

The Southwest Drycleaners Association

Summer 2022

THE Southwest Press

Serving the Professional Drycleaners of Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma & Texas

Keeping the American Dream Alive

How four entrepreneurs left corporate jobs and communist nations to build dry cleaning businesses in America

Plus...

Industry Happenings

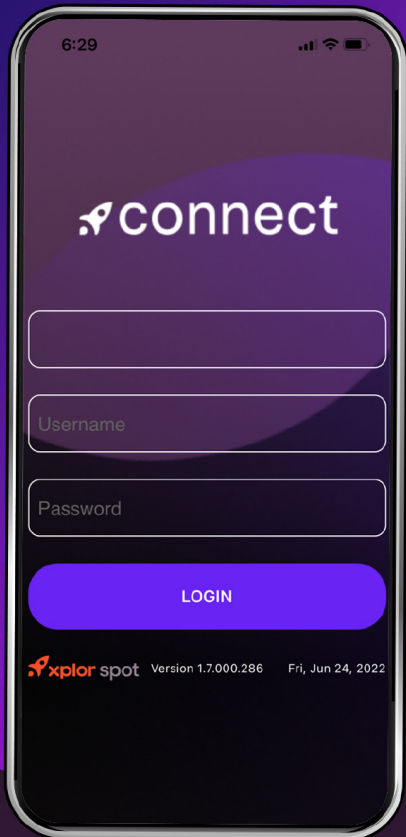
When is Overtime Exempt

Using Dye Strippers

& More

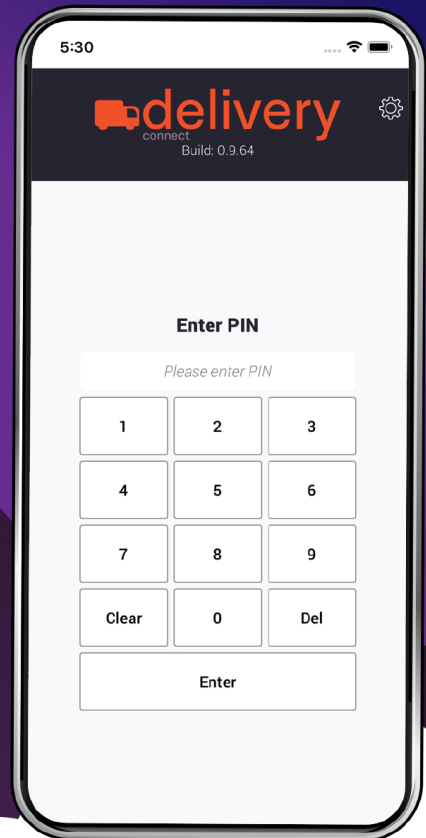
*Photo: Jose & Nicolas Abuawad,
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Southwest Drycleaners Association
801 S. Highway 183, #1115
Leander, TX 78641
512-873-8195

Publishing Editor: Liz Williams, staff@sda-dryclean.com

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President's Message

Industry Happenings

by Kyle E. Nesbit, SVP Edit-TX, LLC,
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As I sit down to write my first article for the *Southwest Press* I can't help but start by giving a tip of the hat to my predecessor Danny Bahlman. In the halls of dry cleaning history, Danny will forever be known as the President that led the SDA through the coronavirus pandemic, as well as the leader that scored the winning run and garnered the Texas Dry-Cleaning Remediation Program Extension. These are historic accomplishments, but my sincere love and admiration for Danny comes from the fact that he is the kind of man who will shift all the credit to his Lord and Savior because he knows 'it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.'

With a like-minded heart, I'm so humbled and honored to represent each and every SDA member as your new SDA President. My prayer is that the Lord uses me to benefit our association, our members, and the industry as a whole. My promise to you all is that I will 'work with all my heart, as working for the Lord,' to do so.

Recovering From The Pandemic

The phrase 'new normal' is over used and I personally believe the statement is inaccurate. Most operators I network with all agree that revenues continue to trend upward for our businesses and they really kicked into gear right after Spring Break 2022. There were many in the industry, myself included, that believed that 30% of the dry cleaners across the country would be forced out of business. However, DLI has only seen a ~14% reduction in membership since March 2020 (1231 to 1048) and we know that not all of these companies folded. SDA's membership decline closely reflects DLI's, but in the coming months, I trust that we will regain some of the members that were in a rush to cut expenses in the

pursuit of survival. Writing this article reminded me to do a temperature check with my good friend Toran Brown at Spot Business Systems. The industry revenues, as tracked by Spot, sit at ~(-10%) vs 2019 and pieces are down roughly ~(-20%) as of 6/8/22.

