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## Mail Room - We'd love to hear from You!



## Congratulations to our 2019 Scholarship Recipients

By Larry Lesieur, Chairman of the NETSA Scholarship Committee Chair

If you are looking for some good news during these tough times, here it is. This year, despite the recent pandemic, NETSA was still able to **award twenty scholarships** to deserving students from the New England area! While 2020 has been tough on all of us, these scholarships are sure to be the bright spot in an otherwise difficult year in the tire and automotive business. I won't list the recipients names here since they are all presented inside this issue of the NETSA Road Runner, but I would be remiss if I didn't thank the people who made giving out the twenty \$2,000 scholarships possible. Firstly, a big thanks to our scholarship sponsors who stuck by their commitments made to this program. Max Finkelstein, Mohawk Rubber Sales, Pete's Tire Barn, and Sullivan Tire have graciously sponsored two scholarships each. American Tire Distributors, Connecticut Tire Dealers, Cooper Tire, Maynard and Lesieur, Melvin's Tire Pros, Modern Tire of West Hartford, Nokian Tyres, Reliable Tire, Tire Tutor, Tom Lyons Tire, Town Fair Tire, and Wilder Brothers also stepped up and donated scholarships this year.

Thank you to all these companies and please support them as members if you could to show your appreciation for their efforts. Without them, there would be no scholarships. Secondly, thanks to all the people who traditionally support the scholarships by donating items to the NETSA Trade Show Dinner and NETSA Scholarship Golf Tournament auctions, as well as those who attend both events and bid on the items. While we were not able to hold either event this year, we hope to double our efforts next year to make up for some of the lost income we traditionally receive from these events for the scholarship fund.

Thirdly, thanks to NETSA Executive Director Tony DeSimone for guiding us through the scholarship process in 2020 and coordinating the efforts to award all the scholarships during this difficult year. Lastly, but certainly not least, we thank those who applied for our NETSA scholarships. We normally get around

*Continued on pg. 2*





A funny thing happened on the way to writing this article for the Roadrunner. I realized that I have become the leader of an organization mired in the old days, doing things like we always have done since our founding on May 23, 1952. Think about everything that we have had to change in 2020.

Our Annual Meeting and Trade Show had to be postponed until...

hopefully...2021 due to the pandemic. This resulted in the loss of hundreds of opportunities for our members to make valuable industry connections on a face-to-face basis. Vendors lost the chance to greet customers who attend our show, that they ordinarily only speak to on the telephone. No chance to renew old friendships or make new ones. Certainly, a disappointment.

We missed out on the opportunity to honor those important people selected to be inducted into the NETSA Hall of Fame. I'm praying that we can do so, at the 2021 Hall of Fame Dinner. Speaking of the Hall of Fame...no dinner, meant no scholarship auction. This eliminated the chance to raise the money NETSA uses to dollar-for-dollar match sponsor-pledge scholarships. Certainly, a disappointment.

Another big change in 2020...NETSA could no longer hold in-person Board of Directors' meetings, due to the pandemic. Those meetings are now held virtually via Zoom. We all enjoy not having to drive to the hotel we traditionally met at, but somehow it is less satisfying to be sitting at the kitchen table staring at an iPhone or laptop and trying to share the future direction of our "Greatest in the Nation" Trade Association. Certainly, a disappointment.

The next big change in 2020? After much debate, the long-anticipated Scholarship Golf Outing was shut down when shortly before the scheduled date, the governor slashed the allowable number of participants at an outdoor event by 50%. That left the Golf Committee with no choice but to cancel. Certainly, a disappointment.

It is apparent that NETSA, like TIA, like SEMA, like AAPEX and so many other trade organizations and large corporations such as Goodyear and Nokian, will need to start planning for virtual Trade Shows, Seminars, and membership "Gatherings", in order to maintain our Regional Trade Association leadership into the future.

But wait! In the midst of all of this disappointment, cancellations, quarantines and being unable to have in-person events, I was presented with an astonishing event. As I stated, we have been unable to hold in-person events, either by our own decisions or at the hand of outside forces. The director's largest concern, above all others was how to maintain the dollar-for-dollar match for up to 20 sponsor-pledged awards. In 2020 and beyond, kids of hardworking tire and service families are counting on these scholarships. Our concern was how to do this without depleting the treasury.

What happened next really was an unexpected and certainly an emotional surprise. Some of your directors...I shall not name any names...rose to the challenge and pledged enough contributions to equal half the amount of money that was NOT raised at the cancelled Trade Show and Scholarship Golf Outing. Certainly NOT a disappointment!

This selfless act of generosity underscores our statement that NETSA is the best Regional Trade Association in the nation.

*Blaise*



*The Roadrunner is a publication of New England Tire & Service Association. The Road Runner is published 4 times a year as a source of information for NETSA Members and supporters. NETSA directors, staff and members do not*

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## Congratulations to our 2019 Scholarship Recipients

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*forty applications each year from all over New England and I can tell you that picking winners is not easy. They all merit consideration and I really wish we could give a scholarship to all the applicants. It is amazing to see what these (mostly) young people are doing in school and in their lives. They are our future and we are pleased to be helping to support them in their efforts to make a good life for themselves and their families. The emphasis of the NETSA scholarships has always been on highlighting the recipients in the Road Runner every year.*

*Please take the time to read what these amazing people are doing with their lives and celebrate their accomplishments. They are a very deserving group of individuals and worthy of being the 2020 NETSA Scholarship winners.*

***Congratulations to this year's recipients and to all those people who made awarding these scholarships possible this year! Thanks again. Larry.***

## News In Brief

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE September 16, 2020** – Dill's VentDILLator Submitted to FDA for Review The Dill team is excited to announce that Dill's new VentDILLator has been sent to the FDA for review! The VentDILLator is Dill's new ventilator system designed for medical use. Dill utilized its expertise in fluid control to create a prototype of the unit. The VentDILLator has been thoughtfully and diligently designed in the USA by Dill's product Engineers in their Oxford, North Carolina headquarters. If approved, the Dill VentDILLator could be used for emergency medical use.

**Nokian Tyres** has announced the sale of its Vianor US business to Oregon-based, Point S member Gills Point S Tire. The transaction covers all ten Vianor service centers here in New England. All current Vianor service center employees will become part of the Gills Point S Tire & Auto Service.

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In a global marketplace, tire business success even at the retail level depends on your ability to bridge cultural differences. If you are not fluent in the native tongue of the country where you are transacting tire business, then language is an obvious communication barrier, but misunderstanding the culture can also lead to lost tire business opportunities. To bridge cultural differences,

you have to acknowledge that there are variations in global work styles and tire business behaviors. Then you can work to understand and navigate those differences. Whether you are growing your tire business internationally by sending employees abroad or increasing the diversity of your workforce at home, your ability to adapt to global work styles and tire business behaviors of other cultures affects your bottom line. Recently, RW3, a global training organization conducted a study of 1,362 business professionals at organizations with a presence in multiple countries. They found that companies which fostered intercultural savvy were more likely to achieve their business goals.

Andy Molinsky, the author of *Global Dexterity*, provides a helpful framework to consider when approaching people from cultures different from your own. Think about the directness of communication style, enthusiasm, formality, assertiveness, self-promotion, and personal expressiveness. Molinsky filtered American, Brazilian, and Mexican business cultures through his lens. I'm going to summarize a few of his findings to familiarize you with the framework, but since these are generalizations, your specific situation may vary. Molinsky observed that Americans generally value straightforward communication, with men typically communicating more directly than women. In business settings, Americans expect directness to be delivered with tact. Honesty should not mean brutality. Americans appreciate enthusiasm, and it is acceptable to demonstrate zeal in business settings, like when you are interviewing for a job. Assertiveness refers to the degree to which it is acceptable to confidently advocate for your interests or opinions. As members of an individualistic society, Americans highly value confidence and assertiveness. They are comfortable with self-promotion, especially in business contexts, where people are used to having to "sell" themselves. Don't forget the fine line between self-promotion and boasting, though, because braggadocio is still a turn-off. Americans tend to be more informal in their dress and behavior in tire business settings, though some situations call for greater formality. For example, job interviews call for more formal behavior and dress. Personal expressiveness refers to acceptable levels of self-disclosure, and Americans are comfortable sharing personal information and expressing personal opinions in work settings. The United States is one of the only countries in the world where it is acceptable to share personal information with perfect strangers in passing conversation, though some subjects remain taboo, like religion, politics, and salary.

According to Molinsky, compared to Americans' high level of directness, the Mexican style of business communication is more indirect, formal, and polite. It reflects the high priority that Mexicans give to "saving face" and

preserving group harmony. Instead of openly disagreeing with another's point of view, consider saying "That's an interesting point, but what do you think about..." Mexicans are also reluctant to deliver bad news directly in a business setting. The directness in communication among Mexicans differs depending on the dynamics of power in the relationship, and Mexican bosses will address subordinates with a high level of directness. It is generally acceptable for Mexicans to express enthusiasm in business settings, within limits. Too much enthusiasm is perceived as kissing up to the boss. Employment relationships tend to be hierarchical, with Mexican subordinates acting extremely unassertive with their bosses, but comfortably voicing opinions among peers. Self-promotion in the form of emphasizing the accomplishments of your team is acceptable between family and friends, but "selling yourself" to strangers at a networking event is rare. It is very important to avoid the appearance of attempting to outdo your boss. Mexicans are relatively more formal in their dress and communication in tire business settings. They also use the formal "you" (Usted) instead of the informal "tu" when addressing each other and greet people by their titles. With time, these dynamics can relax, and people may treat each other more informally. With its proximity to the United States, the northern part of Mexico is more informal than the South, and younger generations of Mexicans are more casual than their elders. Mexicans are very comfortable with self-disclosure. Building and maintaining relationships is important in Mexican culture, and conversations between colleagues often entail more than just small talk.

