

A photograph of a narrow alleyway between multi-story brick buildings. In the foreground, several large, shiny, corrugated metal pipes are laid out on the ground, pointing towards the alley's end. The sky is visible at the far end of the alley.

ISNEWS THE CHIMNEY SWEEP NEWS

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ISNEWS THE CHIMNEY SWEEP NEWS

Voice of the Sweep since 1979

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Lindemann Chimney Co. preparing to install
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Photo by Erik Nuñez

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SaverSystems:

Saving Structures and Building Businesses

Article and photos by Jim Gillam

After John Meredith became a chimney sweep in 1982, it didn't take him long to realize that many of the chimneys he serviced needed major repairs, although some were only a few years old. "That was frustrating for me," he recalled. "I saw all those problems. I started researching."

So began a quest that led John to the development of a line of products for prevention of water damage and deterioration to masonry chimneys. Chimney professionals know SaverSystems, the manufacturing company John founded in 1984, for products to protect and repair masonry chimneys such as ChimneySaver water repellent, CrownSeal and the HeatShield flue sealant system. SaverSystems has also developed protectants for log homes, wood decks and fences, even caskets.

The main plant at 800 South 7th Street in Richmond, Indiana, is a 30,000 square foot two-story brick building that looks from the outside like an old public school. Inside are the offices, laboratory and fabrication area for SaverSystems' "wet" products, such as ChimneySaver, CrownSeal, CrownCoat, Cold Weather CrownCoat and the rest of the ChimneySaver line. The original por-

tion of the building was built in 1900, with additions in 1935 and 1950. It was a tool and die factory for many years.

Two years ago, SaverSystems acquired an additional building about a block away from the main plant. The forty-thousand square foot facility houses the production of powdered products such as CreAway, CrownSaver, and the HeatShield line including HeatShield Cerfractory Flue Sealant & Repair, ChamberCoat, HeatShield Cerfractory Foam and PCR. The building also has warehouse and training space. SaverSystems periodically hosts CSIA's Masonry Repair for Chimney Professionals course at the new facility.



SaverSystems in Richmond, Indiana.

New Product Development

SaverSystems has aggressively developed and introduced new products since first bringing ChimneySaver water repellent to the market in 1987. The company has focused on providing solutions to problems that chimney professionals encounter. "The driving force behind all SaverSystems' products is performance," John declared. "Before we introduce a product, we test every commercially available product in its category. If after extensive testing we can't offer a better performing product than an existing one then we simply won't



John Meredith, founder and CEO of SaverSystems

offer it. Today our growing product line reflects many state of the art solutions to problems commonly encountered in commercial and residential structures."

SaverSystems introduced CrownSeal to the market in 1997. ChimneySaver and CrownSeal account are still some of their best selling products.

Poultice Creosote Remover (PCR), introduced by SaverSystems in 2015, is a revolutionary product designed to remove third degree glazed creosote from flue tiles or stainless steel chimney liners. When PCR is applied, it dissolves the creosote and absorbs it. As it absorbs the creosote and dries, it loses its adhesive properties and falls off the sides of the flue tiles.

ChimneySaver Paint 'N' Peel Fireplace Cleaner is a safe, effective way to clean fireplace fronts. The product is painted over the stained areas and dries to a thick, rubbery, non-hazardous film in 12-24 hours. When completely dry, the film is peeled away from the surface



Buckets ready to be filled at SaverSystems.

FROM THE EDITOR



Dear Readers,

We have been writing about OSHA regulations for years, and Harriet & I had a sweep business for 18 years, prior to taking the helm of *The Chimney Sweep News* in 1999. Still, in listening to Jim Brewer and doing some additional research, I was taken aback by how much rigmarole is required to comply with OSHA regulations today, even before you drive off your parking lot.

Nevertheless, if you have employees you **MUST** comply with OSHA's requirements. Even if you do not have employees, OSHA's regulations provide a template to follow, or at least consult, as you determine the best ways to work safely.

Jim Brewer provides guidelines for developing your company safety policies beginning on page 18. If you have not established your own company safety plan, the time is NOW.

We echo Jim Brewer's plea: Let's stay safe out there!

Chimney Jim



Stuart Karanovich stands next to the HeatShield mixer at SaverSystems.

and discarded. Paint 'N' Peel received the Pete Luter Innovation Award in 2013.

SaverSystems introduced DekSaver in 1994, originally with the intention of providing a product that chimney sweeps could sell in the summertime. The product soon found a market outside of the chimney professional community. Wood preservatives, including lines for log homes and decks, have

grown to be a significant part of the company's product mix.

HeatShield

In 2009, John Meredith of SaverSystems and Chim-Scan developer Tom Urban of Estoban Corporation created a system for simultaneously inspecting and repairing terra cotta flue liners.

HeatShield® is intended for fill-

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ing gaps in mortar joints and repairing cracks in flue tiles that are otherwise structurally intact. It can be applied solely to the mortar joints, or a thin coating can be applied to the interior of the entire flue. Combining the application of flue sealant with concurrent video scanning, the HeatShield system provides professional chimney service specialists with the capability to repair the flue tile and immediately verify the integrity of the repair.

HeatShield is adapted from Eldfast, a product with a 27-year history of use

in the United Kingdom and Europe. Eldfast's inventor worked with John over a two-year period to develop a formulation using raw materials available in the U.S.

"This is a unique chemistry," John said. "I coined the term 'cerfractory,' because it combines the strength of a high fired ceramic with the heat resistance of high temperature refractory cement. It contains no cement or lime. The interesting thing about this material is the more firing it gets, the stronger and more thermal resistant it gets."

John has sponsored a conference of HeatShield dealers every other year since 2010. The three-day HeatShield Summits have offered some of the most rigorous business building training available for our trade. [See the May-June issue.]

Early Years

John was born and raised in Richmond. "My grandfather delivered



Tom Meredith demonstrates the application of Poulitce Creosote Remover at the Oregon Chimney Sweeps Association convention in 2016.

babies," he says. "My dad was in local politics."

John attended Ball State University for four years. After living in Indianapolis for a while, he moved back to Richmond and married his high school sweetheart.

"I was in architectural sales right after getting out of college," he remembers. "This was during the Carter years when interest rates were close to 20%."

"My dad said, 'There's an opening at the Fire Department. You don't make much money but you get a paycheck every two weeks whether you want it or not.'"

With the idea that it might be "kind of macho and fun," John joined the Fire Department.

Soon he found he had a lot of time on his hands. "I wanted to be productive with it," he said. That led him to read about chimney sweeping in *The Mother Earth News*.

John bought an August West system in 1982 and was soon out sweeping and discovering problems.

"You needed ways to deal with some of the problems, like the condensation in the cavities," he recalled. "A lot of chimneys had problems with sloppy construction techniques, and I thought water repellents would help with that. And some crowns were repairable."

