortunately, to protect the best interests of your operation, an internal investigation and complete incident report should follow. The same process should happen anytime there is an incident on site, even when the wash was not at fault. The incident happened on your property and you have a right to make sure you have all the documentation you need. Too many times washes have been caught off guard and left holding the bag, unable to defend themselves months after an incident when an involved party could not get compensation from the source they should have. The next step they take is coming after the wash, trying to spin the fault somehow onto your operation. Sadly, it's just a natural progression. Many times, after an attorney gets involved, they put any party they can on notice of a pending suit, or request you notify your insurance carrier of such. The best way to protect yourself is to have a policy and procedure to document every incident that happens on your property. This way, you and your staff are well versed should one day there be a catastrophic incident such as the one noted above. You may need to recall specific details of the incident months or years down the road. Will you remember them clearly without documentation from that day? Will the staff that were there when it happened still be working for you to help recall the details? Did you capture the incident on video and copy it to a backup so you can pull it up later?

What about photos from around the incident to show what happened up close, in addition to any video footage? In this piece I am going to cover the documentation you should have following an accident or incident on site and show why it is so important to be consistent in your documentation. You want

it clear, long before something happens, who is to take charge should you not be on site or available. This is another area to add to your annual training regimen.

Incident Report Is Critical

A few things we have learned in the insurance industry is having a formal incident report form which gathers information we might need to process and potentially defend any claim is paramount alongside timely reporting. The longer the delay in reporting the higher the payout and handling expenses seem to go; this is a proven industry fact. I want to move forward here and detail the key elements that you really need to have documented:

Date of incident

Time of incident

Type of incident: Vehicle Damage – Property Damage – Customer Injury

Customer/Employee information for each party involved to include the following:

Full name, phone number(s), email address, complete home or business address

Vehicle Information for each party involved to include the following:

Year, Make, Model, Color, Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)

Vehicle owner's insurance information to include:

Carriers name, policy number, agents name and phone

Injuries: If yes, gather the following information

Age of injured party(s), occupation, description of injuries.

How did the incident occur? – provide a narrative

Weather conditions at time of incident

Was the accident reported immediately to a company employee?

If yes, name & title

Were police notified?

Was a police report filed?

Add report number & date filed

Were Fire and EMS notified?



- Was there video footage? – If so, secure it for the investigation
- Were photos taken? – document up close and from many angles to show what happened
- Have diagrams of a vehicle showing all sides to indicate where damage is located
- Was the area of property or building inspected for damage after the incident?
- Note by whom, list any equipment or area of property/building damaged
- Witness information for each person who saw the incident:
 - Full name, phone number(s), email address, complete home or business address
- Get a signed witness statement describing what they saw and heard
- Contact information for the official carwash representative to be contacted to discuss the incident:
 - Full name, phone number(s), email address, complete home or business address
- Signatures: Get signatures from the parties involved indicating the information in the report is accurate.
 - Include: manager's signature, attendant signatures, signatures of parties involved (customers)

I can hear the voices from many now saying this is a lot of work and will tie people up for a while; we are busy and need to get fully operational right now. By training key staff to know what to do ahead of time, it will help reduce the time it takes to process an incident. Hopefully, this is not a frequent occurrence. If there are a lot bigger problems you should look at to get to the root cause of why.

Any time a customer comes and says my car was damaged, I just fell over in that area, or this or that just happened, take it seriously. This course of action can save you headaches and money down the road, even if you know the person in front of you could be trying to get you to fix damage not created by the wash, or pay for something else that is not your fault.

Have a formal process that is consistent to show the person you take these reports seriously. Stay calm and start gathering all the information listed above. If they complain, tell them this is your procedure to investigate and document the issue. Indicate you need to have full information to properly process what exactly took place, including what happened leading up to the issue. This tactic will help some of those fraudulent claims go away when they see it is not going to be easy to fleece the operation for a few bucks.