Molinsky described Brazilians as open, direct, and forthcoming in communicating, except when sharing negative feedback. In such instances, they use a more indirect approach. They are also more indirect when communicating with authority figures. More so than in other cultures, Brazilians take cues about the directness of their communication from the culture of their company or organization. It is acceptable for Brazilians to express emotions in tire business settings. Though Brazilians in the South of the country are more reserved, even they would rate high for expressiveness on a global scale. Brazilians are comfortable asserting their opinions in public settings, but tend to avoid conflict and act more reserved when interpersonal relationships are at stake. Brazilians score low on self-promotion and tend to be humble. They are generally informal at work, calling each other by names or nicknames, even their bosses. Decision-making is still a formal process that comes from the top. Brazilians scored highly on personal disclosure. In fact, it may be considered awkward not to share personal information with coworkers. It is especially important for foreigners to take time to establish relationships with their colleagues, as this is crucial to doing tire business in that culture.

Now that you see how to use the framework, you can start examining the culture of the country where you are doing tire business and adjust your communication style accordingly. Be patient with yourself and take a long-term perspective. It takes time to acclimate to a new culture. You will probably make mistakes, but your consistent effort will pay off in the long run, and those results will show in your bottom line.

*Mike Cioffi is founder of [TireTalent.com](http://TireTalent.com), a boutique recruiting agency whose mission is to align top talent with top tire companies.*



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The economic impacts of the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic are still being felt, measured, and predicted. It is indeed a critical time for the automotive and tire service industry. More than ever, for those considering the sale of their business, the reliance upon the expertise and integrity of a business broker is of paramount importance.

A broker is there to help a business owner with the sale of their business. If you have never sold

a business before, having an expert guide you through the process, find qualified buyers, and deal with banks and lawyers will likely result in getting to the finish line quicker and with the maximum possible sale price.

During times of economic crises, it is a challenge to know how to provide a seller with the best opportunities. However, there are, in fact, hundreds of eager buyers with cash at the ready to snap up the opportunities that are sure to come onto the market.

Important elements of the sales process to keep in mind are:

### Be flexible with buyers

Business sellers are more nervous than ever about how their sale will go and the price that they will be able to get for their business. A buyer and their bank will be looking closely at monthly sales and profits to judge the pace at which the business is recovering from the initial impact of COVID. This financial trend is critical in projecting when the profits might return to pre-COVID levels and justify the sale price.

As a business broker leveraging the experience, in-depth knowledge, and extensive contact network I've achieved in over 40 years in the tire and automotive aftermarket industry, I can offer assurances that I have been through drastic fluctuations in the market and have been able to assist my clients.

BusinessesForSale.com recently conducted a survey that found that 65% of buyers on the site had more than \$50,000 to use as their deposit. This is great news for small businesses. However, the same survey also found that 75% of buyers were expecting the asking prices for businesses to come down.

Fortunately, Bank/SBA loans remain available at attractive interest rates for up to 90% of the sale price, plus working capital. Seller financing is not normally needed if the business is generating sufficient Cash Flow to cover the monthly debt service and owner compensation.

While there are buyers ready and waiting, getting them through the negotiations will be more important than ever. Be ready to be flexible on some terms that you thought were non-negotiables before the pandemic.

### Sell a plan for the future

Any buyer that is looking to invest at the moment will be hoping to get a good deal now for the potential pay-off when the markets return to some form of normalcy. Be clear about what you are doing to minimize the impact of the pandemic and the specific opportunities for how a buyer might grow the business in the future. Where can the business cut costs? How can you improve internet reviews and take advantage of social media to attract new customers?

Interest rates in the US are at historic lows and this is giving potential buyers who have cash reserves incentives to invest in and operate a business. A seller needs to give them a reason to believe that, in the future, the business you are selling will have been worth more than leaving their money in the bank.

### Promote the business

Using online marketplaces, which a broker can facilitate, to promote the sale of a business is now, more than ever, an intelligent route to take. These internet sites are viewed frequently by buyer candidates searching for a profitable business that is resistant to downturns from a recession or an unpredictable event like COVID-19. The automotive service business has been deemed "essential" and buyers view it as less risky than purchasing other small businesses such as restaurants, hotels, gyms and dry cleaners.

Business brokers recognize the critical importance of confidentiality when selling a business, so that employees, suppliers, and customers don't find out that your business is for sale. All candidates must sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement and complete a buyer profile to ensure confidentiality and avoid wasting your time with unqualified tire kickers.

### In conclusion

"Seeing a critical need and filling it" with expertise and integrity has been the hallmark of my career. In a highly competitive and unique industry such as the tire and automotive aftermarket, successful business brokerage transactions require the broker attributes I possess:

- Unquestionable ethics
- Ability to achieve positive results and

maintain excellent customer relations through disciplined account management

- Experience in the buying and selling of numerous businesses and real estate transactions over a 40-year entrepreneurial career
- The attributes of a seasoned team player in all phases of strategic marketing and business development.

If you are feeling frustrated and overwhelmed by the daily stresses of operating your business, now may be the best time to find out what your business is worth and potentially cash in your chips.

*For more detailed information on the process of selling your tire and auto service business, or to initiate a no-obligation confidential consultation, call Art directly at 610.722.5636 or visit [www.art-blumenthal.com](http://www.art-blumenthal.com)*



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There is so much that has happened this year but one of the few bright spots has been that NETSA was still able to award twenty \$2,000 scholarships to some very deserving students in 2020 as you will see in this fall edition of the Road Runner. My thanks to everyone involved in making this happen, as I stated in my other newsletter article written as NETSA scholarship chairperson. What about next year's scholarships? Firstly,

we will see how many sponsors are willing and able to continue their support. Secondly, we will have to figure out a way to have NETSA match them. We have several different ideas kicking around. Let me assure you that we will give out quite a few NETSA scholarships in 2021 even though we were not able to raise money this year from the proceeds of our Annual Trade Show Dinner Auction and the Golf Outing. This is one of the best things that NETSA does as an organization and we will continue with the scholarships moving forward. Hopefully, we can resume some NETSA activities with the new "normal" at our Annual Trade Show next spring at Mohegan Sun assuming that there is a vaccine by then. This year the pandemic messed up a lot of people's lives in so many ways. We certainly need to get to the bottom of how Covid-19 was started, why the Chinese government did not make a better effort to contain it, and why they didn't let the rest of the world know that there was a major issue in Wuhan. There are lessons to be learned from this pandemic and we better learn them because this will not be the last time that the world faces a crisis as severe as Covid-19. The problem was compounded in the United States by an administration that was ill prepared to handle a pandemic. Granted, I think that either party in the White House would have had trouble handling Covid-19, but the Trump administration's constant attempts to minimize the pandemic after rightfully instituting travel restrictions were not very helpful. We still have people coming into our business who refuse to wear a mask and say that the pandemic is just a hoax designed to defeat President Trump in his re-election bid. I remind them that both Democrats and Republicans have gotten sick and have died from Covid-19. This crisis should not be a political issue. Former Republican Presidential candidate Herman Cain attended one of the last Trump rallies in the spring without a mask and now he is gone. So are a lot of other people who didn't heed the warnings of the CDC and public health authorities. I freely admit that I don't wear a mask at work some of the day because I am alone at our warehouse for much of the time, but I do wear a mask when I'm over in our office and always wear a mask when I go to other people's businesses to shop. This is not an issue of liberty and freedom, it's an issue of having some common sense. You have a right to kill yourself, I suppose. You do not have the right to infect and kill other people. But I swear, some people just love to fight and argue no matter what. I do understand the balance needed between not spreading the virus and getting people back to work and children back to school. But shouldn't we err on the side of caution when lives hang in the balance? Dr. Anthony Fauci is not the enemy here. He has a job to do and he does not play politics. God bless him dealing with this crisis at 79 years young. Governors Andrew Cuomo of New York, Charlie Baker of Massachusetts,

and Chris Sununu of New Hampshire have, in my mind, done a fairly good job handling the pandemic in their states. Some decisions may seem arbitrary, but overall, they have been excellent at trying to strike a balance when it comes to reopening their states. Will we see a resurgence of Covid-19 in the fall? I would say yes with more people going back to their jobs and kids and college students going back to school. Only a vaccine is going to get the problem under control. Science will triumph in the end, but it may take us a while to get there. In the meantime, we need to have some patience.

Election time is getting closer and it will certainly be interesting to see what happens, including the Right to Repair Bill in Massachusetts. The issue has taken center stage again as independent repair shops try to get telematics included in the new automotive bill of rights so that people have a choice of where to get their cars fixed. The auto dealers have come out with extreme scare tactic ads that misrepresent the facts. Channel 5 WCVB in Boston fact checked the various ads from both sides. On the independent repair shop side, WCVB stated that it should have been stated that former chief of police Ed Davis was a paid consultant when they quoted him in the ad. It seems obvious that Ed Davis isn't going to be quoted in the ad for nothing, but fair enough. On the auto dealer ad side, WCVB said that much of their information about your privacy being invaded came from a bill that had nothing to do with the Right to Repair Bill in California. Channel 5 came out in favor of the independent dealer side on the issue and said that your choice of where to bring your car in the future could be limited if this bill does not pass. The car dealers are desperate to win this battle and have stretched the truth to do so. I have always been in favor of fair competition and fully support the efforts being made in Massachusetts to level the playing field. A lot is riding on the Massachusetts' decision at the ballot box, so let us hope the voters see through these misleading ads from the auto dealers and vote yes for fair competition when it comes to right to repair.

