



# THE Reclaimer

## SEFA Makes Education Top Priority



THE SEFA BOARD HAS MADE EDUCATION AND TRAINING A PRIORITY IN 2019, AND ARE CURRENTLY DEVELOPING THEIR 2019 EDUCATION SCHEDULE.

“Education is one of the most important benefits we can provide”, stated Peter Blake, SEFA Executive Director. “We are looking ahead and formulating a schedule to reach out to all parts of our region and will have at least one program in every state. This is your chance

to request programming in your area. We want to hear from the membership. Contact me with any programs, speakers, or topics you want us to explore. Your voice is needed to schedule the most effective program.”

SEFA is looking to hold technical training programs for Spotting, Pressing, and Wetcleaning. We will also be focussing on Management topics with another Management Boot-Camp program and a Route Development Program.

“We are also focussing on some new workshops,” offered Blake,” on marketing and driving revenue. The Board is developing a list of speakers and topics for the potential future programs, but are still open to suggestions from the membership.”

### SCHOLARSHIPS

The SEFA Board realizes it can be hard to find the local training when you need it, so they have developed an extremely generous Scholarship Program affording members the opportunity to go to the DLI Resident Courses or even have instructors into your plant for individual training.

SEFA has set aside up to \$9000 a year in funds for Members to attend DLI Schools. The funds are available in increments of \$1,000/week of training and is capped at \$3,000/plant over a course of 3 years.

At the recent SDLS show, SEFA announced a grant program that would allow for members to apply for a reimbursement for having private, in-plant training done at member plants. The grant allows for a reimbursement of \$300/day -- up to a \$600 cap over a three year period. The Board set aside up to \$10,000 per year to fund the effort.

*For more information, or to apply, visit [www.sefa.org](http://www.sefa.org)*

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE...

# Change of Seasons

GREETINGS TO ALL IN SEFA LAND! AS THE WARM WEATHER HAS LEFT MOST OF US, CLEANERS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY ARE WELCOMING THE COOLER, FALL WEATHER IN HOPES OF HIGHER PIECE COUNTS. SUMMERTIME FOR A LOT OF US USUALLY MEANS VACATIONS, BEING SHORT-STAFFED, EQUIPMENT MALFUNCTIONING AND FEWER PIECES.

The fewer pieces in our stores are a common trait amongst most cleaners I communicate with on a regular basis. Cleaners in South Carolina, Florida and even here in Tennessee have all asked the same question, "Are you down compared to last year?" I don't mind sharing that my business is not down, but the pieces have basically remained flat from a year ago. Sure my sales are up, but I've had two basic price increases from a year ago so I don't really try to compare sales from year to year. Now piece counts, that's something I keep an eye on.

Aside from piece counts, we should all be looking toward 2019 and what it may bring. Are fashions and fabrics continuing to limit "dry clean only" garments? As a cleaner are you looking at fluff and fold to add to your business? Did you try something new and it didn't work? There are always capital expenditures to think about.

Are you waiting till the Clean Show in New Orleans to shop for something? Speaking of New Orleans, I actually made my hotel reservations last week for the Hotel Monteleone in New Orleans which is the host hotel for DLI for the upcoming Clean Show in June of 2019.

Funny as it may sound, I would not wait terribly long to make hotel reservations for the Clean Show as the host hotel for each organization that puts the show on usually sell out their block of rooms well in advance.

## INSPIRATION

On a different note, I want to ask that everybody keep the Gulf Coast in their thoughts and prayers because of the recent hurricane, the families of the recent synagogue massacre and lastly, one of our own, Lou D'Autorio, whose daughter is battling cancer. Lou wouldn't mind a nice note or call to lift his spirits.

That fight is being chronicled on facebook under the blog Trinity Tough. I know the entire Board and membership of SEFA joins me in keeping her and their entire family in our thoughts and prayers.

When you think things are not going well with you, take five minutes and read what an inspiration his daughter and family is.



