

ROCKY MOUNTAIN FABRICARE ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER

SERVING THE DRYCLEANERS OF COLORADO, UTAH AND WYOMING

January/February 2005

Vol. 20, No. 1

The Good...the Bad...the Funny

By: Joe Blaha



The Fall RMFA Members Celebration was held on October 28th at the Seasons Gourmet Market in Olde Town Arvada, who provided a sampling of their gourmet fare. This function was arranged as an opportunity for members to meet and be recognized for their support of the association, enjoy some refreshments, and examine the power and role of humor and laughter in their lives in a presentation by Colleen Miller a "Life - Relationship - Business" coach. It was an afternoon-evening to remember with a full and energized house exploring the world of grape varietals with two-fisted wine tasting, providing side-by-side (left hand glass - new world; right hand glass - old world) versions of the same grape. White ones and red ones were investigated and everyone had a different favorite. Fun and "kinda" intellectual for a taste of that alcohol based academic exercise the ubiquitous wine tasting. The presentation by Colleen, while focused on humor was also a very serious assertion on the empowering ability to "become fearless by holding your life more lightly". This discussion was driven in no small part by the revelations shared by Paul Mandeville, a key player in the education committee and our RMFA vice-president whose "Bad News" was the necessity to close his business and leave the RMFA. Transforming an obvious business nightmare into an ongoing game plan for the future is a tough topic and Paul's willingness to share his experience with us was exceptional.

We also had the chance to meet three new board members: Ron Davidson of Kwik Dryclean Super Center (Arvada), Carl Salustri of LaundroTech (Denver) and Tom Rowland of Colorado Mountain Cleaners (Silverthorne).

Plans are still afoot for the RMFA Spring Conference taking place the last weekend in April 2005. The town of Grand Junction offers a wonderful package which will include golf (even for those who have yet to ever take a whack), a trip through the local vineyards (with more wine tasting), and another profitable program.

Enjoy the holidays,

Joe

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President's Message

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I recently attended the California Show. It always seems that I learn as much from the cleaners I meet as I do from attending the conference. While I was sitting with some of the Utah attendees discussing shirt laundry problems, a question came to mind. Are you working in your business---or on your business?

With the economy on its way back up, I am starting to hear cleaners are beginning to pick up. Economic struggles were felt across the country with some cleaners being down as much as fifty percent. Was the economy the whole problem? During economic hard times customers seek a bigger bang for their buck. Cleaners that offer more services, greater convenience, or better quality seemed to suffer through a little easier. While drycleaning revenues were shrinking many cleaners were looking at expanding their services to off set the lost revenue. Routes and fire restoration services come to mind.

It's impossible to predict a decline in the economy or a sudden change in business patterns; however, some cleaners were better prepared than others. Business owners who are on the forefront of the industry were already looking for alternative ways to generate more revenue. Cleaners who run their business proactively instead of reactively were better prepared for the economic downturn. How do you run your business proactively? By working on your business.

Staying on the forefront of an industry is not always an easy task. In an industry such as ours, we have seen a lot of changes in the last ten years. Alternative solvents and tension finishing techniques seem to be leading the way. As drycleaners it is important for us to keep abreast of the changing technology. Attending clean shows, association meetings, and networking with other drycleaners are just a few of the ways we can keep current on the new technologies entering our industry. Being stuck at the cleaning machine or in the pressing department keeps the work flowing. What does it do to get new customers in the door? Take a look at your business as an outsider would. You might be surprised at what you see.

Although the last few years have not been good for drycleaners, I think the future looks quite bright.

Richard Reese

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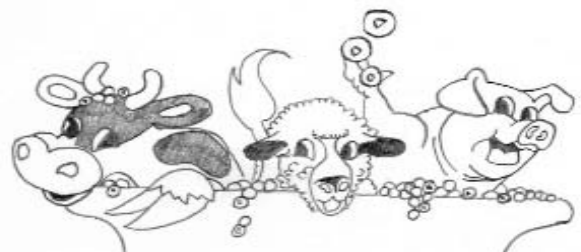
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“Are You a Professional Drycleaner?”

By: Sam Choi, IFI's VP

ENGLISH SUMMARY

IFI's VP Sam Choi contributed the following special column under the title of “Are You a Professional Drycleaner?” Introducing IFI's new resident drycleaning courses specifically designed for the Korean-American dry cleaning community, he emphasized the importance of proper education and training in dry cleaning. The basic one-week “Introduction to Dry Cleaning” course and two-week “Advanced Dry Cleaning” course, conducted both in English and Korean, are now available for Korean dry cleaners.

Most Korean-Americans are readily sacrificing almost everything, thus investing a huge amount of money for the education of their children. However, Korean dry cleaners in general have neglected to invest the money and time needed to educate themselves over the years, due to a misconception of the dry cleaning business, unlike successful main-stream dry cleaners. To help Korean-American dry cleaners become more professional drycleaners and meet the increased demand, classes in Korean-English will be increased in 2005.

For inquiries and further information about IFI's training courses in Korean-English, call 301-622-1900 or 1-800-638-2627.