Lastly, I would like to comment on President Trump going after Goodyear Tire because they did not want their workers wearing MAGA hats (or any other political hats) at work. Goodyear is one of the few tire companies left that are headquartered and owned in the USA. They make a great product. I suspect that most of their employees vote Republican due to the President's efforts to put strong tariffs on tires from China, and maybe soon, Vietnam and Thailand. Mr. President, you are only hurting the very people who will likely vote for you in November with your comments. Getting upset and telling people to not buy Goodyear tires and to buy other brands because they are better and cheaper is out of line. Goodyear tires are not the cheapest, that part is true. They are mostly produced here in the USA by our citizens. There are plenty of less expensive tires out there, but they are not better than Goodyear. Goodyear is very competitively priced in the top tier of tires produced today along with Michelin and Bridgestone. You get what you pay for, Mr. President. In fact, the presidential limousine has Goodyear tires on it. And by the way, I don't want my employees wearing MAGA hats, Biden hats, or any other political hats either. It is a distraction that we don't need in our business. My help can do what they want on their own time. When they work here, I do not want political arguments between my help or with my customers. I can't stop customers from wearing political hats (unlike the mask issue) but I can tell my employees not to wear political hats or shirts at work. That is my right, Mr. President. Please do not tell Goodyear Tire or Maynard and Lesieur how to run our businesses, and in return I will not try to tell you how to run the country. Let us all try to look forward to a much better 2021 regardless of who wins the election.

*Larry*



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# Don't Just Be an Installer!

Jason Abrahams: Tire Tutor

The Road Runner  
Fall 2020



I incorporated my first tire business in 2002. It was an e-commerce site for tires, wheels, and custom car accessories. We were shipping tires and wheels across the country. We also opened two brick-and-mortar tire stores that operated independently from our online e-commerce site. We were running this business during the dot-com bust, and

just a few years after Tire Rack took their business from mail order to a website. In other words, we were relatively early with the e-commerce of tires.

Fast-forward almost twenty years later and I've now launched TireTutor—a company built from the ground up to help local tire dealers compete with the large e-commerce sites (that are siphoning away tire sales from local dealers). During this period, I had the good fortune to work for tire companies such as Bridgestone and Hankook, and leaders in e-commerce such as CarGurus. What I learned along the way is that you need to meet the shopper where he/she is.

When I talk about meeting the consumer where he/she is, I'm referring to truly understanding the stages of the consumer's shopping journey and taking friction out of the process for them. Unlike most of us in this industry, tires are not interesting or exciting for the consumer. Buying tires is an opaque shopping process<sup>11</sup>. They don't understand the jargon, nor do they know which tires to buy. Yet, 41% of consumers spend over a week researching tires online and 63% look at up to four dealer websites in the process. With consumers online shopping for tires and vehicle service, how can you help the consumer at any stage in their buying journey? I think there are three critical things to keep in mind, in order to effectively digitize your shop and compete with the e-commerce tire sites (Tire Rack, etc.) in the industry:

## Your Website Should Be a Real Alternative to the E-commerce Tire Websites

Consumers are shopping multiple websites for tires. This means that the chances are high that a consumer is shopping an e-commerce tire site right before or after they visit your website. You need to compete effectively online if you want to win the tire sale and not just be the installer for an e-commerce site. One way to do this is to ensure that all of your tire brands are online, with prices, for the consumer to shop. It's not good enough to only have a few of your brands listed on your "Shop for Tires" link on your website. Any brand tire that you stock or willingly sell should be listed on your website. Remember, the consumer just visited another e-commerce site before they came to your website. That e-commerce site had all the brands of tires listed there. At this moment, the consumer is having an internal debate as to whether they should buy the tires from the e-commerce site and ship them to you, or just buy the tires directly from you. Make it easy for them to choose you—get your inventory online.

## Price All of Your Tires Online

You don't need to be the least expensive tire shop in town. At TireTutor, we did face-to-face interviews with nearly 300 consumers, over the course of two years. What we learned was that consumers

prefer to buy tires from their local dealers if the process is as easy as shopping online and the prices are competitive. What's a competitive price? The 300 consumers we interviewed told us that they will happily spend \$15 extra per tire in order to buy from a local shop. At TireTutor, we've exhaustively studied the tire prices of local dealers vs. those of the e-commerce sites. We're quite sure that you can price your tires within \$15 of the e-commerce sites and still make a healthy profit, especially once you consider installation and service upsells. Online is your opportunity to win that car into your bay, as your customer—not as an installation job for the e-commerce site. Instead, earn that customer's repeat business by first winning the tire sale. It will go a long way for ensuring that the consumer is your lifelong customer. When competing to win the tire sale, think about the lifetime value of a customer's repeat purchases after you win that first tire sale. It's a more profitable proposition than the transactional process of simply installing tires a customer bought somewhere else.

## Let the Consumer Decide How They Want to Make Their Purchase

Some customers want to call you to set up an appointment. Others want to email you. Some want to text you. Still others want to completely buy their tires online from you and prepay for installation (credit card and all). Think about it. We're all this way when we're shopping for something. You need to have the digital tools to sell that customer their tires and service in any way they want to buy. It's now about 20 years after the dot-com bubble of the 2000's. We have to meet customers where they are. If a customer is online and shopping for tires at 10pm on a Saturday night and wants to pay for those tires and the installation in that moment (when he/she finally has the time because the kids are sleeping and the errands are done for the day), do you have the technology on your own website to close that customer right then and there? Or can a customer only submit a "Request A Quote" on your website? If you can't sell that customer in that moment, chances are increasingly high (especially in this new era of e-commerce since COVID), that you just lost that customer to one of the e-commerce tire sites. Stop losing customers and get the same technology to do "Buy Now" on your own website. Meet the customer where they are and win their business and their trust. You'll be more profitable for doing so.

*I: Compete/Google  
Auto Tires Purchase  
Study, September  
2013*

*II: MBD/Google  
Tires Study, October  
2013*

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*L-R – Jenifer Gleason – Mother, Aimee Gleason – Recipient, Kevin Gleason – Father and K & W Tire member employee ( Not Pictured – Sponsor Cooper Tire )*



*(L-R) Paul Sullivan– member Sullivan Tire, Brianna Fadden – Recipient, Laurie Fadden – Mother and Sullivan Tire member employee (Not Pictured – Sponsor TireTutor)*

**Aimee Gleason** Winner of the \$2,000 William J. Clark 2020 Scholarship Award (funded by Cooper Tire and the NETSA Scholarship Golf Tournament) is from Sterling, Massachusetts. This is Aimee's second time being awarded a NETSA Scholarship.

Aimee is a 2019 graduate of Wachusett Regional High School in Holden, Massachusetts where she graduated with a GPA of 4.0. Throughout her four years of high school Aimee achieved academic excellence. Her efforts earned her membership in the Wachusett Chapter of the National Honor Society, where she served as president throughout her senior year. As a junior, she was awarded the University of Rochester Book Award and Scholarship in recognition of her overall academic achievements. She was a member of Wachusett's Mock Trial Team during her junior and senior years. Lauren Clark, head of Wachusett's School Counseling Department describes Aimee as a: "highly motivated" student, who is "grounded", and has a "great sense of humor".

Outside of school, Aimee has been a member of the Girl Scouts, and has served her local community through this organization. She also has two part-time jobs. She works as a Barista at Beanz, and as a nanny for a local family.

Aimee will enter her sophomore year at Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, New York this fall, with an anticipated graduation date of May 2024. She will pursue a degree in Chemical Engineering. Aimee made Dean's List Fall Semester 2019 with a GPA of 3.69. She is a member of the Colleges Against Cancer Club, dedicated to raising money for the American Cancer Society. She serves as Co-Treasurer for the organization. Karuna Koppula, Ph.D., Senior Lecturer, Chemical Engineering Department at Rochester Institute of Technology describes Aimee as: "A very hardworking and diligent student with excellent work ethics." She continues with: "She responds positively to feedback and criticism by showing great improvement. Aimee is self-critical and does her best in everything she can."

Aimee's father is Kevin Gleason, Branch Manager for NETSA member K & W Tire in Ayer, Massachusetts.

**Congratulations Aimee!**

**Brianna K. Fadden** Winner of the \$2,000 Tire Tutor 2020 Scholarship Award (funded by Tire Tutor and the NETSA Scholarship Golf Tournament) is from Duxbury, Massachusetts. This is Brianna's second time being awarded a NETSA Scholarship.

Brianna is a 2017 graduate of Phillips Andover Academy, where she was an Honor student receiving the AP Scholar with Honor designation. As an Academy student she played four varsity sports; soccer, ice hockey, track and lacrosse. One of Brianna's dreams has already been fulfilled by continuing her soccer career at the University of Chicago. She will enter her senior year at the university this fall.