Don Holecek,  
SEFA President

*Don Holecek*

*Crown Cleaners*

*(865) 584-7464 / Don@crowncleaners.com*

# 2019 DLI/NCA Five Star Brainstorming Conference Set for St. Maarten



THE 2019 DLI AND NCA ANNUAL FIVE STAR BRAINSTORMING CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD JANUARY 17 - 20, 2019 IN ST. MAARTEN AT THE SONESTA OCEANPOINT RESORT. MEMBERS OF BOTH ORGANIZATIONS ARE

INVITED TO ATTEND FOR A LONG WEEKEND OF ADVENTURING, RELAXING, AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP.

With only 129 rooms on the property, the Sonesta Ocean Point resort is a smaller property than the associations have used in previous years. The resort is a Five-Star adults-only property that includes food, liquor, room service, mini bar, WIFI, taxes, gratuities, and other amenities.

DLI and NCA carefully select speakers to inspire and invigorate your desire to succeed. Check out this year's lineup:

## HOW TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN MILLENNIAL EMPLOYEES AND CLIENTS

John DiJulius will share his insights and answers to the key questions you have about attracting and retaining millennial employees and clients. This generation is your future, and you need their support in the workplace, at the counter and on line. John has been studying this challenge and is looking forward to sharing his take on what you need to do to with you.

## PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION IS THE ONLY SUPERPOWER YOU NEED

Jeff Tippett presents with dual purposes: to uplift and encourage while also providing actionable content that creates change. When talking with others about what he does, Jeff finds they often respond: 'So, you're a motivational speaker.' 'Well, not really. But sorta,' he said. 'I'm really more of a motivational teacher. I think we all appreciate and need motivation. Life can beat us down; so I want to lift people. To accomplish this as I present, I bring lots of energy, humor, and heartfelt connection.'

Attendees need more than just motivation because motivation fades, he said. 'I mix in actionable content that can create lasting change in lives. I began my career teaching at a university; I guess once a teacher always a teacher.' With 500+ presentations under his belt, Jeff knows how to successfully weave these two styles together.

## THE SECRET OF CHICK FIL A'S SUCCESS

From Attracting & Training the Best Minimum Wage Employees to Attracting and Optimizing Media, Chick Fil A is the highest ranked fast food restaurant in customer service and the fourth most-inspiring company, according to Forbes. These accolades are the expected norm among higher paying luxury service brands. However, attaining these service and culture heights, when relying primarily on minimum wage employees, makes these Chick Fil A achievements all the more remarkable.

Arthur Greeno, long time Chick Fil A employee turned owner and author of two best selling books, will share the secret of the fastest growing fast food brand's success with you on Sunday morning. His appearances and message have been described by audiences as relevant, adaptable, lighthearted, irreverent, real, hilarious, engaging and remarkable. His goal is to show you how you can make others believe in your business and help make it remarkable too.

Visit [www.dlionline.org/DLIONline.org/Five-Star-Conference](http://www.dlionline.org/DLIONline.org/Five-Star-Conference) for more information

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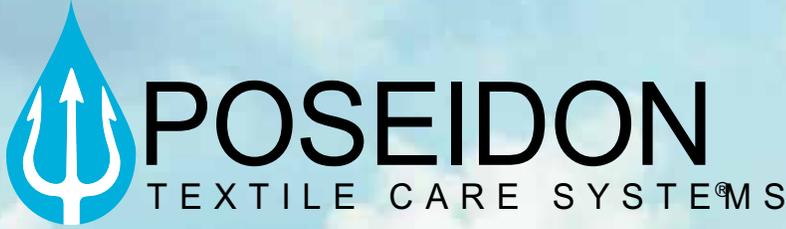
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# Are You Passionate About Your Business, and Do You Share that Passion with Your Customers?