Surviving and thriving in this post-pandemic world means that

the strong cleaners, the DLI/SDA Members, re-examined the business practices they likely would have left as is. They raised prices, diversified, implemented new technology, and sought out production-related automation. These strategies will be imperative for cleaners as we move forward into the 'better than before.'

DLI Membership Pays Package

On top of being the new SDA President, I also have the pleasure of serving on DLI's Allied Trades Partnership Program committee. The DLI Membership Pays package is 'all the buzz' at DLI right now. The DLI Membership Pays package includes significant savings on everyday purchases, service subscriptions, and capital investments such as finishing

(Continued on page 6)



Danny Bahlman, past SDA President (left),
Kyle Nesbit, current SDA President (right)



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Industry Happenings (Cont)

equipment and drycleaning machines. Gift certificates shared by participating Allied Trades companies are valid for one year after the date of beginning membership with DLI.

Members will receive their packages shortly after renewing their membership or joining the Institute. Each discount package is valid for one year. The package offers its members real usable discounts to collect an immediate return on their investment in DLI membership. If you're in the market for new equipment or supplies, (and who isn't?), you'll find a great value in this package. I urge each and every member to take advantage of the savings and if you're not a member, what in the world is keeping you from all the benefits that DLI offers?



DLI's New JSA Agreement

In late April, the DLI Board and staff drafted and sent out the newly proposed agreement to the 10 Joint State Associations (JSA). It has been at least 10 years since the agreement has been reviewed and as we all know our industry has changed dramatically since that time. Each JSA was asked to send their comments and concerns back to DLI by July 1, 2022, so that they can be reviewed and addressed before the new agreement goes into effect. The DLI Board's goal is to have a new agreement in place before January 1.

As I write this article, the SDA Executive Committee was the first and only JSA to have sent in their comments. This doesn't surprise me because we have always been bigger, stronger, and faster than the rest of the pack!

To clarify and add transparency, there are some 'new' JSA Responsibilities drafted into the agreement that I believe will benefit all dual members of DLI & a Joint State Association. Some of the 'new' JSA responsibilities include (not all-inclusive):

- The election of at least one new Board Member every two years.
- Provide a certain number of educational or networking opportunities, based on the JSA member count, with at least half to be held in person.
- The JSA should hold at least three Board of Director meetings. Two of the meetings must be held in person.
- Each JSA will be asked to make face-to-face 'retention' visits to at least 10% of the 'current' members per year, plus 'recruitment' visits to non-members based on 20% of current memberships.
- I hypothesize that the four 'new' responsibilities above will likely change the face and landscape of DLI's Joint State Association program. Strong and active associations like the SDA will be able to meet and exceed the responsibilities, but some associations will see the new responsibilities as a mountain too tall to climb. There will be associations that step it up a notch, some that dissolve, and some that merge. The word 'merge' leads me to the most exciting announcement of this article!

Potential SDA/WSDLA Merger

The Western States Drycleaners and Launderers Association (WSDLA) proudly serves 48 members from Arizona & Nevada. After receiving the new JSA agreement, the WSDLA Board of Directors met to discuss the future of their association, and I am super excited to announce publicly that on May 26, 2022, the WSDLA voted to merge with the SDA!! I imagine this is what Greg Sankey, the Commissioner of the Southeastern Conference, felt like when he started working to add the University of Texas and the University of Oklahoma to the conference. The SDA Board discussed the terms and voted to accept this potential merger. This could be a historic moment, the likes of which the industry has never seen. My hope is that we can join forces and resources that not only make the SDA stronger, but also provide more benefits to the membership base in AZ and NV than ever before. Stay tuned!

SDA Cleaners Showcase

Planning for our Southwest Drycleaners Association (SDA) Cleaners Showcase 2023, which will take place in Irving, TX on April 28-30, 2023, is fully underway. If the rumors and future plans of other JSA's stay 'as is,' our Showcase will be the ONLY regional equipment show of 2023 and quite possibly the last one before Clean Show in August 2025 at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida. Standing alone, at the top of the heap, with the only

Industry Happenings (Cont)

equipment show will be a HUGE benefit for both our SDA membership base, cleaners around the country, and the vendors that set up shop in Irving!