The same goes for any property damage accident in your tunnel or any other areas on the property. We have seen too many times where a wash was not at fault for an accident, another driver was and later down the road the wash gets dragged into a legal action for one of the parties to get satisfaction.

In the beginning of this article I painted a picture of an incident occurring at a wash. Look again now that you have seen what types of detail you should gather to have the proper documentation. Note there was the day of the week it happened, a time frame, and the weather was noted just for starters. I mentioned sounds heard just prior to the crash, followed by visuals of exactly what you saw as you turned to look and heard after. There were basic vehicle descriptions, notes of vehicle damage and injury. The more detail you can provide the better. Just be sure when documenting any incident or claim you stick to the facts of what you saw or heard. Be sure to leave opinions out of the documentation.

When asking for witness statements, be sure to tell them to do the same, just write down the facts. Be sure the documentation is legible so it can be read again later and by those who will be processing a potential claim. If no one can read it, including yourself, you just wasted your time. You may also need to use more than just the room on the incident report form to give a narrative of the incident, so make sure extra paper is available. Many like everything to be electronic, which is okay, but be sure to have your incident report forms available in print version as well so they can start to be filled out immediately after it is safe to start collecting information. The paper versions also allow all parties to sign the report once completed.

You might be asking, why is it important to get signatures from the parties involved such as witnesses and staff completing the reports? When you ask someone to sign a document, you are asking for validation the information within it is true and accurate. You are indicating all parties are agreeing to what is in the report or the statements taken are true. This may also help weed out some of those who might be trying to squeeze the operation for some cash. Watching and reading their body language and statements will help you in the long run. Don't be afraid to add statements into your documentation. If they refuse to sign, do not get into a confrontation, just simply note they refused to sign the report. The lack of their signatures, along with the documentation of such, adds to the big picture.

Make a Check List

As part of your accident or incident investigation process put together a checklist for your staff to follow in the event you are not on site when the process needs to be started. Include whom to call for different types of emergencies, and specific pictures needed. Remind them to secure video footage, to complete incident reports, and get copies of police reports. The more prepared they are ahead of time the better. I am also going to stress it again, please take the time to do training and hold discussions with those who will be delegated to initially handle an incident on site. These can be very high stress times as people can be very angry and irate. The cost of vehicles these days are also driving the rate of anger up when they become damaged. Teaching staff to remain calm and refrain from yelling when frustrated is going to be their best course of action. Teaching them what to say and what not to say

Continued ...

NYSCWA Hosts Hiring Zoom

The New York State Car Wash Association (NYSCWA) held a ZOOM call in June titled, "Hiring During a Pandemic." The ZOOM was led by NYSCWA President Walt Hartl and was open to the membership as well as members of the Carwash Operators of New Jersey and the Connecticut Carwash Association. A panel of industry leaders shared their thoughts, experiences, challenges and successes with finding and retaining employees during these challenging times. "The topic was more than timely and the contributions from the panelists were insightful and tangible," said Moderator Hartl. "I walked away with a few things that we aren't doing in our operation so that was great. We've got the ZOOM up on our website, nyscwa.com, for viewing. I'd definitely check it out."



Hoffman Car Wash, like many other washes, is finding it challenging to attract and retain great employees given the competitive salaries being offered today.



The hour-long ZOOM featured Panelists MaryEllen Olenyk, Director of Human Resources for Hoffman Car Wash in Albany. Olenyk oversees 700+ employees and has HR and hiring experience on a massive scale.

Steve Sause, Executive Vice President with Cloud 10 Car Washes in CT/NJ/FL/PA, is a seasoned industry veteran with experience as a supplier and an operator.



And Anthony Manning, General Manager with Schenectady's Colonial Car Wash, had the association's boots on the ground view of hiring on a smaller scale but still with the challenges faced by the two larger operators. He began at the wash at age 17, and has worked his way up the ranks to now oversee the five-site operation in The Capital District. **NC**

To view the ZOOM link visit nyscwa.com



Safety First ... continued

is also a huge component of this training. Did you know, a simple statement such as, "Don't worry, it's going to be ok. We will take care of everything," meant as good will to calm the situation, can be used against you when not at fault? This statement by an employee can be a conveyance of accepting the responsibility, especially if witnesses can say, "Yes, we heard that."