As a student-athlete Brianna balances a twenty plus hour weekly commitment to soccer and lacrosse at the same time as managing a full, challenging, academic course load. While maintaining a 3.5 GPA as a junior, she was an integral part of her soccer team's success. Her team went 14-3-3 before bowing out of the NCAA Tournament Sweet Sixteen. She is a member of the Women's Athletic Association which promotes women's athletics and organizes and fundraises for Special Olympics. Brianna is a member of the Delta Gamma Sorority which is committed to raising funds for the blind and visually impaired.

Brianna is pursuing studies in Public Policy with an environmental specialty and a minor in Human Rights. She has always had a concern with economic and political systems and how their structure influences the way society functions. With an anticipated graduation date of 2021, she plans on pursuing a researched-based career working for an organization committed to effecting positive environmental changes in government and corporate America, at an organization such as the EPA, or Sierra Club. She has a specific interest in issues relating to global sanitation, land conservation, and the agriculture/food industry. Summer 2020 Brianna worked as a Research Intern at Environment America's Research and Policy Center in Boston, Massachusetts.

Amy Howley Reifert, Women's Soccer Coach at the University of Chicago says; "Bri has contributed to our program with her work rate, her maturity and tremendous growth mindset." Reifert goes on to say; "Bri is an amazing young woman who embodies the true spirit of a student athlete."

Brianna's mother, Laurie A. Fadden, is the Employee Development Manager for NETSA member, Sullivan Tire, Norwell, Massachusetts.

**Congratulations Brianna!**





L-R - Gordon Wiley – Sponsor -Nokian Tyres , Scott Shaw – Father and Pete’s Tire Barn member employee, Cayden Shaw – Recipient, Regan Shaw – Mother.

**Cayden Shaw** Winner of the \$2,000 Nokian Tyre 2020 Scholarship Award (funded by Nokian Tyre and the NETSA Scholarship Golf Tournament) is from White River Junction, Vermont.

Cayden is a 2020 graduate of Hartford High School in White River Junction, Vermont. Throughout those four years she was enrolled in several advanced level courses and graduated with a 3.55 GPA. Cayden also took three college level courses through St. Michael’s College and Community College of Vermont

in 2019 and 2020. She played Lacrosse as a freshman, Field Hockey as a freshman and sophomore, and Varsity Ice Hockey as a freshman, sophomore, and junior. She served as Treasurer for Hartford High School’s Math Team as a senior. Throughout her four years she volunteered for many Community Service events.

Cayden will be entering her freshman year at the University of Vermont in Burlington, Vermont, with an anticipated graduation date of May 2024. She will be enrolled in the University’s Grossman School of Business, pursuing a Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Finance. Her long-term goals include pursuit of a Master’s Degree in Business Administration. She would like to work in a management position in a small local business.

Outside of school, Cayden has worked for Ice Cream Fore-U in West Lebanon, New Hampshire for the past three years. She works not only as a server, but also maintains the inventory for weekly ordering and restocking and works the cash register. Jennifer Johnson, Owner/Manager of Ice Cream Fore-U says: “She is an extraordinary young woman with a phenomenal work ethic and caring personality.” Johnson goes on to say: “Cayden is truly one of the most focused, directed and driven young people we have had the pleasure of working with in all our years as owners.”

Cayden’s father, Scott Shaw, is Operations Manager for NETSA member Pete’s Tire Barn, based in White River Junction, Vermont.

**Congratulations Cayden!**

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Last year as summer was ending, I remember that I was talking about hurricane Dorian hitting Florida just after Labor Day. Well a lot has changed since then. We still have hurricanes in the news and unfortunately, we have run out of conventional names and are now using the Greek alphabet to name the hurricanes. Someone commented that, that must be the worst fraternity ever. Last year I never would have suspected that hurricanes hitting our coastal

cities would not be the lead stories of the news cycle. Add to that list wildfires on the west coast, Covid-19 still claiming American lives, protests, and riots that have cost well over \$1 billion dollars in damages to cities and businesses in several cities with no end in sight. Add to this list a contentious election and a dysfunctional Congress and it sure makes 2019 look good.

However, if you want some encouraging news our **Scholarship Committee** Chairperson, Larry Lesieur, announced our twenty recipients of 2020 NETSA Scholarships. These impressive young people are featured in this issue of the Road Runner and I encourage you to read their short biographies. The accomplishments of these young people are truly remarkable. Maintaining a level of excellence when it comes to grades while participating in extra-curricular activities, community involvement and volunteer work certainly shines a ray of sunshine in this cloud filled year. This is a rewarding commitment that NETSA and our Scholarship sponsors undertake each year and my favorite task is handing out the \$2000 checks in July. I cannot say enough about the commitment of our generous sponsors in this tumultuous economic year, not a single sponsor waived in their financial support of this year's scholarships. We have also featured our Scholarship sponsors in this issue and please take a minute to thank them and show your support for their contributions. Congratulations to these fine young people and to their families, they certainly should be proud.

The **Golf Committee** Chairperson, Jim Melvin Jr., and his team, along with the Executive Committee decided to cancel this year's NETSA Scholarship Golf Tournament. This was another hard decision that NETSA had to make this year. This was our last opportunity to raise funds for the 2021 NETSA Scholarship fund.

Our **Benefits Committee** Chairperson, Jack Kelley, has announced that Merchant Advocates has been added to our Member Benefits Provider list. Look for additional information on NETSA.ORG our association web site. NETSA signed an agreement with Merchant Advocates and they have already begun to save us money on our credit card fees. Contact Alison Dumont, 603-320-1221, [adumont@merchantadvocate.com](mailto:adumont@merchantadvocate.com) for additional information. It is our desire to continue to offer benefits to members that provide services and goods

that allow you to save money as a NETSA Member. We appreciate all our Benefit Providers and thank them for their continued support. Please show your appreciation by giving these companies a chance to prove their worth to you.

The **Trade Show Committee** Chairperson, Rich Tuttle, is pleased to announce that the 2021 NETSA Trade Show & Convention will be held at **Mohegan Sun, 1 Mohegan Sun Boulevard in Uncasville, Connecticut** on **April 9 thru April 10, 2021**. Rich and his team are excited about the venue and promises another great show with information and fun for all attendees. We will be sending out more information to keep all members informed of our progress. Mark the dates down in your calendars and be sure to join your peers at Mohegan Sun in April.

Jim Melvin Jr. the Chairperson of the **Hall of Fame Committee** announced that our 2020 selections for the NETSA Hall of Fame will be inducted as the 2021 Hall of Fame Class. The committee and the Board of Directors decided that 2020 will not have a Hall of Fame Class. We will honor our 2021 Inductees, Alan Saks, Charles Hervey, and Frank Ledwith at our Hall of Fame Dinner during the 2021 Trade Show.

The **Legislative Committee** is urging all our members to ask their Massachusetts friends to support the Massachusetts Right to Repair by voting YES on Question number 1 on the November Ballot. Read more about this fight for the independent repair shops in this issue of the Road Runner or you could stay informed and get involved in this important fight by checking their web site [www.massrighttorepair.org](http://www.massrighttorepair.org).

The **Scholarship Committee** along with the Golf Committee is asking all members to help support our 2021 Scholarship fund raising efforts. We have set a goal of \$20,000 to fund our commitment to deliver twenty \$2000 scholarships in 2021. We are currently more than halfway to that goal having received donations totaling \$10,525. **Please help put us over the top by pledging your donation by contacting Tony DeSimone, 855-638-7248 or [netsapros@aol.com](mailto:netsapros@aol.com).**

**We are also raffling a set of 4 – Yokohama tires (see details in this issue) we will sell the tickets for \$20 each and cap the number of tickets at 50. These are exceptionally good odds for a great set of tires. The raffle will be held as soon as we sell the 50th ticket.**

Thank you for your support, remember to vote and be safe.

Best Wishes,

*Tony DeSimone*

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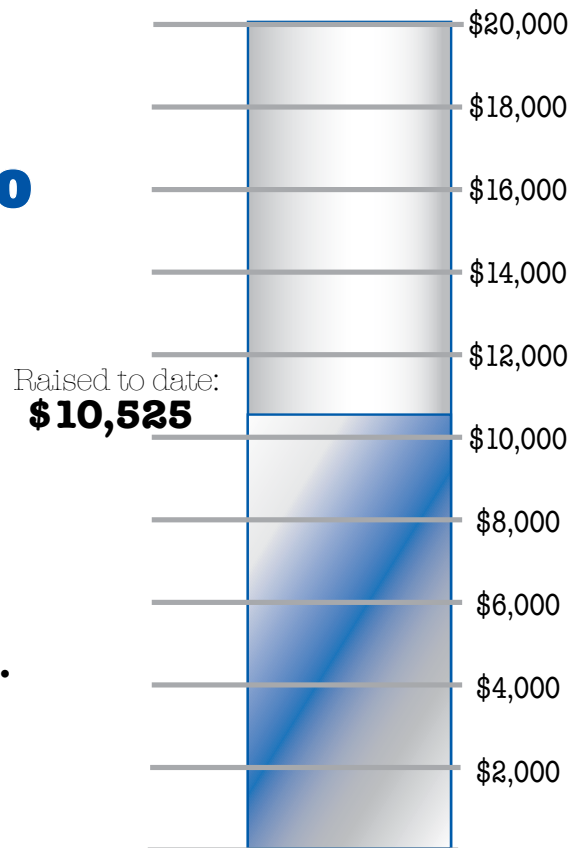
# 2021 NETSA Scholarship Fund



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*(L-R) Denise Corriveau – Mother and Safehold Special Risk member employee, Colton Corriveau – Recipient (Not Pictured – Sponsors -Maynard & Lesieur and Mohawk Rubber Sales)*



*(L-R) Renee Rancourt – Mother, Connor Rancourt – Recipient, Robert Rancourt – Father and Town Fair Tire member employee (Not Pictured – Sponsor -Connecticut Tire Dealers Association)*

**Colton Corriveau** Winner of the \$2,000 Kurtrick Schlott 2020 Scholarship Award (funded by Maynard and Lesieur and Mohawk Rubber and the NETSA Scholarship Golf Tournament) is from Manchester, New Hampshire.