The Showcase Committee has been working on educational speakers and has received word that the DLI Board of Directors will be hosting meetings at the show along with Methods for Management, and the Spot User Group. There are other groups that are planning to attend, but details have yet to be nailed

down. I fully anticipate our Showcase Committee to knock this out of the park!

Kyle E. Nesbit

President, Southwest Drycleaners Association



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Keeping the American Dream Alive

How these entrepreneurs left corporate jobs and communist nations to build dry cleaning businesses in America

Tonya McCrea

East Hills Cleaners, St. Joseph, MO

Walking into East Hills Cleaners (EHC) is like entering the living room of your best friend. You hear jazz music playing in the background along with a sweet aroma diffused into the air and the entry decorated in a home-like atmosphere. Tonya McCrea, owner of EHC, in St. Joseph, MO, has created an experience for her customers and employees. As she says,

“This is a happy and friendly place. There’s a conversation that goes on with every customer. It’s important to provide these personal touches.”

These ‘personal touches’ are a result of Tonya’s sales and marketing experience in the hospitality industry. Holding a degree in Hotel & Hospitality Management, Tonya’s previous career as a district manager for Sysco Foods and Lifeline Foods has equipped her with engaging people skills that boost her customer interaction and connect with employees.

Tonya is a single mom, so when her job began demanding she travel every week, she decided she needed to make a change, but didn’t know what direction. After she quit her job, she told her dry cleaner she wouldn’t be coming in as much. That led to a conversation of how the owner was interested in selling the business. Tonya helped out in the cleaner for two months and during that time, her creativity started bursting on how she could incorporate some more marketing, technology



Front counter at East Hills Cleaners, St. Joseph, MO.



Tonya (center top) with employees, one of whom is from the Sisters of Solace.

and other ideas to grow the business. She made the jump in October 2017 and purchased East Hills Cleaners.

Soon after purchasing the dry cleaner, Tonya teamed up with Sisters of Solace, a local non-profit for women survivors of trauma and addiction. The graduates come to work at EHC and also sell their products, primarily candles, but also bath and body items. "This is a healthy environment for the ladies and they deserve a second chance," Tonya says.

It's evident that creating the right environment and enriching her employees is important to Tonya. EHC decorates for holidays and has birthday celebrations for its employees. After coming to work at 3am several mornings, she really began to get to know one of her employees. Since then, Tonya makes it a point to have lunch with an employee once a week.

Tonya admits she could not live without some of her long-time employees. "I've trusted them as I learn the business." Tonya says as she admits her biggest challenge is completely learning the business, understanding the products and where to buy things.

"I'm constantly reading and on Facebook groups to learn more. Dry Cleaning Consultant Liz Davies has been a tremendous help working with us at the cleaner. Jeff Schwarz with A.L. Wilson helped us with spots and we are continuing that relationship with the company. I just joined Maverick Dry Cleaners and I hope to make many more connections in the industry through that group." "The meetings at SDA are helpful as well. The simple conversations at the dinners triggered me to investigate new equipment."

Purchasing new equipment, Tonya admits, has been the best decision she's made. The decrease in breakdowns in addition to the shirt press installation has been miraculous. "We've also put new systems in place so we don't miss details and have more quality control."

Taking advantage of the pandemic, Tonya bought a competing dry cleaner in the area and closed it down to obtain their customers. Other than that move, she confesses she doesn't look at the competition, but keeps her own goals ahead of her.

Being a small business owner, she's loves interacting with the customers and being creative. "In the corporate world, there are rules everywhere. Here, I can do whatever I want. I can create anything I feel will fit a need. I love the ability to create," she says.

When asked about her goals for next year, Tonya says she wants to increase her SEO visibility and have more services like upscale house cleaning, which is an idea to keep her full-time employees through the slower months. Sisters of Solace is cultivating a customized candle scent for East Hills Cleaners and she plans to leave a candle with every cleaning customer.

"I'm always in the community and keeping an ear out on how we can meet people's needs." Lastly, she says, "I expect to be at the \$1 million mark from our current \$750K. That may not sound like much for a big operator, but for a smaller dry cleaner like EHC, that's an accomplishment."