In 1984, John began working with

continued on page 8

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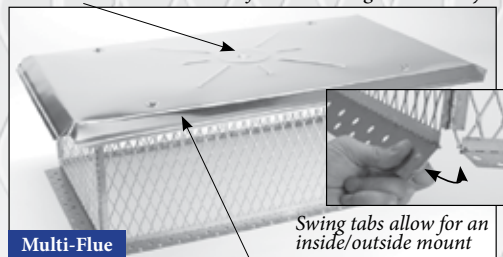


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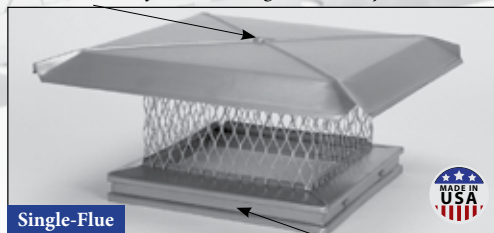
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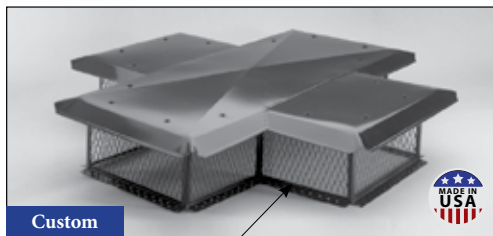


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experts from the Brick Institute of America, the Portland Cement Association, chemical companies and universities to develop products to address these issues. He tested his new formulations on chimneys around Richmond.

“Soon my buddies in the guild started saying, ‘Let me try that!’” John recollected. Demand became such that John decided, “maybe there is a business here,” so in 1987 he introduced ChimneySaver water repellent. “Our first trade show was at the Indiana Chimney Sweep Guild convention that summer. It was the hottest day on record in South Bend, Indiana,” he said.

By 1989, John decided to devote full attention to SaverSystems. He sold his chimney sweep business, which by then had become a multi-truck company offering sweeping, relining, rebuilding and restoration.

The People

Company president Dave Barnes joined SaverSystems in 1999 as sales manager. In 2009, Dave became president. He guides the company with a gentle hand and towering presence.

Stuart Karanovich, the current sales manager, can be seen at sweep events nearly everywhere. In July alone, he made presentations at the Golden State Guild convention; AshBusters Chimney Service near Nashville, TN; the New York Guild Summer Workshop; and Olympia Academy at Owens Chimney in Charlotte, NC. He also hosted his MIX group at SaverSystems. Stuart serves as the Supplier Representative on the National Chimney Sweep Guild Board of Directors.

John’s family has grown into the business. His son, Thomas, started working at SaverSystems part time in 2001 while he was in high school. He started out “labeling buckets and sweeping the floor.” He now works in sales and service, training HeatShield installers.

His daughter, Tricia, is the company’s customer service manager. John’s son-in-law, Jason Wright, is the marketing manager. Jason’s brother, Shawn, is a customer service representative.



HeatShield training room at SaverSystems. The slits in the tiles are there to show how they are filled by application of HeatShield.



Thermocouples attached to test fireplace in Wardenclyffe Hearth Lab.

SaverSystems employs 35 people.

Wardenclyffe Hearth Lab

The additional space in the second building allows John to indulge in a pet project. In partnership with fireplace builder extraordinaire Chris Prior (Adirondack Chimney Co., Middle Grove, NY), John has created Wardenclyffe Hearth Lab.

The two had traded ideas on napkin sketches for years. Now with their own EPA/ASTM testing lab, John and Chris can experiment to their hearts' content and develop new products.

For their first test, they built two identical standard fireplaces. "It is hard to build a crappy design well!" Chris quipped. Chris built one smoke chamber with corbels and parged the other one. They installed view ports in the smoke chambers. "Tom Urban developed a camera for viewing inside the smoke chamber," John said. The test was for comparison, not to a standard.

They used colored smoke bombs to simulate smoke. In the corbelled smoke chamber, "The turbulence was truly amazing," Chris observed.

Their second test compared a typical fire lay with the top burn method that Chris has advocated for years. "We had dramatically less emissions with the top burn," Chris said.

John and Chris plan to continue testing various fireplace designs as their schedules allow. Look forward to a new product introduction next year because of this research.



Test fireplace in Wardenclyffe Hearth Lab.



2013 Pete Luter Innovation Award for Paint 'N' Peel. In 2009, the award went to HeatShield.

The Margin of Victory

SaverSystems is proud of their contribution to the livelihoods of chimney maintenance professionals. "It is personally rewarding to me to talk with these guys when they tell me, 'I floated my business on this,'" John beamed. "Not that our products are 100% of their business. It may be 15% to 40%. It gives them an edge. Our mission is to be a blessing to the chimney professional."



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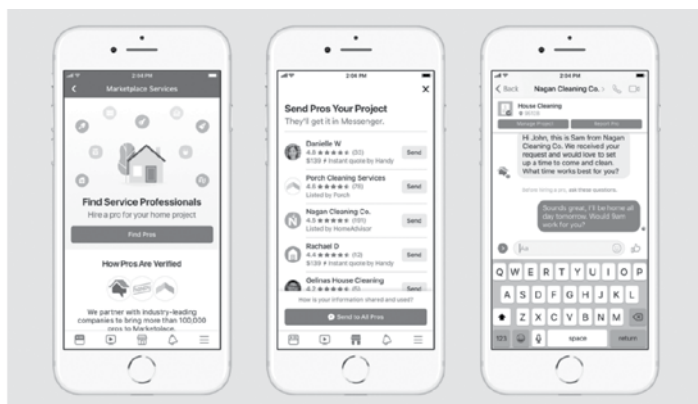
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Facebook Marketplace Links with HomeAdvisor



Facebook has announced a partnership with online home services brokers HomeAdvisor, Handy and Porch to provide listings of service professionals on its Facebook Marketplace. The service is initially available only in the United States.

“By working with industry leaders Handy, HomeAdvisor and Porch, Marketplace will offer hundreds of thousands of top-rated professionals across the US,” said Deb Liu, Vice President of Facebook Marketplace. To get a quote, “simply describe the project you need help with and send your request to multiple professionals at once,” she said. “Easily communicate in real-time with your service professional via Messenger,” she added.

“More people ask for recommendations related to home services on Facebook in the US than any other topic,” Liu said. “Since the beginning of the year, millions of people have asked their friends for suggestions related to home services, such as house cleaners, plumbers and contractors.”

“Facebook Marketplace seamlessly bridges the gap between search and social,” said Chris Terrill, CEO of ANGI Homeservices. ANGI Homeservices is the parent company of HomeAdvisor, Angie’s List and home services connection businesses in Canada, the United Kingdom, Italy, France and Germany. “Facebook Marketplace helps businesses reach consumers on a platform they are already turning to for everyday needs, making it easier than ever for service professionals in our network to reach new customers and for consumers to seamlessly hire one of our trusted service professionals for hundreds of tasks, from plumbing and cleaning to home renovations,” he said.

Two Percent Heat with Wood

Approximately two percent of U.S. households primarily heat with firewood or wood pellets according to estimates by the U.S. Census Bureau. Utility-supplied gas provides the BTUs for 50% of U.S. households. Electricity generates the heat for 38%. Five percent of U.S. households burn oil.

Heating with firewood and wood pellets nationwide has declined slightly since a recent peak in 2014, according to the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey. In 2016, an estimated 2.42 million households heated primarily with firewood or wood pellets, down from a recent peak in 2014 of 2.46 million.