Colton is a 2017 graduate of Raymond High School in Raymond, New Hampshire. He will be entering his senior year at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva, New York this fall with an anticipated graduation date of May 2021. He is majoring in Biology with a minor in Computer Science and Psychology. Upon graduation Colton will pursue a job in the field of Biotechnology doing research and development.

Colton is the President of Kappa Alpha Society at Hobart and William Smith; he is a member of the Soccer Club and the Ultimate Frisbee Club. Colton is also a participant in Eco Reps, a sustainability movement on his campus. He is an active volunteer as well with Habitat for Humanity, in the Geneva, New York Community Lunch Program, and Geneva, New York's Day of Service.

Outside of his studies, Colton worked for Cornell Agritech during the summer of 2019, he has worked as an O'Laughlin Ambassador for Hobart and William Smith's Office of Admissions since the fall of 2018.

Mr. Darren Sealock, a friend of Colton's family, who has known Colton well for several years describes Colton as: "... an example of intelligence, drive, desire and motivation....He takes nothing for granted, and makes every effort to earn what he wishes to achieve....Equally, Colton's a good human."

Colton's mother, Denise Corriveau, is an Account Executive for NETSA member Safehold Special Risk in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

**Congratulations Colton!**

**Connor Rancourt** Winner of the \$2,000 Bob Malerba 2020 Scholarship Award (funded by Connecticut Tire Dealers and the NETSA Scholarship Golf Tournament) is from Middletown, Connecticut.

Connor is a 2020 graduate of Middletown High School in Middletown, Connecticut where he played Varsity Hockey for four years. He was awarded Most Consistent Player in 2019, Most Improved Player in 2020, and the All Academic Award for Hockey in 2020 as well. His team was CCC South Conference Champions in 2019 and 2020. Connor played trumpet in the school Marching and Concert Bands and they were State Champions in 2016 and 2017. He earned a Varsity Letter for Hockey and Band. Bill Siebert, Teacher, Middletown High School describes Connor as: "a soft-spoken, humble individual who demonstrates integrity and character in all his endeavors."

Outside of school, Connor is an Eagle Scout. He serves his troop as Junior Assistant Scoutmaster where he helps to plan troop meetings and activities and provide leadership to newer scouts. He and his troop help in community clean-up projects and place flags at town cemeteries for Memorial Day.

Connor will enter his freshman year at Nichols College in Dudley, Massachusetts this fall with an anticipated graduation date of May 2024. He will pursue a degree in Accounting. His future plans include a job in Accounting, while helping people plan for a secure financial future.

Connor's father, Robert Rancourt, is a Truck Driver for NETSA member Town Fair Tire in East Haven, Connecticut.

**Congratulations Connor!**





(L-R) Steve Dupoise Jr. County Tire Center member owner, Courtney Morin – Recipient, Jennifer Morin – Mother and County Tire Center member employee, Steve Dupoise – NETSA Board of Directors, County Tire Center (Not pictured – Sponsor Mohawk Rubber Sales)

**Courtney Morin** Winner of the \$2,000 Mohawk Rubber Sales 2020 Scholarship Award (funded by Mohawk Rubber Sales and the NETSA Scholarship Golf Tournament) is from Addison, Vermont.

Courtney is a 2017 graduate of Vergennes Union High School in Vergennes, Vermont. This fall she will enter her senior year at Paul Smith's College in Paul Smith's, New York, with an anticipated graduation date of May 2021. She will graduate with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Fish and Wildlife Science. Through

her college studies Courtney has expanded her understanding of how the biological sciences can be applied to real-world problems such as wildlife health and conservation. She would like to continue her education in a Master's or Ph.D. program in the wildlife health and conservation field after graduation. Courtney would like to pursue a job as a Wildlife Biologist, focusing on large predators such as wolves, bears, and coyotes.

Outside of school, Courtney has held varied positions. She was a Customer Service Representative at Hannaford's Supermarket in Middlebury, Vermont during the summer of 2018. Throughout the summer of 2017 she was a Deli Attendant at a local General Store. Courtney also babysits in her local community. Last summer she was a Natural Resource Instructor at the Green Mountain Conservation Camp in Castleton, Vermont. She instructed young people ages 16-21 about natural resources as well as hunting and fishing education, and archery classes leading to state certification.

Courtney also volunteers her time to her local Fire Department Pancake Breakfasts and fundraises for a camp for children and teens with cancer. She and her family have donated their land and their time and have co-chartered a non-profit organization called "Snake Mountain Archers Shooting For A Cause". This group holds three competitions during the summer and donates the proceeds to those in need.

Courtney's mother, Jennifer Morin, is an Automotive Service Writer for NETSA member County Tire Center in Middlebury, Vermont.

**Congratulations Courtney!**

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(L-R) Mike Daigle – Pete’s Tire Barn – Sponsor, Elijah Fadden – Recipient, Laurie Fadden – Mother and Sullivan Tire member employee



(L-R) Grace DiMarco – Recipient, Dominick DiMarco – Father and Pete’s Tire Barn member employee (Not Pictured – Sponsor Reliable Tire)

**Elijah Fadden** Winner of the \$2,000 Pete’s Tire Barn 2020 Scholarship Award (funded by Pete’s Tire Barn and the NETSA Scholarship Golf Tournament) is from Duxbury, Massachusetts.

Elijah is a 2020 graduate of Duxbury High School in Duxbury, Massachusetts. He was enrolled in numerous Honors Level and Advanced Placement Level (college level) courses throughout his high school career. He graduated with a GPA of 3.63. Elijah was a member of Duxbury’s Student Council junior and senior years, he was a violinist for Duxbury’s Concert Orchestra as a freshman, sophomore, and junior. He played Varsity Soccer for four years, Varsity Lacrosse for three years, and was a member of the Ski Team as a sophomore and junior. Outside of school, Elijah was a member of the GPSMA Elite Soccer Team, which is a competitive and nationally ranked team, throughout his four high school years. During his sophomore, junior, and senior years at Duxbury, Elijah was a member of their Robotics Club. This a competitive club, competing throughout New England. Matthew O’Neil Files, Teacher of Technology and Engineering at Duxbury, serves as advisor to the club, as well as Soccer Coach. He has known Elijah for four years in different capacities, and says as a student, Elijah is a: “kind, intelligent young man, who has demonstrated genuine ability and desire to learn and grow.” As an athlete, O’Neil Files says: “Not only is he a great player, but an even better teammate to his peers, all traits that earned him a much-deserved leadership role this season.”

Elijah is founder and president of EKF Lures. He designs and produces fishing lures specially tailored to species, mainly striped bass. He sells his product at a local bait shop and promotes them via social media. He also works as a First Mate on a Commercial/Charter Fishing Vessel.

Elijah will enter his freshman year at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York this fall. He has an anticipated graduation date of May 2024 with a degree in Engineering. He is particularly interested in the study of Biomedical Engineering, where engineering concepts meet the world of science and medicine. He hopes to be on the frontlines of research and new discovery in his future.

Elijah’s mother, Laurie A. Fadden, is the Employee Development Manager for NETSA member Sullivan Tire, in Norwell, Massachusetts.

**Congratulations Elijah!**

**Grace DiMarco** Winner of the \$2,000 Reliable Tire 2020 Scholarship Award (funded by Reliable Tire and the NETSA Scholarship Golf Tournament) is from Uxbridge, Massachusetts.

Grace is a 2018 graduate of Uxbridge High School in Uxbridge, Massachusetts. In high school she was a member of the Field Hockey Team and was awarded the Sportsmanship Award as a senior.

Grace will enter her junior year at the University of Maine in Farmington, Maine this fall. She has an anticipated graduation date of May 2022. She currently has a GPA of 3.19. She is pursuing a degree in Environmental Science. Her future goals include a job that allows her to work in the field collecting data rather than in an office. Grace is a charter member of the Wildlife Society based at her University. She helps to plan and present workshops for science majors.

When on campus, Grace works as a Program Supervisor at the Emery Community Arts Center in Farmington, Maine. She sets up for different events held at the center, and programs the audio and visual effects needed as well. Mr. Joel Johnson, Associate Technical Director at the Emery Center says: “Grace has been instrumental in the running of events at the Emery...She has a positive attitude and communicates clearly and effectively...Ms. DiMarco helps foster an enthusiastic work environment.”

Grace’s father, Dominick DiMarco III, is a Salesman for NETSA member Pete’s Tire Barn in Franklin, Connecticut.