Written by Sid Chelsky, Executive Director of Canadian Fabricare Association



I HAVE COME TO KNOW MANY CLEANERS WHO ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT THE WORK THEY DO. UNFORTUNATELY, THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH OF US OUT THERE THAT WILL TAKE THE TIME TO SHARE THIS PASSION WITH OUR CUSTOMERS. IF WE TAKE THE TIME TO OPERATE UNDER THE BEST

PRACTICES RULES, THEN LETS SHOW OUR CUSTOMERS WHAT THAT MEANS.

From the beginning of taking over the responsibility of caring for our customers' garments, to the end, when we give them back to the customer and take their payments, we should show them what we do that is worth the money they have given us.

If we are fortunate enough to have a location that allows your customers to view the work that is being done in the plant and give them a bird's eye view of the work performed, this will help. If not, we should consider having a computer with a monitor on the counter or on the wall that shows and explains how your staff is working diligently tagging, spotting, cleaning, pressing, and shipping the garments.

As well, if possible, take the time to invite your customers to take a tour of your plant and discuss each process that garments go through.

Doing this will give your customer more confidence in you and your operation in handling their garments and insure that they will remain with you for a very long time. It will also reinforce that the fee you charge is well deserved because of the care you take with their clothes.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF CUSTOMER SURVEYS

Performance reviews are a widely-used tool for running successful businesses of any size. It will allow the most effective managers to recognize areas of success and identify, discuss and plan for opportunities to improve. It also allows both the manager and employee to track performance trends over time. These reviews can promote continuous improvement and help protect those customer relationships against competitive threats.

Asking clients to rate the company's performance on its most important promises shows a commitment to fulfilling those promises to the clients' satisfaction. We've learned from experience that

asking clients to write comments for each rating is too great an imposition and results in a lower response rate. Instead, there is a single comment field where we ask client to share feedback to provide context for their scores.

It is important to follow up with everyone who responded to discuss how much you value their feedback and the changes you are making as a result.

Identify at-risk business - One of the most important benefits of surveying clients is identifying concerns that are more serious than you might have realized and could put the relationship at risk. When you get a lower-than-expected score, you immediately set up a client meeting to learn more about the source of the dissatisfaction and discuss the improvements the client would like to see. You should put together a specific action plan that you share with the client and schedule follow-up conversations to gauge your progress. You might find out that the customer is not happy with the counter person's attitude or competence, or you might find out that the depot location is not easily accessible due to traffic problems, or some other reason you may not have realized.

Identify and leverage potential evangelists - Invariably, the survey responses you receive each year include glowing reviews from delighted clients. From a marketing perspective, those are pure gold. You should immediately ask for written permission to publish the comments on your website or in your store, in new business pitches, etc. Nine times out of 10, the answer is yes. Those comments, as well as survey responses with high ratings across the board, also help identify others who are potential sources for references and referrals.

The key to a successful client satisfaction program understands that the survey is not an end in itself, but rather a catalyst for a continuous cycle of feedback, analysis, action and evaluation. Having the courage to ask the right questions, take the answers seriously, and commit to taking action to build on successes and address areas for improvement can strengthen client relationships and pay big dividends.

## DON'T IGNORE THE CUSTOMER:

Focus on Task over Mood - If you sense your customers are rushed or frustrated, don't ask them how they are. That question just reminds them that they're not having a good experience. Instead, ask, "What can I do to make your day go a little better?" It helps keep the conversation positive while indicating you're aware that they have other things they'd rather be doing.

Speaking of better word choices, avoid asking reluctant customers what they want or what they'd like. Frankly they don't want

Continued on page 12

## Where Will you Find Success?

Written by Peter Blake, SEFA Executive Director



**IN THE PAST THREE MONTHS I HAVE HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF ATTENDING AND PARTICIPATING IN DRYCLEANING CONVENTIONS AND WORKSHOPS IN CALIFORNIA, WEST VIRGINIA, KANSAS CITY, AND MASSACHUSETTS.**

It has afforded me the opportunity to connect with drycleaners throughout the country from all types of business models, all types of cleaners, and all types of employees. I got to meet owners, managers, route drivers, and customer service representatives. It is always surprising to me how they all share in common. Doesn't matter the region or the type of business -- everyone is sharing the same frustrations and the same challenges.