Firewood is a significant home heating fuel in some counties. In Apache County in northeast Arizona, 60% of households heat with firewood, according to the Census Bureau. More than 17% of households heat with wood in St. Lawrence County in northern New York. In Klamath (home of *The Chimney Sweep News*) and Josephine counties in southern Oregon, approximately 18% of households heat with firewood.

Historically, in 1940, nearly a quarter of households nationwide heated with firewood and it was the dominant fuel in the Pacific Northwest and South. By 1970, only 1.3 percent of households nationwide heated with wood. The energy price shock of the mid-1970s and a cultural trend toward self-reliance led to 3.9 percent of households heating with wood in 1990.





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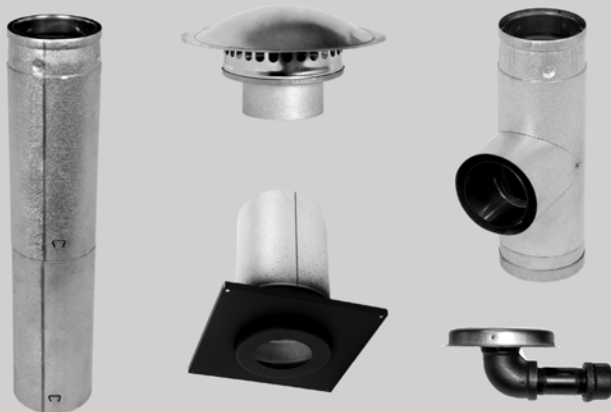
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Sweep Away Cancer

By Chuck Roydhouse

*Clean Sweep of Anne Arundel County Chimney Repair & Maintenance, Millersville, MD
Treasurer of the Sweep Away Cancer foundation*

What is Sweep Away Cancer?

Chuck Roydhouse: Sweep Away Cancer is a 501-3C tax-exempt charity established to assist chimney sweeps and their families when this tragic disease strikes. The monies raised help each person based on what they might need, for example, prescription help, transportation reimbursement, mortgage/rent payment, groceries, and medical testing costs.

If someone needs assistance, how can they apply?

Chuck Roydhouse: Anyone in the sweeping industry can apply by going to www.sweepawaycancer.com and selecting "contact us." An "apply for aid" icon will appear. Just click it and you are on your way.

How much money have you raised?

Chuck Roydhouse: Since 2015, we have raised \$40,000. Nearly 100% of the proceeds go to our sweeps in need due to the gracious underwriting of storage, logistics, and shipping assembly by Darin Bibeau, President of National Chimney. Our only expenses are for a CPA/Professional, which is a federal requirement to be an established charity.

Who are the people behind Sweep Away Cancer?

Chuck Roydhouse: Tommy Nelms, Mark Stoner, and Darin Bibeau started Sweep Away Cancer in September 2015. Tommy Nelms (Sweeps and Ladders, Nashville, TN) is the President; Darin Bibeau (National Chimney) is our Vice President. Tommy Venafo (National Chimney) is the Secretary. I am the Treasurer. The other directors are Mark Stoner (Ashbusters Chimney Service, Smyrna, TN),



Tommy Nelms

Hope Stevenson (Dave Pomeroy Signature Training), Chuck Hall (Winston's Chimney Service, Fairfax, VA) and Megan McMahon (NCSG/CSIA).

How can I contribute?

Chuck Roydhouse: To contribute, you may go to our website www.sweepawaycancer.com. You can donate by clicking on shop for a cure and donate any amount or purchase tee shirts or koozies.

Another way to participate is by attending our annual Sweep Away Can-



Chuck Roydhouse

cer Road Rally. Bring your motorcycles, sports cars, or anything you want to drive! This past June, we held our inaugural rally, in honor of Jim Robinson, at the world-famous Tail of The Dragon Deals Gap in North Carolina.

Every October is Sweep Away Cancer month. Please have all of your employees wear our t-shirts to show solidarity and support for our colleagues dealing with this terrible disease.

Our sincerest thanks to all who have helped us help our sweeps in need.



Attendees at the Northeast Association of Chimney and Hearth Professionals Sweepfest show off their new Sweep Away Cancer long sleeve shirts.

Photo by John Ceaser



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The Right Fit Makes the Difference

Ten Steps to Better Hiring

By Kate Zabriskie

I don't understand what happened. He interviewed so well. But it's six months later, and it's obvious. He's not a good fit.

We should have known better. She's just not detail oriented, and this job requires a lot of repetitive work. She is a creative person, she's bored, and she's leaving. I wish we had somewhere we could use her talents, but we don't.

Why do we have such a hard time getting on the same page? We rarely agree on whom to hire when we have a new position, and from day one it seems as if only half of us are invested in a new hire's success. It's just sad. We could do better. We need to do better.

When bad hiring happens, everyone suffers.

Finding the right person for a position is part art and part science. While some people certainly have a gift for finding good people, everyone can improve their success rate by following a methodical step-by-step process.

Step One: Know What You Want.

First and foremost, it is important to envision what work will look like with a new person. What will he or she do? How do you envision interactions looking and sounding? What do you expect in terms of quality and quantity of work? What temperament do you envision working best? Does the person need to be creative? Is the work the same each

day? If this person is going to interact with people other than you, who are they, and what do they want from a new hire? Knowing what you want is essential.

Step Two: Create a Robust Job Description.

Once you are clear about the kind of person you want to hire, it is time to put pen to paper and create a job description. When you list the duties the person will perform, if you begin each of your sentences with a verb and write in everyday English, you will be well on your way to solidifying your expectations.

Step Three: Think About What It Is Going to Take for Someone to Be Successful.

Experience and education are essential to success in some jobs, and for others, they are not. If education is not a deal breaker, do you want to exclude candidates by making a degree mandatory? What you require can widen or narrow your applicant pool — potentially in ways that could hurt your chances of finding the right person. Think long and hard about what is essential before moving to the next step.

Step Four: Create a Strong Job Ad.

Just as candidates are selling them-



Kate Zabriskie

selves, you are selling your company and the position you are filling. An ad is your opportunity to attract talent. Spend time creating a strong job title, telling your organization's story, and briefly describing your essential requirements, whether you are working with a recruiter or doing the recruiting yourself. If you have a great location, solid benefits, or some other selling point, include that information, too.

Your ad should quickly paint a robust picture of why you are great, what you are looking for, and why they should want to work with you.

Step Five: Promote Your Position.

The type of job you want to fill should dictate where you would promote it. Many options exist. Regardless of which you choose, it is important to have a plan and to understand how each promotional avenue works.

Step Six: Craft Your Screening Questions.

In tandem with creating your ad and promoting your position, you will need to develop your questions for screening candidates and interviewing those with whom you eventually choose to meet. This step is essential for several reasons. First, it helps you follow a repeatable process. Second, it helps those who interview to ask relevant and legal questions. Finally, it ensures you are fair and can gather answers you can compare with relative ease.

Step Seven: Evaluate Candidates And Set a Phone Screening Schedule.

Once your job offer closes, it is time to review the qualifications of those who met your position's criteria and set a screening schedule. Depending on the number of responses you get, you may choose to screen everyone or rank candidates and screen the top group. Either way, you will want to talk to applicants before you bring them in to meet in person.

Phone interviews offer several benefits. They allow you to get an initial impression of a candidate without having people's physical appearance influence your thinking. They are also an efficient way to address some basic questions.