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Gulf States Celebrates 40 Years

The last 40 years have been an incredible journey for our family and our commitment to the wonderful Dry-cleaning and Laundry Industry that we are so proud to be associated with. We have met amazing dedicated individuals within the industry whose relationships we still continue to cherish. Sadly, we have also lost some of our great friends over the years.

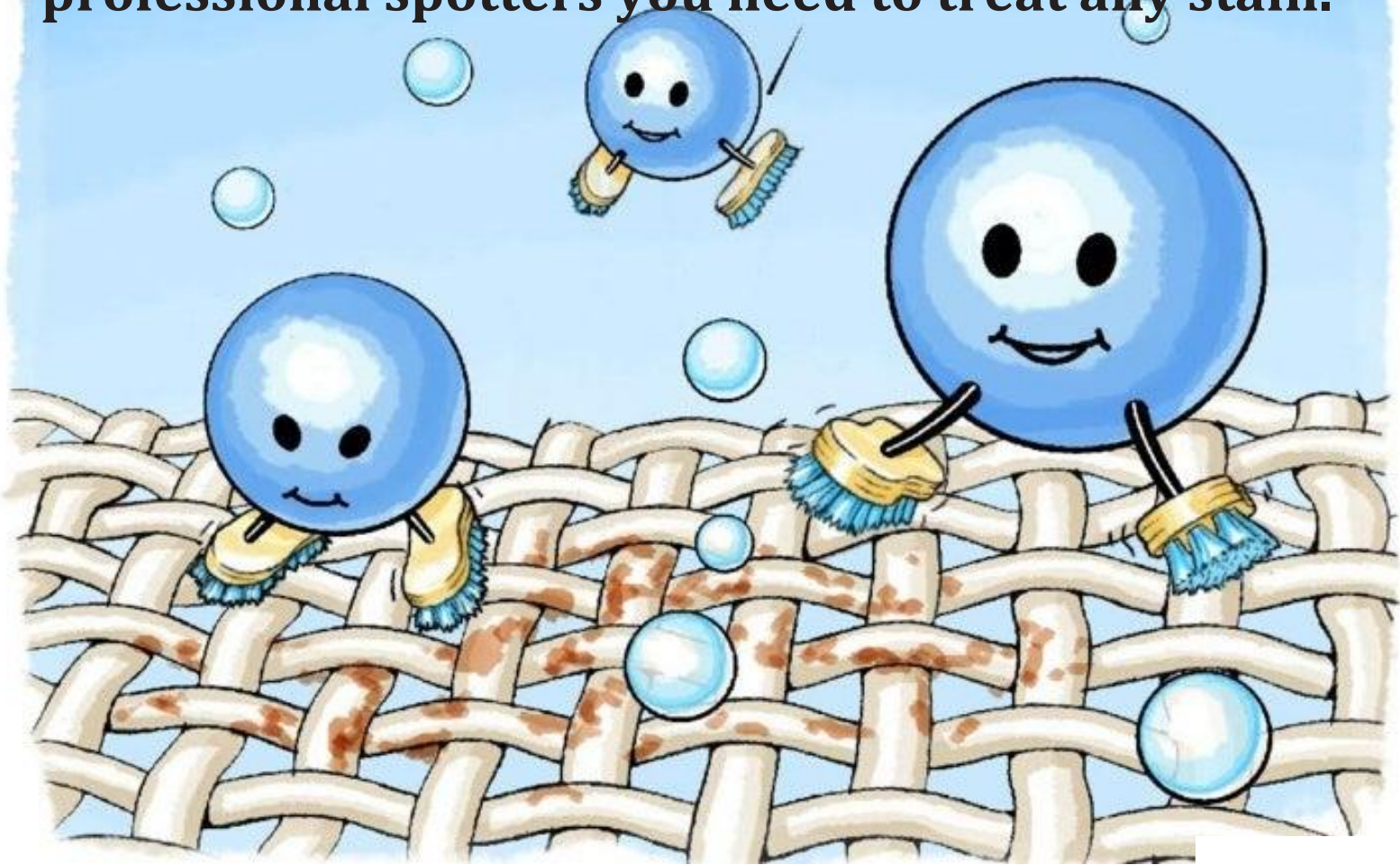
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We will be sending out invitations and calendars soon. Please feel free to contact us anytime!