One of my favorite questions to pose to people I meet is -- what are your greatest challenges? Without fail, the biggest challenge remains diminishing volume. When looking at new programs and services, these are two areas I try to keep focus on.

### DRIVING REVENUE

There is no question, piece counts from traditional drycleaning pieces has fallen and we need to look at ways to combat that trend. When faced with the dilemma of a shrinking market, you only have two options you can either get a bigger piece of the pie -- or make a bigger pie. We are trying to help members do both.

When looking at increasing market share, you need to invest in marketing. I am not necessarily talking about a huge monetary investment, much of what needs to be done can be done by most cleaners, but you need to invest time.

DLI has posted a 5-part video series on Marketing featuring recent SDLS speaker Brian Rashid. If you haven't taken advantage of it yet -- do it soon. It is a great program that breaks down social media marketing into very understandable, and usable segments.

I think we are in a great spot right now to really do some great organic marketing. The window may be closing within the next 5 years, so you need to take advantage of these opportunities while you can.

In addition to the marketing videos, DLI also has a great Effortless Social media program and a very good e-mail marketing program, "Great Impressions". If you need help with email marketing, or social media: Call me. I would love to help. When piece counts are dropping, or business is slowing, that is not the time to cut back on marketing, but to increase it, and maybe to invest in new avenues or promotion. You need to keep working on your brand and your identity.

### A BIGGER PIE

Diversification is the key to creating new revenue sources and recapturing volume in your plant. There has been a lot written about wash-dry-fold in the past, but it is still the one segment of Fabric Care Services that continues to grow and members are capitalizing on the trend.

You should also look at the services you offer, and make sure to promote those little used but high profit services. Do you process a lot of comforters? Households? Do you take in shoes? Leathers? Handbags?

These can be great sources of revenues, but many consumers never think of using professional services for these items. I recently had my golf shoes cleaned at my drycleaner and they came out great. I can't tell you how many other golfers in my league asked how they could get theirs done too. Sometimes the key to growth is thinking and looking outside the box.

The best way to increase these sales is through educating your current customers of what you do. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, E-mail marketing, signage... they all play a key role in growth. Need help? Let me know!

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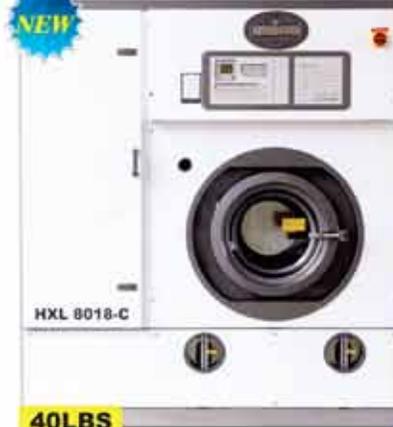
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## Going for Gold

Dallas, Texas September 10, 2018: Provided by M&B Hangers



WHEN ZACH HERICKS WALKED OUT ONTO THE POOL DECK, HE WASN'T NERVOUS. HE WAS READY. THE CROWD BUZZED, THE VOICE OVER THE LOUD SPEAKER CLAMORED OUT, CALLING THE SWIMMERS TO THEIR SPOTS, AND ZACH'S FAMILY WATCHED ANXIOUSLY, CHEERING FROM THE STANDS.

For Zach, even though the day represented one of the highest levels of swimming competition in the nation, his cool, calm excitement was evident as he and his fellow competitors approached their starting blocks. On your marks. Get set. And he was off and into the water.