Step Eight: Determine Whom You Will Invite to Interview in Person, and Prepare Your Interviewing Team.

After you have concluded your screening process, it is time to prepare your interviewing team and invite candidates into the office. Getting ready is essential. Both you and the prospective employees are auditioning. Your interviewing team needs to be just that, a team. You should discuss the welcoming process, the interviewing order, the questions each person will ask, and how you will close your meetings with candidates and send them on their way. Leave little up to chance. You are on stage. Depending on the position you are filling, you may decide to conduct more than one round of interviews. Regardless of what you choose, you must have a plan.

Step Nine: Gather Feedback and Rank the Candidates.

When you have finished interviewing people, it is time to rank them. Because you have asked each person the same questions, this should be easier than it could be if you had not.

If you find your team disagrees, think before you make an offer. If none of the candidates is exactly right, again, think

before you make an offer. The wrong person now is rarely as good as the right person a little later.

Step Ten: Make Your Offer.

Assuming there are no obvious roadblocks, it is time to make an offer. Be excited when you do, and recognize this is only the first step in effectively integrating an employee into the fabric of your organization.

So there you have it. Ten steps can make all the difference. Great hiring is about good discipline and patience. The better you are at establishing and following a strong inclusive process, the stronger your results will be. Now go find that candidate!

Kate Zabriskie is the president of Business Training Works, Inc., a Maryland-based talent development firm. She and her team help businesses establish customer service strategies and train their people to live up to what is promised. For more information, visit www.businesstrainingworks.com.





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Protect Yourself and Your Family From Carbon Monoxide

Each year in the United States, carbon monoxide poisoning claims approximately 150 lives and sends thousands of people to hospital emergency rooms for treatment.

There are simple steps you can take to protect yourself from deadly carbon monoxide fumes.

Understanding the Risk

What is carbon monoxide?

- Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless and toxic gas. Because it is impossible to see, taste or smell the toxic fumes, CO can kill you before you are aware it is in your home. At lower levels of exposure, CO causes mild effects that are often mistaken for the flu. These symptoms include headaches, dizziness, disorientation, nausea and fatigue. The effects of CO exposure can vary greatly from person to person depending on age, overall health and the concentration and length of exposure.

Where does carbon monoxide come from?

- CO gas can come from several sources: gas-fired appliances, charcoal grills, wood-burning furnaces or fireplaces and motor vehicles.

Who is at risk?

- Everyone is at risk for CO poisoning. Medical experts believe that unborn babies, infants, children, senior citizens and people with heart or lung problems are at even greater risk for CO poisoning.

What Actions Do I Take If My Carbon Monoxide Alarm Goes Off?

What you need to do if your carbon monoxide alarm goes off depends on whether anyone is feeling ill or not.

If no one is feeling ill:

1. Silence the alarm.
2. Turn off all appliances and sources of combustion (i.e. furnace and fireplace).
3. Ventilate the house with fresh air by opening doors and windows.
4. Call a qualified professional to investigate the source of the possible CO buildup.

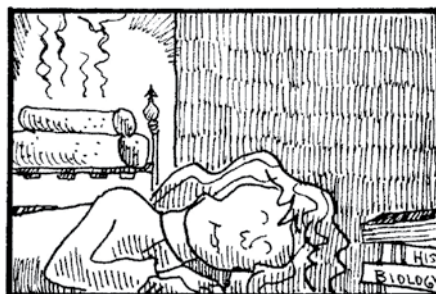


Illustration by Kyle McQueen

If illness is a factor:

1. Evacuate all occupants immediately.
2. Determine how many occupants are ill and determine their symptoms.
3. Call your local emergency number and when relaying information to the dispatcher, include the number of people feeling ill.
4. Do not re-enter the home without the approval of a fire department representative.
5. Call a qualified professional to repair the source of the CO.

Protect Yourself and Your Family from CO Poisoning

- Install at least one UL (Underwriters Laboratories) listed carbon monoxide alarm with an audible warning signal near the sleeping areas and outside individual bedrooms. Carbon monoxide alarms measure levels of CO over time and are designed to sound an alarm before an average, healthy adult would experience symptoms. You may not

be experiencing symptoms when you hear the alarm. This does not mean that CO is not present.

- Have a qualified professional check all fuel burning appliances, furnaces, venting and chimney systems at least once a year.
- Never use your range or oven to help heat your home and never use a charcoal grill or hibachi in your home or garage.
- Never use a generator indoors – including garages, basements, crawlspaces and sheds – even with ventilation. Exhaust fumes contain extremely high levels of CO, which can rapidly become deadly if inhaled. Consumers should use a portable generator outdoors only, in a dry area away from doors, windows and vents that can allow CO to come indoors. Wait for the rain to pass before using a generator, as consumer-grade generators are not weatherproof and can pose the risk of electrocution and shock when used in wet conditions.
- Never keep a car running in a garage. Even if the garage doors are open, normal circulation may not provide enough fresh air to prevent a dangerous buildup of CO inside the dwelling.
- When purchasing an existing home, have a qualified technician evaluate the integrity of the heating and cooking systems, as well as the sealed spaces between the garage and house. The presence of a carbon monoxide alarm in your home can save your life in the event of CO buildup.

Information courtesy of U.S. Fire Administration and U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

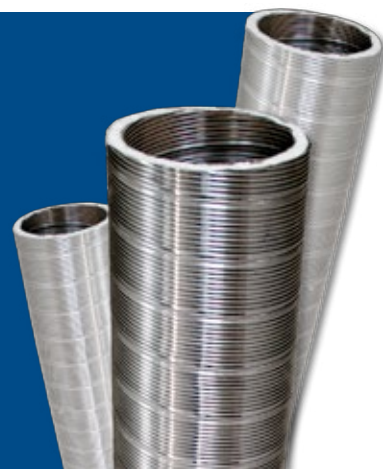


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Jim Brewer: Developing Your Company Safety Plan

By Jim Gillam

“Let’s develop a culture of safety for our companies and our employees,” implores Jim Brewer (Magic Sweep Corporation, Chesapeake, VA).

Jim presented seminars on developing a company safety program at the HeatShield Summit in January and the National Chimney Sweep Guild convention in April.

“Safe work cultures start from simple common beliefs that are supported by all employees in an organization,” states the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). To clarify the company’s safety goals and share them with employees it is helpful to write them down.

Effective management of worker safety and health programs reduces the extent and severity of work related injuries and illnesses, improves employee morale and productivity, and reduces workers’ compensation costs, according to OSHA.

U.S. OSHA requires companies to maintain a written safety plan for certain specific activities, such as respiratory protection for workplaces where employees are required to wear respirators. Additionally, companies with more than ten employees are required to maintain a written safety plan. The 27 states with their own occupational safety agencies have similar requirements.

A written safety plan should contain the following elements, OSHA recommends:

- Goals statement

- List of responsible persons
- Hazard identification
- Hazard controls and safe practices
- Emergency and accident response
- Employee training and communication
- Recordkeeping

“I talk a lot about OSHA requirements because that is how you will be judged should an accident occur,” Jim explained. “The ultimate goal, however, is accident prevention.”