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American Dream (Con't)

Horacio Erminy

Brite Touch Cleaners, Houston area, TX

In just four years, Horacio Erminy and his family have acquired fourteen dry cleaners in the greater Houston area, including The Woodlands Cleaners, Dry Touch Cleaners and Fashion Cleaners. Maria Alecia Erminy de D'Ambrosio and Leonardo D'Ambrosio, Horacio's sister and brother-in-law, first came to the United States when his employer transferred him to Houston. This provided Horacio the opportunity to come to the States to try something else and leave the volatile environment in Venezuela.

While in Venezuela, Horacio earned a law degree, but confesses, "My father is a lawyer and I love law. It's what I wanted to do since I was a child. As I started down that path, something was missing. As a lawyer, the work is predictable and I have this passion for business and creating solutions. I'm an entrepreneur at heart." Realizing this, Horacio switched careers and worked in the meat processing industry for seven years, growing the business from \$2M to \$24M in sales.

Though business excelled, the government intervention was too much. "The political and economic situation in Venezuela was too bad to stay. The socialist government would restrict businesses and exploit them by regulating pricing and the supply chain. There was also physical violence as the government took over the few remaining private businesses. You just didn't feel safe and you couldn't speak freely. If you even disagreed with something the government did, they could say you are starting a conspiracy."

Before the socialists took over in 1998, Horacio explains Venezuela was the ideal country. With the largest oil and gas deposit in the world, it was a wealthy country. As the oil and gas prices increased between 2003 and 2015, the country obtained more money than it did the past 150 years. After that much income into the country,

Venezuela went into a horrible economic crisis. How this could happen is a mystery that's still not answered.

Once Horacio, Maria and Leonardo settled into the Houston area, they researched different business opportunities and attended franchise expos. It wasn't long before they decided that they wanted to invest in dry cleaners. "Compared to other industries, it's a benevolent industry, profitable, and fast paced.



Horacio Erminy (left) with sister Maria D'Ambrosio (right).

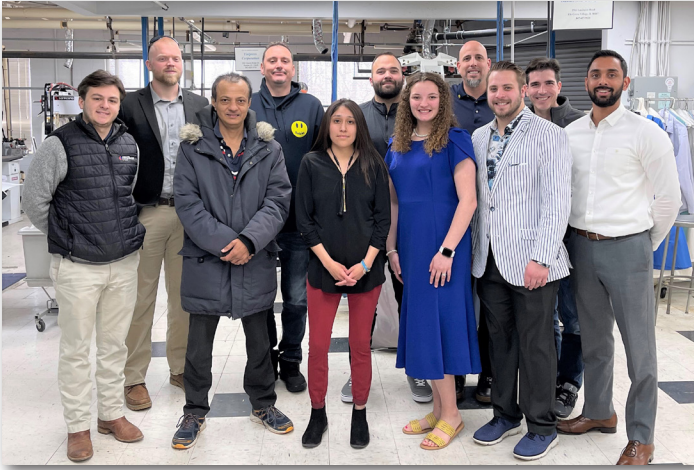
If you do it right, you can grow really fast, which isn't common in all industries," Horacio explains. "It's also a low risk industry. If you ruin someone's car, that's a higher liability than if you ruin a shirt."

"The biggest challenge in running a business here has been the lack of industry knowledge," Horacio explains. "Everybody says they know the business and tries to convince you they know it all. However, they haven't even been to the DLI School of Drycleaning. The DLI School is a MUST for any new owner or manager," Horacio said. "There's a need for professionalism in our industry and it's the best dry cleaning education out there. Going through the school last year was the best business decision I made." Horacio attributes the DLI School of Drycleaning for the new processes and procedures he's implemented in their dry cleaners.

In addition to the DLI School being a big support, Horacio admits Steve Mills, the former owner of The Woodlands Cleaners was extremely helpful to their team. "Steve has always been there for us and provided much needed advice at a time we really needed it. Don Beckman with Cole &

(Continued on page 12)

American Dream (Con't)



DLI Advanced Class graduates Spring 2021 with Erminy (second row, far right).

Wilson has also been an incredible help when it comes to chemicals.”