Bring in some people you know to do some role playing before or after a shift, and let staff watch different scenarios unfold, even if they are not the ones going to be filling out the report. Any one of them might need to complete a witness statement. It is just as important that they too are educated in how this all works.

The biggest keys to protecting your profits are training and documentation. Don't let your wash sit unlocked to the world because you did not take the right actions when you needed to — long before anything happens! **NC**

Dave Snyder is a Rick Management Program Specialist with Carwash Insurance Program by McNeil in Cortland, NY. You can reach Dave at dsnyder@mneilandcompany.com or 607/428-2147.



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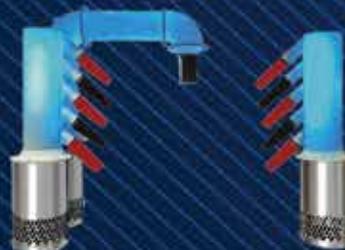
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Letting Go of a Belief That Things Have to be a Certain Way

By Ray Justice

In the mid 1980's I had breakfast with Burt August. We were putting the final pieces together so I could lease a building from him and install a carwash. We were sitting in one of his favorite meeting places, Fox's Deli.

Burt was the founder of the very successful chain of businesses called Monro Auto Services, (originally Monro Muffler) with currently more than a thousand locations. He was a very successful entrepreneur with years of experience. I, on the other hand, was a younger entrepreneur wannabe.

As we finished our agreement I asked him a final question. "Burt, you're a very successful businessman. Off the top of your head, what advice would you give me as I work on my own entrepreneurial skills."

Without any hesitation he answered, "Ray, don't be afraid to walk away from a deal if it does not feel good or isn't going right. If it is not falling in place, if it is a mess putting it together, it is pretty good odds that it will also be like that afterwards.

"Remember, there is always another deal around the corner, even if you don't see it now. You won't be able to do it if you are tied up in a mess."

If it's a mess putting it together, there are pretty good odds that it will be a mess on going. If I had practiced Burt's guidance I would have saved much aggravation and a lot of money over the years. I always seemed to remember Burt's story "after," instead of before. A great piece of advice that experience comes to know.

Referring to that same philosophy Burt had taught me, what signal was my body giving me? Until I heard it from him, I only applied this type of awareness to my personal health and well being. For some strange reason, it had not arrived in my life while focusing on a business deal or situation.

I knew but was not aware that I knew.

I did not know that I did not know.



Connecting body senses, like a gut feeling, with letting go and being aware of it all. I had to "Let Go" of my belief of how a

business deal unfolds and now view it with an open mind while also using awareness of what my body senses were telling me.

What it opened for me is a way of looking at things from perspectives other than the one I currently had. I used to be mainly focused on the financial issues, and I still am, but added turning on my curiosity awareness and my body messages. We don't know what we don't know. So how do we grasp that deep thinking style?

How do we learn to listen to, and be aware of, our body senses and what they are telling us?

What happened and what I learned is that over the years it may not have been the catalyst for many decisions, but it was certainly supportive. The aspect of being aware and paying attention to how things "felt," in a business setting became clearer. I learned through many personal development courses, books and exercises to always be aware of what I sensed, or felt, and take that into consideration.

I did not always follow my feeling senses in the moment, however. I was not aware until I looked back later and thought, "Oh Nuts" or something stronger.

I am using the term "Gut Feel," as one example of many body senses that talk to us. Did we just swallow or clear our throat? Rub our forehead? Scratch our head? Change our breathing? Feel a stiff neck? Blink more than normal? Feel our weight shift away or toward something? Have a feeling of impatience?