Job Hazard Analysis

The first step to working safely is to identify the hazards of the job. Some of the hazards typically encountered in the chimney sweep trade include the potential for falling from heights; inhalation of particulates such as soot and silica; skin exposure to creosote and toxic chemicals; injuries from moving heavy or awkward loads; injuries from power tools; repetitive motion injuries; and motor vehicle accidents.

To identify of the hazards of a specific job, “Involve your employees and examine work processes and the work-site,” Jim recommended. “Create a prioritized list.” Then, strive to eliminate or minimize hazards by developing guidelines and training employees.

Training and Recordkeeping

“OSHA is big on training and training records,” Jim observed. “You can have a policy on your shelf, but if you



Jim Brewer wearing a Petzl climbing helmet.

don’t back it up with training records they are not even going to look at it,” he said. Keep records of safety meetings and all training provided. “If it isn’t written, it didn’t happen,” Jim said.

Disciplinary actions against employees for violation of company safety policies should be included. “OSHA wants to see records of enforcement,” he noted.

Head Gear

Jim strongly recommends wearing a climbing helmet whenever working above the ground. “Half of serious or fatal injuries involve head trauma,” he said. “I have been a paramedic for a long time. I have seen a lot of fall injuries. If you hit your head, all bets are off,” he warned.

Climbing helmets must be worn with a chinstrap to hold it on in case of

a fall. “My recommendation is a ventilated white helmet with a chinstrap,” Jim said. “White absorbs less heat and the vents helps keep you cool.” Attachable sunshades are available for climbing helmets.

Jim wears and supplies his workers with a Petzl climbing helmet that costs approximately \$100-\$150. He recommends choosing a model that conforms to ANSI standard Z 89.1 so that the helmet may also serve as a hard hat on a commercial jobsite.

“I would like to see everyone wearing them,” he emphasized.

Respirators

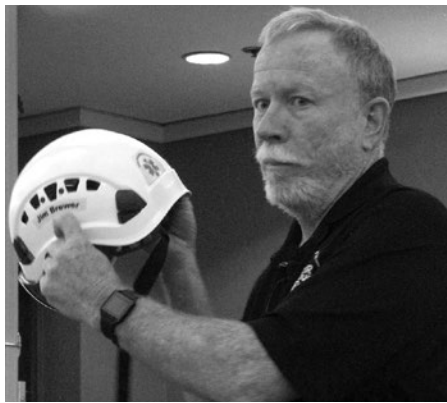
OSHA’s respirator standard requires employers to establish and maintain an effective respiratory protection program when employees must wear respirators to protect against workplace hazards. Different hazards require different respirators, and employees are responsible for wearing the appropriate respirator and complying with the respiratory protection program.

The standard contains requirements for program administration, worksite-specific procedures, respirator selection, employee training, fit testing, medical evaluation, and respirator use, cleaning, maintenance, and repair.

Any respirator program should stress thorough training of all respirator users. Employees must be aware that a respirator does not eliminate the hazard. If the respirator fails, the user will be overexposed to dangerous substances.

To reduce the possibility of failure, the respirator must fit properly and be maintained in a clean and serviceable condition.

Employers and employees must understand the respirator’s purpose and limitations. Users must not alter or remove the respirator even for a short



Jim Brewer

time, even if it is uncomfortable.

An effective respirator program must cover the following factors:

- Written worksite specific procedures
- Program evaluation
- Selection of an appropriate respirator approved by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)
- Training
- Fit testing
- Inspection, cleaning, maintenance, and storage
- Medical evaluations
- Work area surveillance
- Air quality standards.

Whenever OSHA standards or employers require respirator use, there must be a complete respiratory protection program. Employers must have written operating procedures to ensure that employees use the respirators safely and properly. Users must be familiar with these procedures and with the respirators available and their limitations.

[Material in the above section courtesy of U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration]

In response to a question about fit testing with beards, Jim said, “We use 3M respirators, and some of my guys have fit tested successfully with beards. 3M has a soft silicone seal. The respirator program says you have to offer alternatives, so North Safety is our second

choice,” he added.

When Jim hires a new employee, “I tell them that they have to pass a fit test, and if they pass it with a beard, that is OK.

“This is the first time I have appeared in public with a beard,” Jim laughed. “I was afraid someone was going to ask me about it.”

Silica

Found in sand or quartz, silica is a principal component of glass and masonry products such as concrete, mortar and stucco. Exposure to respirable crystalline silica can cause silicosis, lung cancer, other respiratory diseases, and kidney disease. Exposure can occur during common chimney construction/repair tasks such as using masonry saws, grinders, drills and chipping tools.

OSHA’s respirable silica standard requires employers to limit worker exposures to respirable crystalline silica and to take other steps to protect workers.

OSHA offers two choices for compliance in many workplace situations. A company may implement an OSHA specified procedure for dust control or conduct testing to prove that control measures are not necessary.

“It includes wet sawing and dust collection,” Jim noted. “Dust collection sounds easy until you start to implement it.”

Employers are required under the rule to limit access to high exposure areas, provide training, provide respiratory protection when controls are not enough to limit exposure, provide written exposure control plans, and measure exposures in some cases. Employers are also required to offer medical examinations to highly exposed workers. *[See the Nov-Dec 2017 issue for more on OSHA’s silica standard.]*

Hazard Communication

Employers with hazardous chemicals in the workplace must have a hazard communication program, according to OSHA regulations. This includes maintaining an inventory of hazardous chemicals and labeling all containers. A library of their Safety Data Sheets (SDS) must be accessible to all employees. “Train employees in recognizing chemical hazards and reading the SDS,” Jim advised.

SDS are required for some products that may not be thought to be especially toxic or hazardous including silicone sealants and mortar. “Each different brand of mortar has its own SDS,” Jim noted.

After a fatal accident in Jim’s company [see *The Chimney News*, May-June 2016], OSHA investigators questioned employees about the company’s SDS. “Our SDS are in the cloud, available on our guys’ tablets,” Jim explained. “They asked one employee where his SDS were, and he said, ‘On my tablet.’ The OSHA investigator said, ‘Show me.’ He did, so we were good,” said Jim, recalling his sigh of relief.

Employers must provide any necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) and train employees in proper usage.

Safety Bag

“This is just something I made up,” Jim shrugged. “It is a cheap backpack with all of an employee’s PPE stuff in it. We issue it on day one. You sign your tax forms and you get a safety bag.

“It’s has your respirator, eye protection, climbing helmet, gloves and hearing protection,” he enumerated. “Our guys get a safety vest because we do some commercial work and commercial sites require you to put on a safety vest,” he added.

Driving

Motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of workplace fatalities. “Think of your responsibility,” Jim cautioned. “You have primarily young guys driving big work trucks — are you providing any special training for that?”

Jim brought a trainer from AAA to present a driving safety course in his shop.

“Things to consider include seat belt use, securing materials — when I wake up at night and start worrying about stuff, ladders flying off trucks is one of the things I worry about,” he interjected.

“Aggressive driving, fatigued driving — during the busy season, what are we asking these guys to do?” Jim asked.



Frank Ayres (Ayres Ashes Away, Chiloquin, OR) testing the fit and seal of his respirator.