When asked what he enjoys most about the dry cleaning business, Horacio says, “It’s all about building strong and lasting relationships with our customers and employees. Whether here or in Venezuela, we work hard to build a team

to get everyone on board with the same goals.” He adds, “I also enjoy that the business is fast-paced. When you start a shirt on the product line, you can see the finished product hours later. It’s not common to see the results that fast in every industry.”

Looking forward Horacio states, “A challenge I see in the industry is the need for a new generation of cleaners to arise, which includes dry cleaning vendors. But, it’s coming. I was excited to see all the attendees at the DLI School who were under 35.” Horacio pauses and adds, “I see the changes in the industry already with the relaxed dress codes, but there will always be special fibers that need to be cleaned and given special attention. There’s also household items like curtains and cushions. We are expanding this year in several areas with more drop stations, pick-up and delivery and possibly even franchising.”

Neal Barker

Town & Country Dry Cleaners, Sulphur Springs, TX

In the height of the pandemic when many dry cleaners daydreamed about selling their business, Neal Barker decided to jump at that opportunity and buy Town & Country Dry Cleaners in Sulphur Springs, TX. After years in corporate sales for the financial services industry, Neal wanted to stop traveling for his job, so he started looking for options and having conversations with people in the community about buying a local business.

During those conversations, someone suggested Neal talk with Bob Weaver about his dry cleaning business. Bob was already Neal’s drycleaner and they knew each other from church. Though the business wasn’t officially for sale, their conversations late 2020 led to Neal shadowing him for three months and buying the dry cleaner on June 1, 2021. “Bob owned the business for 27 years and wanted to make sure the cleaner was

purchased by someone who was going to be personally invested. Bob had been in the banking industry before owning the cleaner and, like me, he was also 43 when he bought the cleaner. I think he saw similarities between us,” Neal said.

In his previous career, Neal explains, “I had to look at things from different angles and figure out how to make them work. I’ve been trained to look for solutions. Right now dry cleaning is in a state of innovation, both in customer engagement and operations. Those that are thriving right now are innovating and I relish in that environment.”

Though Neal is creating solutions, he confesses that being new in the industry has been the real

(Continued on page 14)

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American Dream (Con't)

challenge. "The machinery is so specialized that you just can't google information about it." He acknowledges half his staff has been with the cleaner 20 years, which is a blessing. "But I can't rely on employees all the time to know the baseline on things like how many pieces a certain machine can do in an hour."

When asked what the best decision he's made as a dry cleaner, Neal responds, "This may be controversial, but getting rid of alterations and boot repair was the best decision I could have made. The majority of our issues were from those services and it was jeopardizing our customer relations. When I announced this to the staff, they said 'thank you!' because they knew that meant fewer problems in the business."

Without alternations, that freed space to create a better work flow. "Now clothes detailing is in a separate room close to the entryway so the front counter can always be clear. The wash and fold laundry is now stored in air conditioning, which makes the clothes appear more fresh when picked up by the customer," Neal explains. "My office is in the back of the plant in an air conditioned room." He confesses, "I couldn't live without my office. If I stayed in the plant, I'd always be fixing things. Having an office to retreat to allows me to get clarity and give the employees the opportunity to resolve issues that pop up."

Other changes Neal made this year is to buy a dry cleaning production plant, where he migrated the equipment to Town & Country Dry Cleaners, adopted the customers and sold the building. Plans are currently in the works to install a kiosk 30 miles away. "There is an employee at the drop location, which allows for the customer face to face interaction, but the kiosk will allow for more customer options," Neal says. "We've implemented many new things this first year. Next year I'd like to have solid processes with full employee buy-in."



Neal Barker at DLI School of Drycleaning Fall 2021.

"It's been so helpful to have vendors like Byron Griggs with Fabriclean Supply and Burle Bowling of U.N.X. who've helped me find the right products. It's so refreshing to find people like them who sincerely want to help and not just make a dollar."

"SDA's also been helpful as a platform to learn industry knowledge, especially through the networking at meetings. I was also awarded the Gerald Stavelly scholarship last year from SDA to attend the DLI School of Drycleaning. The industry information from SDA and DLI has been invaluable," Neal stated.

All in all, entering into dry cleaner ownership has achieved Neal's goal to have the freedom to spend time with his children and family. "I get calls once in a while, but we don't work on weekends and now we can travel when and where we want," Neal reports. "I enjoy the work. National data claims dry cleaning has greatly decreased, but that's not always the case. North Texas is growing and though that claim may be correct on a macro level, we are succeeding."