Other examples of "Letting Go" include letting go of the belief that you are not good enough will allow Intuition & Creativity to flow. Replace that belief with thoughts and examples of personal confidence.

Letting go of the need to be right or correct

Letting go of fault finding and the need to blame

Letting go of believing it was my fault

Letting go of thinking, "I should have ... or I shouldn't have ..."

Letting go of following a life path based on others' thoughts or their beliefs.

"Letting go creates space for our mind and our energy."

– RWJ

A Story of Impatience

Here are a couple examples of day-to-day things I believed and had to let go.

After taking a personality profile test at a business management course I received a big surprise. The results were on a scale of one to 10. Was I a One, meaning very Impatient, a 10, meaning extremely Tolerant, or in the middle as a Five? Most people who know me, I believed, would say I was a seven or an eight, very tolerant.

I actually came out a One and said to the Instructor, "I'm not a one."

She replied, "He says, impatiently."

My next sound was a groan, Ouch! Then it was explained to me that I was making impatience "wrong" and a negative when actually it was my body letting me know something before my mind knew it. So, now Impatience becomes a gift for me. When I feel Impatient it is not time to make a big decision or maybe even talk to someone.



My body, signaling me ahead of my thoughts — what a gift. In earlier years, when I experienced acid reflux after eating, I would eat a slice of bread thinking that it would "soak up the acid." Little did I know that bread itself, wheat gluten, was the problem. A health example of not knowing what I don't know.

Start with setting your Intention. Not just what you want to "get," but even more, how you want "to be." Think of Intention as a focus of energy. What do you want to express or experience? Who do you want to help?

Here are some examples of talking to yourself about focusing on your Intention. "Having a sense or feeling of the Intention of what is next, sets it into happening."

Intention Statement Samples

- It is my Intention to have a good night's sleep
- It is my Intention to make healthy eating choices today
- It is my Intention to pay attention to my thoughts
- It is my Intention to clear my mind of my negative, fear-based, thoughts
- It is my Intention to release negative thoughts about myself
- It is my Intention to release negative thoughts about others
- It is my intention to change the way I ...

With Intention you are telling yourself what you really want and as strange as it sounds, it makes a difference.

This could be described as simple, yet it takes a decent amount of practice. When you do create this new habit you will begin to see, at first, that it is not easy, yet powerful. Thinking and belief habits need to change and that is where the work comes in.

Ray's Current Beliefs

I believe that we are all naturally creative human beings and "all" means every single one of us. We create from our inner space or inner environment which refers to our thoughts and imagination guided by our beliefs (many of which we are not even aware of).

How peaceful and still we are internally, combined with our thoughts, beliefs and feelings, is a major factor in what we are creating. A crowded, busy mind misses a lot, often steering things away from what we really want. Once you see it, feel it, and be it, automatically you will be clearer with your possibilities.

In any given moment, how I am feeling about me is picked up by you and vice versa. We exchange energies that affect and have an impact on what we will be creating next.

When our minds are too busy with thoughts, doubts, fears, anxieties and even with just busy "to do" noise, we are not aware of or tuned into our natural intuition and our connected creative forces.

One of the most important factors during any interaction, or decision, is how you feel about yourself. A beginning step toward greater creativity, communication and connection is one that sounds very simple, well it actually is, but it takes practice and an inner trust feeling, confident of a deeper knowing.

I will end with this quote which I often used to remind myself:

"About your thoughts,
don't believe them? Be curious and wonder
where they came from, but don't believe everything
they say."
- RWJ

What if ... you decide to look at things differently and start to do things differently? If you don't know what you don't know ... what if ...

NC



Ray Justice

Ray Justice is an entrepreneur, poet and creativity explorer. He is a former carwash operator and past president of the New York State Car Wash Association. Visit him at ThoughtCompass.com where he offers two Free courses, *Ideas to Wonder* and *A Good Night's Sleep*.

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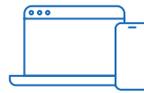


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