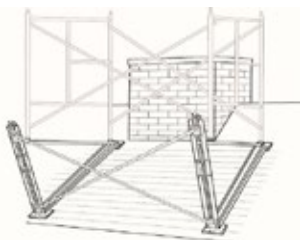
Photo courtesy of Frank Ayres

“Cell phones and distracted driving, calling clients — are your company policies encouraging this? Think about your company’s policies and how they relate,” Jim advised. For example, he suggested, “I would not want to have something in my company manual that says, ‘When you are driving to the next job, call your client.’ Because when he has an accident doing that, what is your position?”

Fall Protection

“If you are over six feet above the ground or above a lower surface, you must have a personal fall arrest system, guard rails or safety nets,” Jim noted. “Fall protection is highly relevant for our industry.”

continued on page 22



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Rope and harness systems can allow better access for work positioning as well as provide fall protection. "With rope access techniques you can work safely on a 20/12 pitched roof," Jim stated.

He touted the CSIA Rope Access training course as a great way to learn these techniques.

The recently introduced RidgePro device is a "game changer," Jim said. However, it does not meet fall protection requirements unless affixed with a secure anchor.

In Jim's opinion, OSHA's "current rules have a commercial/industrial slant. They are kind of inflexible. It is something I have been talking to OSHA about for ten years." The NCSG task force has proposed that OSHA create a distinction between longer and shorter duration jobs.

Ladders

"Secure your ladders!" Jim exclaimed. "That is the most important thing you can do." Falls from portable

ladders (step, straight, combination and extension) are one of the leading causes of occupational fatalities and injuries. OSHA states, "The employer shall provide a training program for each employee using ladders and stairways, as necessary. The program shall enable each employee to recognize hazards related to ladders and stairways, and shall train each employee in the procedures to be followed to minimize these hazards."

Scaffolding

According to OSHA requirements, "All employees who work on a scaffold must be trained by a person qualified to recognize the hazards associated with the type of scaffold used and to understand the procedures to control and minimize those hazards. A competent person must train all employees who erect, disassemble, move, operate, repair, maintain, or inspect scaffolds. Training must cover the nature of the hazards, the correct procedures for erecting, disassembling, moving, operating, repairing, inspecting, and maintaining the type of scaffold in use."

Confined Spaces

Some chimney maintenance jobs, particularly in commercial or industrial settings, may entail working in a confined space. "How do you get the worker out?" Jim wondered. "You must have a plan!" [See the March 2010 issue for more on Working in Confined Spaces.]

First Aid

An employer must ensure prompt first aid treatment for injured employees. Employers may either staff a trained first aid provider at the worksite, or ensure that emergency treatment services are within reasonable proximity (no more than a few minutes away) of the worksite.

An employer who intends to rely on assistance from outside emergency responders as an alternative to providing a first-aid-trained employee must make prior arrangements with the service provider to ascertain that emergency medical assistance will be promptly available when an injury occurs.

Accident Reporting

If an accident occurs that requires hospitalization or involves a fatality, employers must report it to OSHA within a specific time — eight hours for a fatality, 24 hours for a hospitalization, amputation or loss of an eye. Otherwise, OSHA does not require accidents treated in emergency rooms or clinics to be reported.

Urgency

Jim Brewer has long been involved in the safety field. "My first real job after MacDonald's was the fire department," he recalled. He started his chimney business "as a part-time thing in 1978 while working as a firefighter medic," he said. He has served on NCSG's OSHA task force for ten years. His company has had a well developed safety plan.

Yet, "things go wrong," he lamented. On April 6, 2016, things went wrong for Jim when his employee, Bill Rary, who was also a lieutenant in the Chesapeake, VA Fire Department, perished from head trauma after his ladder apparently kicked out at a one-story home [see *The Chimney Sweep News* – May/June 2016].

Having directly felt the anguish of a fatal accident in his company, Jim's urgent plea to all chimney professionals is, "Let's be safe out there!"



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Dear SNEWS

Weighed Down by Carbon Monoxide

I was just reading some old *SNEWS* magazines and reread Eric Nunez's article in the Nov/Dec 2017 issue. He mentions a carbon monoxide incident.

Have I ever told you about my CO incident?

I went to clean an oil furnace chimney. The lady took me down to the furnace in the basement where there was a bed, some furniture and a collection of weight training equipment. It was apparent that someone lived there and she confirmed that her son lived there. She said he was ill, not using the weights or working.

I cleaned the chimney, which was completely blocked with three feet of soot, bird nests, dead birds and chimney debris.

It was obvious to me that the fumes were not exiting this chimney and must have been coming back into the basement. Carbon monoxide, of course, is invisible as well as odorless. However, I would have thought that the soot smell would still be there.

Anyway, I asked what was wrong with her son, who it would seem must have been pretty healthy at one time based on the weights, etc.

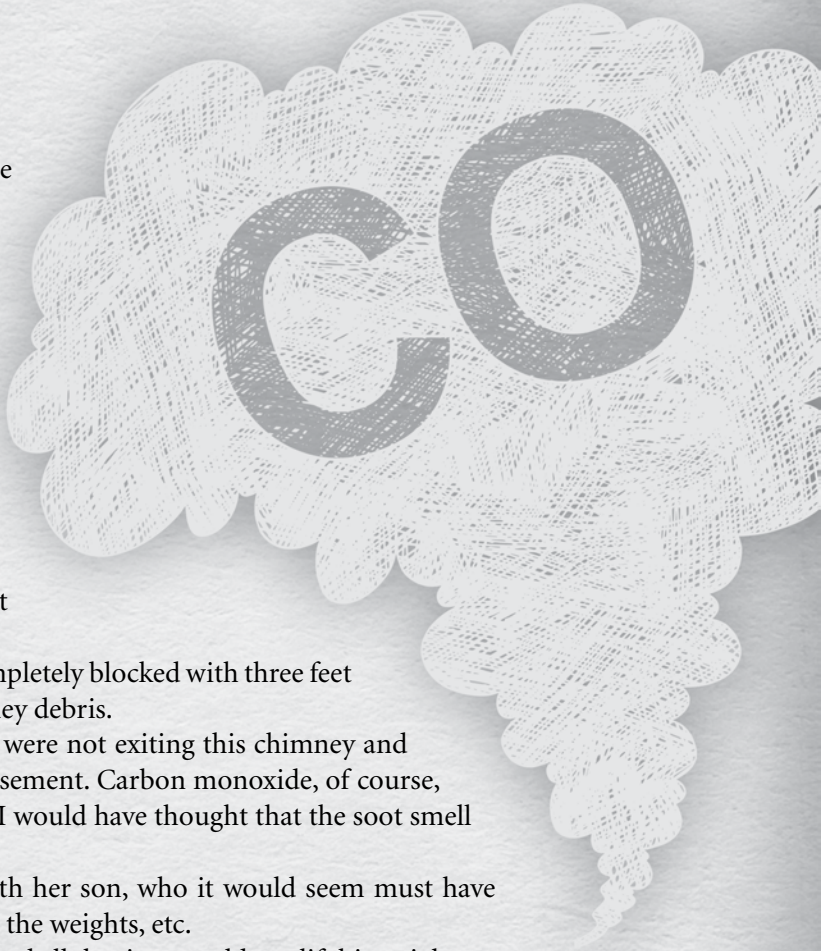
She said they did not know. He was tired all the time, could not lift his weights or even work, much less keep a job. Doctors had tested him and could not find the problem.