당신은 전문세탁인가?

최 상 학
IFI 아시아담당 부사장

오늘날 많은 한국 이민자들이 세탁분야에 종사하고 있다. 특별한 사전 경험과 기술없이 기이 모두가 잘하고 있으니깐 난들 못할소냐 하고 많은 한인들이 1970년대말 부터 세탁업에 뛰어들어 20여년이 지난 오늘날에는 한국 세탁인들이 숫적인 면에서 미전체세탁업계의 거의 과반수에 육박하고 있다. 반면 한국 세탁인들이 차지하는 미세탁업계 시장점유율은 미주류세탁업계에 비해 너무나 열악하다. 미주류 세탁인들 중에는 몇천만원의 년매상을 올리는 세탁인들이 상당수 있고 수백만원의 년매상을 올리고 있는 업소도 500여개에 달한다. 이 숫자는 IFI의 회원중에 년회비 1,300여불 이상 내는 5-스타 멤버들 기준으로 해서 산출한 것인데 IFI의 5-스타멤버로 가입돼 있는 한인 업소는 전국에서 불과 5개 업소 밖에 없다. 이와 같이 한국 세탁업계가 미주류세탁업계에 비해서 열세인 이유는 과연 무엇인가? 첫째는 세탁업에 관한 교육과 훈련 부족이다. 혹자는 한국 세탁업계는 아직 연륜이 짧기 때문이라고 하기도 한다. 나는 이에 동의하지 않는다. 한국 세탁인중에서 불과 10년 이내에 100만불이상의 매상을 올린 케이스도 있기 때문이다. 세탁업으로 대성공한 사람들에서 볼 수 있는 한 가지 공통점은 교육과 훈련을 철저히 실시하고 필요한 노하우를 적극적으로 활용한다는 것이다.

엄밀히 따져보면 세탁업을 운영하는데 필요한 지식과 기술은 대단한 것이 아니다. 불과 수주동안 배우면 세탁업계에서는 일류 기술자가 될 수 있음에도 불구하고 그 필요성을 완강히 거부하는데 문제가 있다. IFI의 문진에도 와 보지 않은 사람이 여겨 넘어 배운기술 가지고 일류 기술자라고 자처하고 아까운 돈내고 왜 세탁교육을 받느냐고 같이 배우려는 사람까지 말린다는 이야기를 가끔 듣는다.

5년이고 10년이고 다람쥐 쳇바퀴 돌 듯이 같은 일에 쫓기다 보면 세월은 나 가고 몸과 마음은 고달프기만 하다. 이제도 늦지 않으니, 다시 시작한다는 기분으로 새로 출발하자. 3주교육이 정 어려우면 1주간의 기초교육만이라도 받으면 과연 세탁분야의 전문지식과 기술이 얼마나 중요한 것인지를 깨닫게 된다. 자녀들 교육을 위해 수십만불을 교육비로 투자하는 것이 한국인들의 관례인데 이러한 돈을 벌여주는 자기사업을 위해 절대적으로 필요한 자기 교육 투자는 왜 그렇게 소홀히 하는지 이해할 수가 없다.

미세탁업계의 중추적인 역할을 하는 IFI는 100여년의 역사를 가진 전문세탁인 양성 기관이다. 현재 미주류세탁업계에서 크게 성공한 세탁인들 전부가 IFI의 교육과 훈련을 받았고 이를 자랑할뿐 아니라 IFI에서의 교육을 적극 권장한다. IFI에서는 작년부터 한국인들을 위해 한국어 세탁 교육과정을 신설하여 많은 한국인 세탁자랑생과 기존세탁인들에게 이론과 실기를 가르치고 있다. 교육은 영어와 한국어 교재를 사용하며 영어와 한국어로 강의를 함으로서 세탁용어 등을 이해 시키는데도 특별 배려를 하였다.

금년 7월에는 2주간의 고급반도 한국어로 교육을 실시하였다. 보다 많은 한국세탁인들이 참여할수 있도록 내년에는 교육과정 횟수를 좀더 증가 시킬 계획이다. “Being late is better than never”라는 말이 있다. 이제라도 제대로 교육을 받아 합리적인 경영체제를 갖추어 불필요한 고생을 덜고 보다 쉬운 방법으로 많은 돈을 벌기를 바란다.

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Which Way Did the Perc Go?

By: Robin M. Fryberger, PE, Sundance Environmental Consultants, Principal Engineer

Environmental site testing seems to be required for many properties, particularly ones that have had a dry cleaning plant. It may be a property buyer, a refinancing banker, or a landlord with an exiting tenant, but sooner or later someone with interests in the property will want to know if there is any Perc (perchloroethylene or PCE or tetrachloroethylene) contamination. Site testing can be a nerve-racking process, even for shops that have operated carefully and efficiently. This article is intended to provide a shop owner with some idea of what is required for an adequate site assessment. Future articles will describe regulatory management strategies and various cleanup options, which may be useful if Perc residues exist.