**Congratulations Grace!**

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*(L-R) Tom Maguire – Sullivan Tire -Sponsor, NETSA Board of Directors, Jacob Matson – Recipient, Jeremy Matson – Father and Webster Square Tire & Auto Service member owner*

*(L-R) John Pardi – Father and Cooper Tire & Rubber member employee, Julia Pardi – Recipient (Not Pictured – Sponsor Melvin’s Tire Pros)*

**Jacob Matson** Winner of the \$2,000 Max Finklestein 2020 Scholarship Award (funded by Max Finklestein and the NETSA Scholarship Golf Tournament) is from Auburn, Massachusetts.

Jacob is a 2020 graduate of Auburn High School in Auburn, Massachusetts. He graduated with a GPA of 3.3. He founded the Electronic Sports Team at Auburn High School. This group competed against other local high schools, with the end of season champions being awarded scholarships. Jacob designed graphics and a wide range of programs for his high school and other schools in his school district. William Wright, Auburn High School Department Head of Engineering and Technology speaks very highly of Jacob’s abilities and his character. He has worked with Jacob since the Sixth Grade, and says: “Since his time at Auburn Middle School and until now, I have had the pleasure of watching Jacob grow into the fine young man he is today.”

Outside of school, Jacob works at Webster Square Tire performing basic automotive repairs and helping with paperwork.

Jacob will enter his freshman year at Framingham State University in Framingham, Massachusetts this fall with an anticipated graduation date of May 2024. He will pursue a degree in Marketing. Future goals include employment in Advertising for a technology company.

Jacob’s father, Jeremy Matson, is the owner of NETSA member Webster Square Tire, in Ware, Massachusetts.

**Congratulations Jacob!**

**Julia R. Pardi** Winner of the \$2,000 Melvin’s Tire Pros 2020 Scholarship Award (funded by Melvin’s Tire Pros and the NETSA Scholarship Golf Tournament) is from Manchester, Connecticut. This is Julia’s second time being awarded a NETSA Scholarship.

Julia is a 2017 graduate of Manchester High School in Manchester, Connecticut. She had a very successful high school career as a scholar-athlete. She graduated with a 3.88 GPA with many awards, certificates, and high honors throughout her four years. She was a member of the National Honor Society and served as its president. She participated in Cross Country, as well as Indoor and Outdoor Track.

Julia will enter her senior year at the University of New Haven in West Haven, Connecticut this fall after achieving a 3.73 GPA as a junior. Julia has made the Dean’s List for all her college semesters thus far. She has been selected to the Psi Chi International Honor Society in Psychology and the Sigma Tau Delta International English Honor Society. She has an anticipated graduation date of May 2021, with a Psychology Degree along with a concentration in Forensic Psychology. She also plans to earn a degree in National Security and a Certificate in Cyber Securities and Networks. Her future plans include graduate work in her field and eventually earning a Doctorate in Forensic Psychology and working as a Psychologist or working in the court systems. Julia is an active member of the Rotaract Club, a community service-based organization that organizes a variety of volunteer services around the New Haven area. She is also a member of Love Your Melon which brings joy to young Cancer patients.

Ashley Bell, Manchester High School Math Teacher and Cross Country Coach describes Julia like this; “She is known by staff and peers alike for her positive attitude, intellectual acumen, and her drive to succeed.”

James J. Tierinni, Jr., Manchester High School Math Teacher says: “Julia’s competitive edge can be seen during sports, but also in the classroom. She is a hardworking and kind-hearted person who continues to excel in and out of the classroom.”

Julia’s father is John H. Pardi, Territory Manager of NETSA member Cooper Tire, Findlay, Ohio.

**Congratulations Julia!**



# 2020 NETSA Scholarship Winners

The Road Runner  
Fall 2020



(L-R) Gary Saks – Dorchester Tire owner, Alan Saks –Dorchester Tire owner, NETSA Board of Directors, NETSA Hall of Fame Inductee, Jamie Solimine – Recipient, Kathy Solimine – Mother and Dorchester Tire Service member employee, Glenn Wilder Jr. – Sponsor Wilder Brothers Tire Pros owner, Claire Wilder – Sponsor, wife of Glenn Wilder SR.

**Jamie L. Solimine** Winner of the \$2,000 Glen Wilder Sr. Memorial 2020 Scholarship Award (funded by Wilder Brothers Tire Pros and the NETSA Scholarship Golf Tournament) is from Stoughton, Massachusetts. This is Jamie's fourth time being awarded a NETSA Scholarship.

Jamie is a 2015 graduate of Stoughton High School in Stoughton, Massachusetts. Throughout her four years at Stoughton, Jamie was a member of the Marching Band and received several competition awards. She also was a member of the Color Guard Marching Band. Jamie received her Associate Degree in Elementary Education from

Massasoit Community College, in Brockton, Massachusetts in May 2017. In the fall of 2017, she enrolled in Bridgewater State University to begin working toward a Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education-Special Education, and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Dance. This fall she will enter her senior year with an anticipated graduation date of May 2021. She presently has a GPA of 3.5. She plans to pursue a master's program after graduation.

Jamie has had a passion for teaching children since she was a child herself. She is currently an after-school program teacher and a summer camp counselor. Jamie has been employed at Kidsports in Stoughton, Massachusetts since 2013, starting out as a front desk assistant and party helper, and advancing to a management position. Susan Greenblatt, her supervisor at Kidsports says; "Jamie is loyal and dependable...she is a good problem solver...and does a fantastic job working with the children in the program, making sure they are all safe and having fun." Jamie has also been working for the last year as a babysitter for two hours each weekday morning before school or work. Her employer, Ms. Christine Duffey, says that: "Jamie provides exceptional care....Jamie is hard-working, compassionate, energetic, and well-balanced....she has been invaluable this past year." Jamie is certified in EEC, CPR, and First Aid.

After completing an internship at Joseph R. Dawe Elementary School in Stoughton, Massachusetts under the supervision of Susan L. McCabe, Miss McCabe summed up Jamie's performance there like this; "There are tens of thousands of people walking the halls of universities hoping to learn all they can about teaching so they can become an expert teacher. Only very few of those people have 'the gift' of teaching. I can say in my heart of hearts, Jamie Solimine has the 'Gift'. She is smart, dedicated, reliable, assertive, gentle, and has the motivation to be an expert teacher."

Jamie's mother, Kathleen Solimine, is a Bookkeeper/Office Manager for NETSA member Dorchester Tire, Boston, Massachusetts.  
**Congratulations Jamie!**



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(L-R) Bob Vacca – Sponsor American Tire Distributors and member NETSA Board of Directors, Stephen Vining – Father and Plymouth Tire Pros member owner, Madeline Vining – Recipient

**Madeline Vining** Winner of the \$2,000 American Tire Distributors 2020 Scholarship Award (funded by American Tire Distributors and the NETSA Scholarship Golf Tournament) is from Sagamore, Massachusetts.

Madeline is a 2020 graduate of Sandwich High School in Sandwich, Massachusetts. She was enrolled in numerous Honors Level and Advanced Placement (college level) courses. She graduated with a 3.97 GPA and the distinction of being inducted into Sandwich's chapter of the National Honor Society. She was a member of the Indoor and Outdoor Track and Field Teams and received the Women in Sports Award as well as the Undergraduate Sportsmanship Award for her achievements. Madeline was a member of the Advanced Show Choir as a freshman and sophomore, Best Buddies for four years, and served as a board member for the organization, she was a member of the Prom Committee as a junior, and Yearbook Club as a senior. Through these clubs she volunteered much of her time to fundraising and giving back to her community. Matthew MacLean, Teacher, Sandwich High School Health and Wellness Department says: "Maddie has strong communication skills, is extremely organized, reliable and self-motivated. She can work independently and cooperatively; and is able to follow through to ensure that the job gets done."

Outside of school, Madeline works at Twin Acres Ice Cream Shoppe during the summer months, and Marshland Restaurant and Bakery during the remainder of the year.

Madeline will be entering her freshman year at the University of Rhode Island in Kingston, Rhode Island this fall with an anticipated graduation date of May 2024, she will pursue a degree in Communicative Disorders. She would like to work as a Speech-Language Pathologist after graduation where she would assess and treat speech, language, social and cognitive communication, and swallowing disorders in children.

Madeline's father, Stephen Vining, is the owner of NETSA member Plymouth Tire Pros, in Plymouth, Massachusetts.

**Congratulations Madeline!**



(L-R) Mary Goss – Mother, Makayla Goss – Recipient, Robert "Dave" Goss – Father and Direct Tire & Auto Service member employee, Bob Lane – Direct Tire & Auto Service (Not pictured – Sponsor – Sullivan Tire)

**Makayla Goss** Winner of the \$2,000 Robert J. Sullivan 2020 Scholarship Award (funded by Sullivan Tire and the NETSA Scholarship Golf Tournament) is from Norwood, Massachusetts.

Makayla is a 2020 graduate of Norwood High School in Norwood, Massachusetts, where she was enrolled in numerous Honors Level and Advanced Placement Level (college level) courses. She graduated with a GPA of 4.069. Makayla was selected for the Foreign Language National Honor Society for her achievements in the study of the Spanish Language. She was a member of the Mustang Mentor Group at Norwood. These students must have outstanding leadership skills as they welcome and mentor new students to the high school. She was a four-year member of the Friendship Club, and the SADD, Students Against Destructive Decisions Club. Makayla was a member of the Post Prom Committee as a junior. Ms. Christine Daigle, School Counselor, Norwood High School, describes Makayla as: "kind, caring, extremely bright and hard-working." She goes on to say that she: "has had a positive impact of all those she interacts with."