Zach Hericks was one of only 12 swimmers from Texas selected for the National Special Olympics Games in July at the University of Washington. He participated in four swimming events, and through hard work, consistent practice, and an always-optimistic attitude, he took home two gold medals and a silver medal as prizes for his incredible efforts.

The son of Shelly and Jim Hericks, owners of FabriClean Supply in Dallas, Texas, Zach has been a part of his local swim team of Special Olympians since he graduated high school. The Mac Gators, as the team is called, gather together for an eight week swim

season, during which time Zach, in addition to his full-time job at FabriClean Supply, puts in the work to get better at his sport.

“At practice we work on our strokes. We work on our times. We work on getting better and better, and we have a lot of fun,” Zach says. And though he’s working hard to become a better swimmer, his team is truly about having a great time together. “His teammates are some of his best friends. They all graduated high school together, and they’ve been together ever since, almost 16 years now,” says Shelly.

As Shelly and Jim reflect back on Nationals, their pride is evident in every word they share about Zach’s success. “It was the experience of a lifetime,” says Shelly, “and it was exciting to say the least! It was so special to see him win those medals. We knew he’d do well, but to get two gold medals and a silver medal, we were absolutely thrilled for him and so very proud.”

In October, Zach will travel to College Station, Texas, for the State Games at Texas A&M University. He’ll practice hard. He’ll prepare. He’ll aim for more medals. But truthfully, Zach says the best part about these events is the people he gets to spend time with and the lifelong friends he makes through the sport.

“I really do love swimming,” he says. “and I love getting to know people. That’s really the fun part.”



### The Next South Eastern Fabricare Association Board Meeting

**SEFA Winter Board Meeting**  
*Saturday, January 12, 2018*  
*San Destin Resort, Destin, FL*

# Cleaner & Launderer Celebrates 58th Anniversary



**RANDY AND ALBANE WENTE PUBLISHERS OF CLEANER & LAUNDERER, TRADE PUBLICATION FOR THE DRYCLEANING AND LAUNDERING INDUSTRY ARE HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE THE 58TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PUBLICATION.**

The publication was started in October of 1960 by Wally Urquhart under the name of California Cleaner & Launderer covering 13 states and expanding, warranting the first change in the publication's title to Western Cleaner & Launderer and as boundaries continued to expand, in 2007 was renamed Cleaner & Launderer.

In the early 80's Wally hired Joan Reid, Randy Wente's aunt and

worked for him several years. When Wally retired due to ill health he sold the publication to Joan and in turn she partnered with her sister Dorothy Ballard (Randy Wente's mother).

Together, the dynamic duo ran the business on their own until Joan decided to retire in 1990 and sold her share to Albane Wente. In 1992 Dorothy also retired, selling her share to Randy Wente, who left Hughes Aircraft Co. after 20 years.

"We really commend the Wente's and congratulate Cleaner and Launderer on their anniversary," offered Peter Blake, SEFA Executive Director. "They have been a tremendous resource for the industry through the years, and have provided a great service. I do hope all our members subscribe to their publication and visit their web page. In this day and age we really must be using all the tools in our toolbox to build a brighter future. They are a valuable asset to the entire industry.

Over the years readership and boundaries continued to expand. Today, Cleaner & Launderer is mailed nationwide to all 50 states. Over the next several years Cleaner & Launderer grew its large reader base even more not only through print, but online, mobile and social media.

Surviving all of the hurdles throughout the years, Cleaner & Launderer is still going strong and look forward to many more decades.

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## Sharing Your Passion for Industry with Customers

Continued from page 7

to be there at all. Instead, phrase your questions along the lines of, “Would it be useful...?” “Would it make sense...?” “Would it be helpful...?” In general, we get better results with task oriented questions that focus on resolving the customer’s problem, than with questions that encourage customers to think about their mood.