Industry guidance for environmental assessments states that testing for contamination should be performed where it is most likely to be detected. So, where is the Perc? Based on past experience, Perc residues may be observed in the soil, soil vapor or groundwater at a dry cleaning facility. A testing program is often a phased process and begins with an inspection of the site to identify accessible test areas. Soil vapor testing is a relatively simple and inexpensive method for locating potential hotspots, and is particularly useful for former dry cleaning facilities where equipment locations are no longer known. Soil vapors are screened with a field meter at a dozen or more locations through small holes drilled through the concrete floor slab. The readings are compared to each other to identify locations that may need further soil testing.



Soil testing is important because soil is the first place liquids end up if they soak through the floor. State soil standards have been developed against which actual Perc concentrations can be compared. Typical testing locations may vary from site to site, but often include around the dry cleaning unit (DCU), near drains or sumps, near chemical storage or stained areas, near cracks or joints in the floor, and possibly near other plant equipment such as the spotting board, the vacuum unit, or a remote still. While access to these types of test locations can be difficult in a busy plant, testing beneath these potential sources is the most direct and inexpensive method to evaluate for a release. Indoor drilling rigs or hand augering techniques can allow shallow soil testing

after work shifts even amongst operating plant equipment. While drilling, the soil cuttings are tested for vapors with a field meter. Laboratory samples are collected from the depth interval that displays field evidence of impacts, if any, such as staining, odors, or elevated field meter readings. If impacts are observed at shallow depths, deeper drilling and soil testing is important to document the maximum depth of contamination.



Groundwater sampling is also an important method for evaluating site conditions. It is more expensive than soil sampling because deeper drilling and well construction is required. However, groundwater testing may be necessary to estimate whether a significant release has occurred without testing inside the plant, or if soil impacts are known to have reached the water table. The allowable concentration of Perc in groundwater is approximately one thousandth of the allowable Perc concentration in soil. Therefore, even low detections of Perc in groundwater can have a significant effect on how much effort is required to manage environmental issues at a drycleaning site. Once a site has been tested and found to be clean, a great deal of concern is alleviated for the landlord and tenant alike, and a property's full value may be recognized.

About the Author: Robin M. Fryberger, P.E. is the Principal Engineer at Sundance Environmental Consultants, Inc. of Parker, Colorado, and can be reached at (303) 699-7870 to develop environmental testing or management approaches for specific sites.



Utah Update

By: Sharon Dutcher

The man who said he would never retire has retired. Boyd Henrie, the "fabric doctor", has finally turned in his spotting brush after five decades of cleaning fabric. And, according to reports, he's enjoying himself immensely.

Beginning with a small shop (Union Cleaning and Tailors) in downtown Salt Lake City, Boyd built the Henrie's Drycleaning chain into a formidable competitor. For years he did all of the spotting and loved nothing more than a difficult challenge according to Garth Showalter of Laundry Supply.

Boyd was a driving force in the Utah Drycleaners Association in the 1960's and 70's, serving in many positions including president. He remained active in the IFI and IDC, attending conventions and trade shows to increase his knowledge of drycleaning. Not one to rest on his laurels, Boyd has always been innovative and stayed on top of new developments in the industry.

Well known for his colorful sport coats and ascots, Boyd understood the importance of image and customer perception as a vital part of the dry cleaning business. His continuing efforts to improve his product and communicate this with his customers set

the benchmark for quality dry cleaning in Utah. Under Boyd's guidance, Henrie's Drycleaning became an area leader in quality cleaning, packaging and pricing.

Mike Horrall, current president of Henrie's, says that Utah has higher standards for dry cleaning than other areas of the country in part because of Boyd Henrie and a few of his contemporaries. Mike is "grateful to have had the opportunity" to have worked for many years with Boyd. He feels that he wouldn't be in the drycleaning business today were it not for Boyd's influence.

Congratulations, Boyd. We hope you enjoy retirement as much as spotting!

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BOARD UPDATE

By: Brad Ewing

I haven't written an article for this newsletter for so long I'm not sure I remember how to type. Of course since I never really knew how to type it isn't much of a loss. I have been tasked with the job of sharing some changes that have been going on at the leadership level of RMFA. In the past 18 months several of the board members have stepped down because they are no longer in the business.

To fill the vacancies on the board we have found three volunteers. **Tom Rowland of Summitex Cleaners in Silverthorne, Ron Davidson of Kwik Clean Super Center in Arvada, and Carl Salustri of Laundrotech in Aurora.** Tom is relatively new to the business, but not new to business. He is also the recipient of a state environmental award. Ron and his wife have been very active in RMFA and have attended a number of programs. Carl has been in the business for a number of years but is new to the association. All of these people bring something slightly different to the board, and I think the mix will be great for RMFA.

The changes that have occurred also affected the executive committee. Specifically there was a vacancy in the position of Vice President/President Elect. Because of depth problems on the bench there were only a couple of choices to fill this spot. After some discussion at the last board meeting it was decided that I would fill the spot.

Change is inevitable and I think these changes mean the future of RMFA is bright. They have led to new faces and new energy (with the exception of the incoming president). These new people bring a new perspective that is vital to keeping the association moving forward. We will be introducing the new board members in future issues of this newsletter so look for their bio's.

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