Outside of school, Makayla is a member of a competitive Dance Team, and was awarded the Dance Student of the Year Award last year. Makayla works as a Gymnastics Coach for the Gymnastics Academy of Boston on Saturdays.

Makayla will be entering her freshman year at Regis College in Weston, Massachusetts this fall with an anticipated graduation date of May 2024. She will pursue a degree in Nursing. She plans on working as a Labor and Delivery Nurse after graduation. She also hopes to open her own dance studio one day.

Makayla's father, Robert Goss, is a Mechanic for NETSA member Direct Tire in Watertown, Massachusetts.

**Congratulations Makayla!**





*Madison Dyer – Recipient, Jeff Dyer – Father and American Tire Distributors member employee (Not Pictured – Sponsors -Maynard & Lesieur)*

**Madison Dyer** Winner of the \$2,000 Leo H. Lesieur 2020 Scholarship Award (funded by Maynard and Lesieur and the NETSA Scholarship Golf Tournament) is from Merrimack, New Hampshire. This is Madison's second time being awarded a NETSA Scholarship.

Madison is a 2018 graduate of Merrimack High School in Merrimack, New Hampshire where she graduated with a 4.65 GPA. She was enrolled in many Honors Level and Advanced Placement Level (college level) courses. She was an active member of Merrimack High School's Student Council for four years as well as president of her junior class. As a senior she was President of Merrimack's High School Chorus and Chamber Choir and was a two-time All-State Choir participant. Madison served as vice president

of the Merrimack High School Theater Department during her senior year. She was founder and president of Merrimack Cares, a service-learning organization at her high school during her senior year. Madison was awarded the Outstanding Character Award from her high school as a senior.

Madison will enter her junior year at St. John's University in Jamaica, New York this fall. She completed her sophomore year with a 3.86 GPA. She has an anticipated graduation date of May 2022, with a degree in Government and Politics. Madison is enrolled as an Ozanam Scholar at St. John's, a program that seeks the brightest and most passionate young leaders to critically examine systems that perpetuate poverty and take action to advance social justice through academic scholarship, service, and global citizenship. She was one of twenty-five students chosen for the program out of seven hundred applicants.

Carline Bennett, Director of the Ozanam Scholars Program says: "Madison has dedicated her considerable academic skills and Vincentian heart to serving others. Whether rebuilding and revitalizing community spaces with community members in Puerto Rico, presenting on the topic of building an academic service program at the IMPACT Conference, or tutoring elementary students at Reading Partners in Queens, New York, Madison's commitment to sustainable service equips her to effectively analyze, reflect upon and ultimately propose thoughtful, research-based solutions grounded in social justice."

Madison would like to attend law school upon completion of her undergraduate degree and eventually become a prosecutor specializing in sexual assault, harassment, and domestic violence. She aspires to eventually work in government, either as a U.S. Senator or federal judge.

Outside of school, Madison is an Independent Consultant for Rodan and Fields Skin Care. She is also a Sales Associate at Torrid, a retail fashion store.

Madison's father is Jeffrey Dyer, Commercial Sales Manager for NETSA member American Tire Distributors in Londonderry, New Hampshire.  
**Congratulations Madison!**

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It's no secret that social media has exploded. Although Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram all started out as quick and easy ways to connect

with friends and share content, they have gradually evolved into platforms that offer a dynamic way to build your business. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has only increased their importance as internet usage took a geometric jump after more than 155-million Americans went into lockdown and began practicing social distancing this past spring – a shift that has dramatically altered the way people shop for tires, repairs, and parts and just about everything else. Even though the economy is opening up, most of your potential customers turn to the web as the first step of any buying journey in the “new normal.”

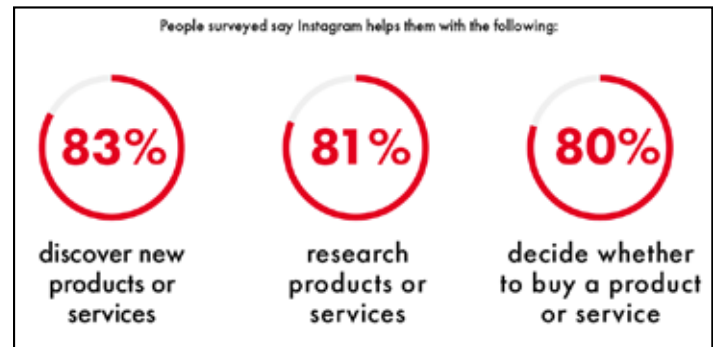
While almost every business has a website and a Facebook page these days, most overlook the growing power of Instagram. Instagram marks its 10-year anniversary in 2020 and, with more than one billion visitors each month, the visual-centric platform that began as a photo-posting app has grown into the fastest growing social media platform today with a 5% growth per quarter—significantly ahead of Facebook at 3.14% for the same time frame. But compared to Facebook, Instagram is largely a network of younger users.

According to recent studies, more than half of the global Instagram user population is younger than 34 years old and the 18–24-year-old age group is the largest slice of that demographic. Overall, there's a mostly even split between the genders with 51% female and 49% male users.

This younger population is what makes it such a potent tool for dealers. With its easy-to-use visual interface, it's a great way to build your brand because Instagram puts a “face” on your business that encourages trust and engagement among potential customers. Having an Instagram account signals that your business is reputable, real, and transparent to this audience. Plus, in the age of COVID, having another way that people can get to know your business is highly valuable. Many of these younger buyers don't have a lot of experience in maintaining their vehicles, but all of them begin to shop for everything in their lives by browsing the internet. Most importantly, the platform is often used as the first step in the discovery portion of the sales funnel as a staggering 83% of Instagram users report that they use the app to discover new products and services on the platform.

But using Instagram for searching for products and services is just the start. Over one-third of Instagram users have used the app to purchase a product online, making them 70% more likely to do so

than non-Instagram users. In addition to this, 75% of Instagram users take action, such as visiting a website, after looking at an Instagram advertising post.



Bottom line: If you are not using Instagram to promote your business, enhance your brand, engage a new generation of customers, and sell products and services directly, you're leaving money on the table!

*This article was created by the team at Net Driven. Learn more about Net Driven digital marketing solutions by visiting [www.netdriven.com](http://www.netdriven.com).*

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# 2020 NETSA Scholarship Winners

The Road Runner  
Fall 2020



(L-R) Alyce Sader – Mother, Michael Sader – Recipient, Piere Sader – Father and Quick Stop Tire Shop member owner (Not Pictured – Sponsor Sullivan Tire)

**Michael Sader** Winner of the \$2,000 Tim Haley 2020 Scholarship Award (funded by Sullivan Tire and the NETSA Scholarship Golf Tournament) is from Methuen, Massachusetts.

Michael is a 2020 graduate of Central Catholic High School in Lawrence, Massachusetts. He graduated with a 3.37 GPA. He played Varsity Football for Central Catholic for four years as an offensive tackle. He earned a Varsity Letter for this sport, was named to the First Team All- Conference in the Merrimack

Valley Conference and was awarded Most Valuable Player for his achievements. He was also a member of the Winter and Spring Track and Field Teams at Central Catholic, throwing shot put. Michael earned a Varsity Letter for Track and Field as well. He was involved with many service programs throughout his high school career, his favorite being his volunteer work at North Andover Youth Center in the Crusade Program, where he taught young adults with developmental disabilities about the game of basketball. Ms. Lisa Finneran, School and College Counselor, Central Catholic says: “Michael is a kind and cooperative young man. He is dedicated, sincere, as well as polite and gracious. He will succeed and go great places....”

Outside of school, Michael worked as a grocery bagger for Market Basket in Salem, New Hampshire for one year. He currently delivers pizza for Romano’s Pizza in Methuen, Massachusetts.

Michael will be entering his freshman year at High Point University in High Point, North Carolina this fall. He has an anticipated graduation date of May 2024, with a Bachelor’s Degree in Business Finance and Marketing and a minor in Sports Management. His future goals are to work for a professional sports team as a manager, marketer, or in their finance department.

Michael’s father, Pierre Sader, is the owner of NETSA member Quick Stop in Plaistow, New Hampshire.

**Congratulations Michael!**

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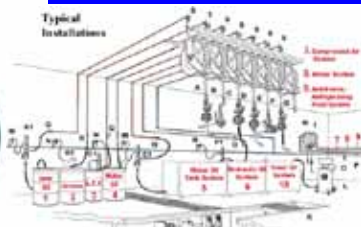
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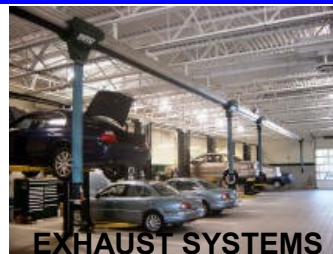
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(L-R) Mike Daigle – Pete’s Tire Barn – Sponsor, Kerrie Virgin – Mother, Rachael Virgin – Recipient, William Virgin – Father, Bruhm’s Tire & Service Member Employee



(L-R) Cassie McDermott – Mother, Riley McDermott – Recipient, Leo McDermott – Father and Mohawk Rubber Sales member employee (Not pictured – Sponsor Town Fair Tire)

**Rachel Virgin** Winner of the \$2,000 Pete’s Tire Barn 2020 Scholarship Award (funded by Pete’s Tire Barn and the NETSA Scholarship Golf Tournament) is from Saugus, Massachusetts. This is Rachel’s second time being awarded a NETSA Scholarship.