A person waiting for a garment to be pressed or stain removed may not mind waiting if they understand that a professional job requires time. On the other hand, a person kept waiting due to an appointment they have to be at needs an explanation. The counter person shouldn’t just ignore the delay. She should start with, “Thanks for your patience to-day. A previous customer had a serious problem with her garment. I needed to spend a little more time with her. Rest assured we’ll take all the time we need to take care of you. Before I do, how’s your time – are we OK?” When customers agree to proceed they feel less taken for granted, more like they’ve regained control, and become more receptive to your service.

### SHARE YOUR STRATEGIC INTENT

Let begrudging customers know that you understand what they really want. An employee at a license plate registry office would do

well to tell a customer who’s obviously running errands during lunchtime, “Let’s take care of this quickly so you can hopefully get a chance to eat.” A plumber replacing a hot water tank mentions, “At least now when you leave the house you’ll know that you won’t come home to a flood.” Customers may be focused on the immediate painful purchase. You need to remind them of the more positive strategic out-come.

### OFFER PRICING PERSPECTIVE

By definition, people don’t enjoy spending money on grudge purchases. So with big ticket purchases it’s helpful to break the price down into something that sounds less daunting. So, rather than saying to a customer, “The cost of cleaning this dress will be fifty dollars,” Instead say, “The beautiful dress will be \$50”. Then compare that figure with their overall investment. “Keep in mind the cleaning of the dress is protecting your hundreds of dollars invested in the dress. Whatever you invest in cleaning the dress is likely to prolong the length of life and beauty by at least that amount. Plus, of course you don’t have to worry about deterioration caused by staining and hid-den problems such as invisible liquid spills and underarm buildup of chemicals from deodorants.



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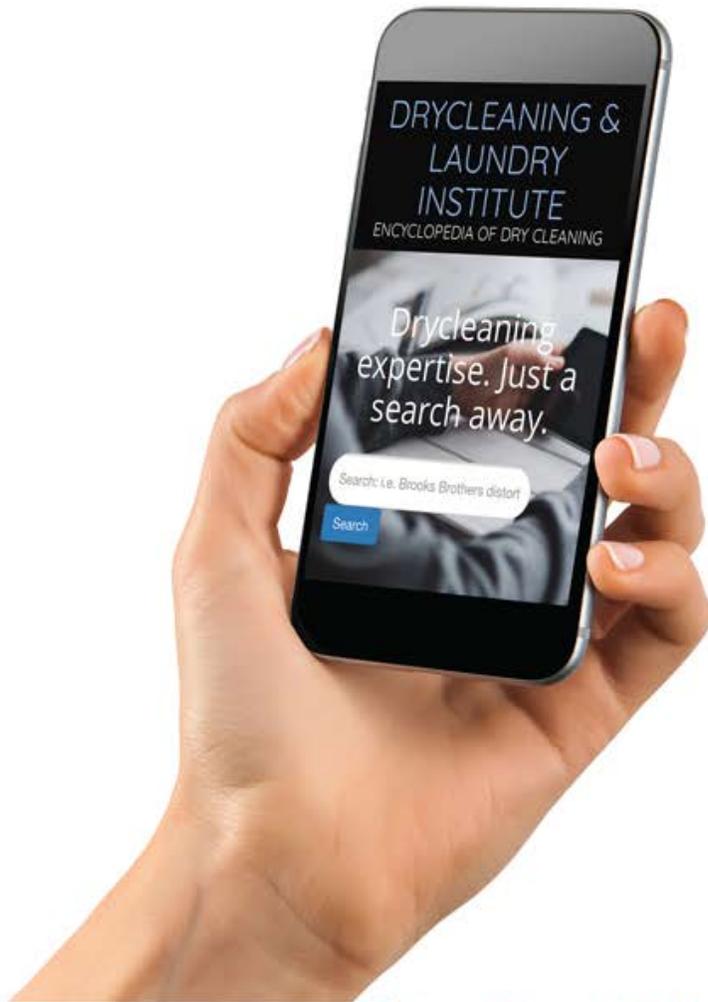
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