(Continued on page 16)



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American Dream (Con't)

Jose & Nicolas Abuawad Dutch Boy Cleaners, San Antonio, TX

Imagine paying 84% in taxes and not having the ability to lay off or fire any employee. Those are just some of the obstacles brothers Nicolas and Jose Abuawad faced as owners of the biggest drycleaner in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. Their plant opened in 1970 and was purchased by their father in 1980, who grew it to include a 60,000 sq. ft plant and thirty-two locations. Business changed when the government fell under Socialist rule in 2005.

"We wanted to expand the business, but it's too volatile and hard to make a profit in Bolivia," Jose said. "America is much more business friendly." Jose further explained that labor regulations require all employees to be salaried and if they are laid off, the business must pay them one month's salary for each year they worked, plus an additional three month's salary, unpaid vacation and bonuses. During Covid, even though the country shut completely down for three months, their Bolivian dry cleaner had to pay their employees the entire time for no work.

"Not only do we pay 84% in taxes, but there is always a government representative analyzing our paperwork in order to fine us," Jose explained. Every customer ticket has to be kept for eight years with the name and tax ID. If the numbers are wrong, the business has to pay ten times the amount. This is also true for purchases. "Paying sales tax is so easy here - it just takes five minutes. In Bolivia, it takes one month and there's usually an additional fine."

If taxes and labor weren't enough stress, trade restrictions make it difficult to import items. Before the pandemic, it could take three to four months to re-



The Abuawad dry cleaning plant in Bolivia.

ceive supplies or equipment. This supply chain issue prompted Jose and Nicolas to make their own poly, hangers and soap.



Jose & Nicolas Abuawad with Keith Kocher at the SDA March 2022 membership meeting.

When Jose and Nicolas began searching for dry cleaners to purchase in Texas, it needed to be a specific size to satisfy their immigration requirements. November 2020, the brothers met with Jess Culpepper of Culpepper Cleaners, in San Antonio, TX. During that time, Jess introduced them to long-time SDA member Pat Gardner of Dutch Boy Cleaners, who was ready to sell his dry cleaner. "Pat was very flexible and transparent, we developed a great chemistry, so the deal happened fast. We purchased Dutch Boy on February 4, 2021."

"We are grateful to Jess and Ethan Culpepper for helping us understand how business is done here. They made us feel like family," Jose reflected. "So many people made it possible for us, like Brian Johnson with DLI and our immigration lawyer. We also still have lunch with the previous owner, Pat - he took us in and helped us a lot more than he needed to. The transition has been better than we expected."

Jose admits that the SDA membership has been more helpful than he expected as well. "The networking is the most beneficial. We've already made friends and everyone is willing to share their experiences. The information we've received is priceless and worth more than the membership cost."

"All the challenges we face here in America are still better than in Bolivia. We developed certain skills over there that have made things easier for us. Running a business there prepared us for the pandemic and all the hardships that are currently present," Jose said.

As they come upon a year and a half anniversary here in the U.S, Jose reports, "Coming here and purchasing Dutch Boy Cleaners was the best decision. We are already hitting 2019 numbers. With other dry cleaners closing, we expect better numbers in years to come. In these times of inflation, labor cost and supply chain, we are trying to be efficient and find solutions that will benefit us in the long run."



Salaries

When is Overtime Exempt?

Frank Kollman, Kollman & Saucier, P.A.

Let's start with a simple rule: (1) Unless you pay an employee a salary, that employee is rarely exempt from overtime, but (2) the payment of a salary does not automatically exempt an employee from overtime (and minimum wage). Moreover, if you do not follow the Department of Labor rules on deductions from salaried employees, you may lose the overtime exemption, regardless of the employee's high rank in the organization.

There are three main exemption categories under federal wage and hour law: executive, administrative, and professional employees. The first two are the most important. Executive employees are supervisors and managers who perform certain duties and are paid a salary. Administrative employees are people like the HR director or CFO, who exercise independent judgment in the management of the business, and are paid a salary. In both cases, the Department of Labor wants to know (1) what the exempt employee actually does and (2) under what circumstances the exempt employee might not get a full salary in a workweek.