I told her to take him back to the doctor and get him tested for CO poisoning. A few weeks later, she called to thank me. She said I probably saved his life. He was back to work and lifting weights and as a bonus, they were feeling better themselves, too. I am sure some of the fumes must have found their way upstairs and affected them, too. But much less so as they both worked and were out of the house more, plus less of the carbon monoxide would have been upstairs. Her son down in "the thick of it" and working out would have been much more affected.

We as chimney sweeps can affect people's lives more than we may think. Not just saving lives and preventing house fires but even sickness. We can prevent sickness from mold by stopping water leaks and from bird and animals diseases and fleas by keeping animals out by putting on caps.

I hope that makes you feel better about what may at times seem like a thankless, boring ho-hum job. You really can make a difference.

—David Liddle
Pasadena, Maryland



If You Want Freedom, You Need Systems

*By Taylor Hill and Carter Harkins
Spark Marketer*

Being a business owner is not as glamorous as they make it look on TV. Most of us can't remember the last time we took a real vacation, but we know it did not include a yacht... yet. However, you can successfully run a business and have more of the freedom you dreamt of at the start if you take the time to establish systems and develop SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures).

Systems and SOPs can allow you to be a little more hands off in your business, without worrying about things crashing down or being done incorrectly. They allow you to delegate jobs and tasks, and give you the confidence that your team is fully capable and empowered to do the work exactly as you would have done it, without you actually having to do it.

Good systems that are understood and followed by everyone on the team can help prevent unhappy customers, costly mistakes, time and material waste, and damage to your brand's reputation. And with these systems in place, should something still fail or go wrong, you will know it was either a failure of the system or a failure to follow the system.

Sure, it takes time to get SOPs right, but the time and stress they save you in the long run are well worth it. Here are just two areas of your business that could benefit from systems:

Scheduling/Customer Service

Have you ever called a business and been "greeted" by an unfriendly, jarring voice and snarky tone? I have, and it made me feel like a burden and an inconvenience.

Is that the kind of message you want people to receive when they call looking for a company in which to invest their money and trust? Not if you want to be successful.

If you have grown to the point where you can afford to hire someone to take over scheduling and phone calls, we hope you have hired someone with a pleasant tone, a cheery disposition, and the ability to diffuse anger, as opposed to escalating problems and turning customers off. Still, developing SOPs for customer interactions and creating a script for how the phones should be answered can make your expectations clearer, make your employee's job easier, and ensure that your customers



Taylor Hill and Carter Harkins

receive the level of care and service you want them to receive, each time.

Field Services

Do you promise mess-free service? Have you provided your employees with the systems, procedures, and equipment they need to keep that promise? Do your employees know how important this promise is to you?

Your competitors can provide the same service to some degree – it is *how* you provide that service and the quality and consistency of the results that make you different. With systems and SOPs in place, your employees will be equipped to provide the level of service you promise, to your standards, every single time. As a result, your customers will trust, value, and remain loyal to you, keeping your company ahead of the rest.

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How to Develop SOPs

OK, so systems are helpful and can provide clarity to anyone needing to do the job, but how do you develop SOPs? Should you be the only one involved in the process?

Step One: The first step in establishing a system or an SOP is to make a list of each task within your business that you would like to systemize. Then, prioritize the tasks you would like to create SOPs for first. You may want to start with the tasks that frequently raise questions, tasks that you consider most important to your business and your way of doing things, or tasks that lead to a lot of waste if done wrong.

Step Two: Once you have picked the task or process you would like to start with, begin breaking down the different steps. As tedious as it may seem, be as detailed as possible. You want any new hire to be able to come in, read the SOP, and have an understanding of what to do and how to do it. It should be crystal clear and they should know exactly what to do and what not to do.

In just about every 80s movie, someone with no experience is talked through the process of disarming a bomb. Remember in *The Abyss* when the Navy Seal says to Virgil, "Cut the blue and white wire, not the brown and yellow wire," but because he is deep in the ocean with only a flash-

light, it is nearly impossible for him to tell which is which? You need to consider the environment in which these tasks will be performed when writing your SOPs so you can provide as much clarity and rule out as much error as possible.

Step Three: Look over the steps you have written out and decide which ones are absolutely required and which ones depend on personal preference or the situation. If all of the steps are 100% law, state that in the SOP. If some of the steps provide a little flexibility, state that.

You may even want to explain in the SOP why you do it that way and not another way. The more your employees understand, not just the process, but the *why* behind it, the better.

Should You Ask for Employee Input?

Yes! So many business owners do not bother discussing SOPs with employees or including their employees in the process of developing systems and SOPs, which is a huge mistake. Here are some of the major benefits of including your employees in the SOP development process:

Your employees bring fresh eyes and insight and may know a better way to do things. Even if you are still out in the field every day, your employees may have new ideas or new

ways of doing things that you haven't thought of. When you have done things one way for so long, it may be hard to see where things could be improved or how new technology or tools could actually make the job easier. And since your employees perform the tasks every day that you are writing SOPs for, they will likely be able to identify where the process could be better streamlined or improved.

Your employees help point out weaknesses or areas in need of clarification. When you are incredibly familiar with a task or process, it is easy to take your knowledge for granted, and miss where questions might arise or errors might occur. By including your employees in the process of developing SOPs, you will know if you missed something important or if a step or area of the process needs more clarification or explanation, because they will tell you!

Your employees may see ways that the process leads to waste. If a task has become almost automatic for you and you have not even considered doing it any other way in ages, you might not see where the process is wasteful. You might not see how you could save time, money, or materials by doing it differently, but those on your team might. Ask them where and how they think time and effort could be saved or where they see

potential waste in the current process.

Your employees will understand the WHY and be more invested. By involving your employees in the process of SOP and systems development, you communicate that their opinion is valuable and that you want to do things the best way, not just the way you have always done them. Valued employees who know their ideas are heard and who understand the why behind the systems and SOPs they are expected to follow are more likely to invest in the company, adhere to the SOPs, and stick around for the long haul.

Even if you do not yet have employees, take the time to develop SOPs so

that, as you grow, you have one less thing to worry about during the hiring process. You can be confident that your SOPs will provide new hires with the knowledge and guidelines they need to do the job right.

The less time you have to spend hiring, answering questions, training your team, and fixing problems that you could have prevented with better systems in place, the more time and freedom you have for yourself. And isn't that what we all want?

Taylor Hill and Carter Harkins are the co-founders of Spark Marketer, a Nashville-based digital marketing com-

pany that works primarily with service businesses. They are also the co-hosts of the Blue Collar Proud (BCP) Show, the podcast that is all about having and living the blue collar dream, and the co-authors of the book, Blue Collar Proud: 10 Principles for Building a Kickass Business You Love. Both regularly speak at service industry trade shows and conferences across the nation. @sparkmarketer, @bcpshow, @taylorkhill, @carterharkins, facebook.com/sparkmarketer, facebook.com/bcpshow/, facebook.com/groups/bluecollarproudnation/



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Golden State Guild Draws Full House in Reno

*By Michael Dempsey
Professional Chimney Sweep & Dryer Vent Service
Visalia, California*

The Golden State Chimney Sweep Guild had a full house at its 2018 convention and trade show, held in Reno, Nevada at Circus Circus and the Silver Legacy.