If you have employees who work overtime (more than 40 hours a week), and you treat them as exempt, you must take steps to make sure your determination is correct. You can do the research yourself at the Department of Labor website, or you can review their duties with your lawyer. If you incorrectly designate an employee as exempt, you risk being

sued for unpaid overtime, an equal amount in liquidated damages, and attorneys' fees incurred by the employee. In fact, a current employee can sue for unpaid overtime, and you cannot retaliate by firing that employee or taking disciplinary action.

The problem is made worse if you have no record of the hours worked by the employee you considered exempt. You are required to maintain time records for nonexempt employees, and if you do not have those records, the time kept by the employee becomes the main source of evidence for overtime worked. For that reason, unless you are confident an employee is exempt, it would be a good idea to track the employee's time "just in case." I know companies that have all employees track time, including the owners.

If you are paying everyone hourly, you must pay overtime regardless of their duties. If you are paying a salary, make sure any deductions are the kind permitted under wage and hour laws.

Frank Kollman of Kollman & Saucier, P.A. is the DLI "Ask the Legal Expert." SDA/DLI members can enter the member's only section at www.dlionline.org to access this member benefit.



Ask the

*Stain
Wizard*

How & When to Use Dye Strippers

By Jeff "The Stain Wizard" Schwarz

Perhaps no other chemical in the drycleaning and laundry industry is as misunderstood as titanium sulfate/dye stripper/YellowGo. In fact, the main reason I started doing stain removal seminars 20 years ago was to teach people the truths about using YellowGo.

Dye Strippers/YellowGo is a purple/black, acid reducing bleach. Its main purpose is to remove unwanted dye bleeds from fabrics. YellowGo is SAFE, on ALL fabrics, but it's ONLY job is to remove dyes. Like every bleach, for every 10 degrees in temperature, you double the strength of that bleach. With white fabrics, you can make the YellowGo as hot as you want. (In industrial laundry, we used YellowGo at 175 degrees water temperature.) On colors and stripes, you must start with cool/lukewarm water. YellowGo isn't for yellow stains.

I was working in Los Angeles visiting dry-cleaners and a customer told me he stopped using YellowGo, because it ruined a bunch of clothing. "How did you use it," I asked. "Maybe I can help you use it better the next time." The disgruntled cleaner replied (and I quote), "I poured a whole quart of YellowGo into my drycleaning machines button trap to remove yellow stains and it ruined the load!!!!" I asked in total disbelief, "You mean to tell me, you added a quart of bleach to your Drycleaning machine?" Yes he did! Last I heard, he was working at McDonald's.

Getting started

The bottle should have a date stamped on the bottom. This is the day the product was made. When stored properly (cap on tight, away from heat), it should be good for 5-10 years. The liquid should be black in color. When the liquid is white or clear, the product is not good anymore.

Mud or rocks that may appear on the bottom of the bottle are stabilizing components that can fall out of suspension from the liquid. As long as the liquid is black, the titanium sulfate is still good. There is no need to poke, prod, or chunk the solids on the bottom of the bottle. Remember: Reducing bleaches

hate oxygen and heat. (Some Texans have told me they keep their YellowGo in a chemical-storage refrigerator.)

Before putting your hands in any bleach, remove all rings and wear gloves. Read the instructions on the bottle or watch the training videos before starting (visit www.ALWilson.com, click on YellowGo bottle). Use a clean container. (Using a soap bucket that still has residual chemical in it will reduce the bleach's effectiveness.) Know your water temperature - use a laser water temperature gun.

When using YellowGo, there are times the garment continues to bleed after removing the garment from the soak (multi-colored cowboy shirts are notorious for doing this). In that case, stabilize the dyes using salt or white vinegar. Sometimes you need skill and luck when using bleaches.

You can use YellowGo on the spotting board to remove the last traces of ink stains. Always add rust-remover to the YellowGo. You are adding an acid to an acid and this helps flush the bleach out of the fabric and makes it stronger.

Most importantly, if the original color is affected, rinse immediately, then soak in diluted (2-3 oz/ gallon water) ammonia and water. This reverses the PH and changes it back to original color. (This is the same concept when using tannins and proteins.)

Good Luck! If you ever have any questions, please call 800-526-1188. We are never too busy to help you over the phone.

Jeff Schwarz is Regional Vice President at A.L. Wilson Chemical Company and can be reached at jeffschwarz@alwilson.com.



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