Stuart Karanovich with SaverSystems was our opening speaker. "Details are very important" when fixing leaking chimneys, Stuart said.

Bob Ferrari (White Glove Chimney & Duct, Redding, CA) had us guessing what "Squirrel" was ever since I put it on the agenda. His seminar about maintaining focus and self-control made a lot of sense. "Making a specific plan, follow-

ing a path, stills the monkey mind," Bob said. Good nutrition and good sleep are keys to maintaining focus.

Bob also presented a primer on rope access. [See the Nov-Dec 2017 issue.]

Eric Crankshaw (Advanced Chimney and Dryer Vent Cleaning, Murrieta, CA) did a seminar on Facebook and your business. This was the second seminar Eric has presented. He did an outstanding job teaching us how to advertise in the computerized world we live in.

Michael Boudart with Lindemann Chimney Company taught us how to increase our numbers by working three jobs a day instead of six. Spending quality time with each customer creates a higher bottom line.

Rich Vogeler (Right Way Chimney Service, Thousand Oaks, CA) and Michael Danskin (The Clean Sweep Chimney Cleaning and Repair, Knightsen, CA) updated us on ladder safety, respirators and eye protection.

James Keeton and Jeff Allred (A-One Chimney Service, Fresno, CA) & Daniel




Michael and Daniel Dempsey

Dempsey (Professional Chimney Sweep & Dryer Vent Service, Visalia, CA) presented an awesome gas Seminar.

I did a seminar on vintage sweeping. We had 39 sweeps at our roundtable from the youngest to the oldest. We learned a lot about what our older sweeps are dealing with and we learned a lot about our younger sweeps and the new knowledge they are bringing to the table.

We started the convention this year with a best ball golf game. On Sweeps Night, we played poker into the late evening with special visitors Bill & Chris Latimer and Joan & John Dykman. It was awesome to be able to see our retired sweep friends.

I brought 14 family members to Reno to go to the Reno Chicken Wing Festival. Our daughter, Brianna, celebrated her 20th birthday there. Brianna has attended every Golden State convention since she was born. She was three days old at her first one. 

An advertisement for the Wöhler VIS 700 HD Chimney Inspection Camera. The background is dark blue with a subtle pattern. At the top, the word "WÖHLER" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font. Below it, a red rectangular box contains the word "NEW" in white, bold, sans-serif font. Underneath that, "WOHLER VIS 700" is written in large, white, bold, sans-serif font, followed by "HD CHIMNEY INSPECTION CAMERA" in a smaller, white, bold, sans-serif font. In the center, there is a photograph of the camera itself, which is a rugged, blue and black device with a screen showing a live feed of a chimney interior. A cable with a connector is attached to the side. At the bottom, the text "HIGH DEFINITION IMAGES FOR RELIABLE RESULTS" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font, and below that, the website "www.wohlerusa.com" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

South Side Liner

By Erik Nuñez
Lindemann Chimney Co.
Lake Bluff, Illinois

We installed a liner in a 100-year old unlined flue for an old coal boiler on the South Side of Chicago.



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Upcoming Events

Information subject to change. Please confirm dates and locations of any events!

Sept 17-22: CSIA National Chimney Sweep Training School, Plainfield, IN. CSIA Tech Center, 2155 Commercial Dr, 46168. Six-day course includes classroom and field instruction. Contact CSIA at www.csia.org or call 317-837-5362 for more info.

Oct 10-11: CSIA Certified Dryer Exhaust Technician Review & Exam, Plainfield, IN. CSIA Tech Center, 2155 Commercial Dr, 46168. Call CSIA at 317-837-5362 or visit www.csia.org for more info.

Oct 12: CSIA Certified Chimney Sweep Review & Exams, Plainfield, IN. CSIA Tech Center, 2155 Commercial Dr, 46168. Call CSIA at 317-837-5362 or visit www.csia.org for more info.

Oct 16-17: Grandy & Associates Planning for Profit workshop, Denver, CO. \$2650 per company, up to 3 people. Call 877-202-8891 or visit www.grandyassociates.com for more info.

Oct 19: CSIA Certified Chimney Sweep Review & Exams, Latham (Albany), NY. The

Century House, 997 New Loudon Rd. (Rt. 9), 12110. 804-222-3338. Call CSIA at 317-837-5362 or visit www.csia.org for more info.

Oct 23-24: Grandy & Associates Planning for Profit workshop, Salt Lake City, UT. \$2650 per company, up to 3 people. Call 877-202-8891 or visit www.grandyassociates.com for more info.

Oct 25-26: Grandy & Associates Planning for Profit workshop, Phoenix, AZ. \$2650 per company, up to 3 people. Call 877-202-8891 or visit www.grandyassociates.com for more info.

2019

Feb 14-16: Certified Chimney Professionals Expo, King of Prussia, PA. For more info, contact Marshall Peters at contact@certifiedchimneyprofessionals.com.

March 13-15: Hearth, Patio and Barbecue Expo, Dallas, TX. Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center. For more info, visit www.hpbexpo.com.

April 17-20: National Chimney Sweep Guild convention, Norfolk, VA. Waterside Marriott, 235 E Main St, 23510. 757-627-4200. Visit www.ncsgconvention.org for more info.

Unclassified Ads

The Chimney Sweep News is seeking a new owner. Contact ChimneySweepNews@aol.com.

Chim-Scan® remote vision equipment has been providing interior chimney and ductwork images since 1984. Three different color camera types are available plus a hook up to laptop computers for all units built since 1995. Check out our new website at www.chimscan.net. Call our helpful and friendly staff at the Estoban Corporation at 641-472-7643 or e-mail us at info@chimscan.net for more information.

FOR SALE: Successful, thriving 39-year old chimney sweep/contractor/hearth products company with an extensive, loyal customer base and lots of growth potential looking for a new owner. Serving small towns in beautiful, rural Northern California. Contact william@askalpine.com

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Dave Laverdiere - Owner of Boston Brick & Stone - Pasadena California

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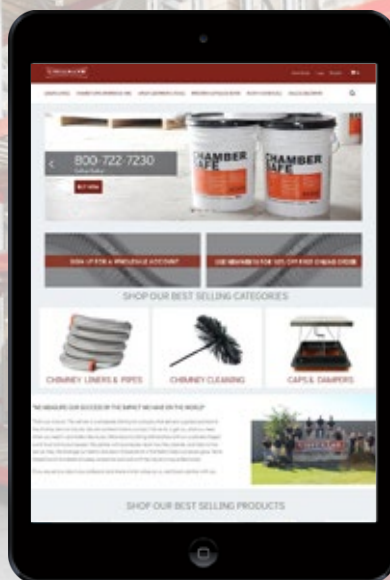


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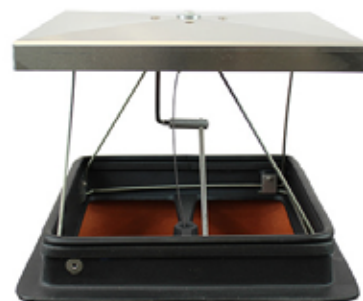
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