Rachel is a 2018 graduate of Saugus High School, in Saugus, Massachusetts where she graduated with a 4.46 GPA. Throughout her four years of high school, Rachel attained academic excellence while completing Honors Level and Advanced Placement (college level course work). This achievement led to her induction into the National Honor Society. Michael Bontempo, Technology Teacher, Saugus High School, who has known Rachel for five years says: “she is a mature young lady...always willing to lend a hand to those less gifted. Rachel Virgin is among the very finest students I have had in 46 years of teaching.”

Rachel will enter her junior year at Boston College in Boston, Massachusetts this fall. She plans on earning a degree in Secondary Education, specializing in English. After graduation she will pursue a Master’s Degree and Massachusetts’ Teacher Licensure. She has a passion for literature and writing and would like to share her passion with young students. Her long-term goals are to pursue a doctorate degree and teach on the college level, as well as to one day publish a novel. At Boston College, Rachel is a member of the Bystander Intervention Program, a sexual assault prevention program which strives to create a safer campus. She is a member of BC’s Bell Choir, and the Thrive Mentorship Program, a weekly reflection group led by seniors.

Rachel’s father, William Virgin, is an Auto Mechanic at NETSA member Bruhm’s Tire and Service in Saugus, Massachusetts.

**Congratulations Rachel!**

**Riley McDermott** Winner of the \$2,000 Town Fair Tire 2020 Scholarship Award (funded by Town Fair Tire and the NETSA Scholarship Golf Tournament) is from Hingham, Massachusetts.

Riley is a 2018 graduate of Hingham High School in Hingham, Massachusetts. He will be entering his junior year at Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio this fall. He currently has a GPA of 3.5. He has an anticipated graduation date of May 2022. His major is Mechanical Engineering with a minor in Business. Post-graduation, he would like to pursue career options that focus on robotics and programming.

Riley is part of the Ohio State University Honors Program and serves on the Executive Committee. He is a member of Phi Sigma Theta Honor Society, a National Honor Society dedicated to recognizing and rewarding academic achievement in undergraduates at institutions of higher learning. Riley is a member of the Eco Club where student participants convert a donated vehicle into a hybrid electric vehicle. The project must emphasize fuel economy, lower emissions, and consumer acceptability, and the team competes against teams from other universities. His team won First Place in 2019. Riley also serves as Host for the Center for Cultural Interchange.

Outside of school, Riley has worked for the Hingham, Massachusetts Recreation Department. He was a Camp Counselor in 2017 and 2018. In 2019 he was promoted to the Summer Management Team where he managed campers as well as forty counselors. Mr. Mark Thorell, Recreation Director for the Hingham Recreation Commission thinks very highly of Riley. He says Riley is: “strong, energetic and motivated....” Additionally he says: “Riley’s work ethic and commitment...consistently demonstrates the characteristics of a natural leader and true team player.”

Riley’s father, Leonard McDermott, is the Controller for NETSA member Mohawk Rubber Sales in Hingham, Massachusetts.

**Congratulations Riley!**



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(L-R) Tom Maguire – Sponsor –Max Finklestein Tire and NETSA Board of Director , Sophie Putnam – Recipient, Amy Putnam-Sanden – Guardian and Pete's Tire Barn member employee

**Sophie Putnam** Winner of the \$2,000 Max Finklestein 2020 Scholarship Award (funded by Max Finklestein and the NETSA Scholarship Golf Tournament) is from Athol, Massachusetts.

Sophie is a 2020 graduate of Athol High School in Athol, Massachusetts. She played baseball and soccer throughout her four years of high school and was a valued member of both teams. She served her fellow students for four years on Athol High School's Student Council and served her senior class as an officer. Sophie was a member of Students Against Destructive Decisions for four years, and a four-year member of "84 Group", a Massachusetts statewide movement of youth fighting tobacco use. Sophie was a member of the Drama Club in her senior year. Through these groups she was involved in numerous fundraising activities and community service events, like Meals on Wheels and the North Quabbin Food Drive. Ms. Heather Berlin, School Counselor, Athol High School says: "I would describe Sophie as hard-working, resilient, and determined." Ms. Kristen Killay, Social Studies Teacher at Athol High School says: "Sophie has shown me to be a driven, compassionate, and remarkable young lady."

Outside of school, Sophie has worked for Athol Summer Playground as a Counselor for four years, and the Athol Board of Health Tobacco Control as a Youth Inspector for the past three years. Also, she currently holds a position in Environmental Services at Heywood Hospital. Sophie will be entering her freshman year at Mount Wachusett Community College in Gardner, Massachusetts this fall with an anticipated graduation date of May 2022. She will pursue a degree in Nursing.

Sophie's guardian, Amy Putnam-Sanden, is Assistant to the President for NETSA member Pete's Tire Barn in Orange, Massachusetts.

**Congratulations Sophie!**



Laura Paiva – Mother, Taylor Paiva – Recipient, Kevin Paiva – Father and Pete's Tire Barn member employee (Not Pictured – Sponsor Michael Garzone)

**Taylor Paiva** Winner of the \$2,000 Tom Lyons Tire 2020 Scholarship Award (funded by Mike Garzone and the NETSA Scholarship Golf Tournament) is from Fall River, Massachusetts. This is Taylor's third time being awarded a NETSA Scholarship.

Taylor is a 2016 graduate of Durfee High School in Fall River, Massachusetts where she was active in the Marching Band, Concert Band, and her school's Symphony Orchestra. Achieving Honor Roll level all four years ensured her induction into Durfee's National Honor Society.

Taylor graduated from the University of Massachusetts in Dartmouth, Massachusetts in May 2020 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology and with a minor in Mathematics. She graduated with a 3.88 GPA and the distinction of being named to the Chancellor's List or Dean's List for all semesters enrolled at the University.

Dr. Whitney Hable, Professor of Biology at the University of Massachusetts has said that Taylor is: "a kind and easy going individual who has been a pleasure to have in the lab." She goes on to say that Taylor's scores: "place her in the top 5% of students," that she has taught over fifteen years at the university. In the Developmental Biology Lab, Taylor studied the effects of sunscreen on fucoid algae development and was awarded a grant by the Office of Undergraduate Research to fund her research. In April 2020 Taylor presented her work at UMass Dartmouth Sigma Xi Exhibition and won second place out of sixty participants. Spring semester 2020, Taylor took a course titled Biology Capstone which brought together her interest in genetics and cell biology. Her independent project focused on Parkinson's Disease. Dr. Hable said Taylor: "synthesized the information into a clear model of the cellular mechanism, a comprehensive summary of how the disease impacts the patients and care-givers, how it is treated, and future directions. Taylor presented her work in a symposium-style poster session, that was well-received by her peers and by Biology faculty."

Taylor will be entering graduate school this fall at Boston University in Boston, Massachusetts, with an anticipated graduation date of May 2022. She will pursue a Masters Degree in Epidemiology and Biostatistics. She will be working in a graduate lab focusing on understanding vaccine hesitancy in low-income communities.

Outside of school Taylor works as a Sales Associate at Target in North Dartmouth, Massachusetts. In 2019 Taylor worked as a tutor at the STEM Learning Center at UMass and as a Teaching Assistant in Dr. Hable's Lab.

Taylor's father is Kevin Paiva, Store Manager for NETSA member Pete's Tire Barn in Providence Rhode Island.

**Congratulations Taylor!**



(L-R) Larry Lemier – Father and Pete’s Tire Barn member employee, Tyler Lemier – Recipient (Not Pictured – Sponsor Brian Hajdasz, Modern Tire of West Hartford)

**Tyler Lemire** Winner of the \$2,000 John DeSimone Memorial 2020 Scholarship Award (funded by Modern Tire of West Hartford and the NETSA Scholarship Golf Tournament) is from North Windham, Connecticut. This is Tyler’s third time being awarded a NETSA Scholarship.

Tyler is a 2018 graduate of Arts at the Capitol Theater (ACT) Performing Arts Magnet High School in Willimantic, Connecticut where he graduated with a 3.72 GPA. Throughout his four years he achieved academic excellence. He was inducted into ACT’s High Honors Society as a sophomore, as well as the National Society of High School Honors. He participated in food drives and other fundraisers to help those in need and was a major contributor to every school show, video, and school assembly during those four years. Stacy Vocasek, English Teacher at ACT describes Tyler as: “diligent and hard-working.” She goes on to say that: “he is extremely dependable and exemplifies a reliable work ethic.” Tyler continues to volunteer his services at ACT.

Tyler will enter his junior year at Roger Williams University located in Bristol, Rhode Island, this fall with an anticipated graduation date of May 2022. He continues to pursue a career in Cyber Security where he can help people and establish a feeling of safety and security. Tyler made the Dean’s List at the conclusion of his Fall Semester 2018, Spring Semester 2019, and Fall Semester 2019. His current GPA is 3.714. Upon graduation Tyler would like to pursue a job with a state or federal agency within Cyber Crime.

Outside of school, Tyler has worked as a custodian for Windham Public Schools, as a Concession Stand Attendant at the Mansfield Drive-in, and he worked as a Security Officer for Foxwoods Resort Casino. He is presently a member of Roger Williams University Stage Crew and works university events. Colin Clephane, Assistant Manager of Event Operations at Roger Williams describes Tyler as a hard-working, dependable young man, who respects his job and his supervisors and is always open to increasing his knowledge when the opportunity arises.

Tyler’s father is Larry Lemire, who is a Tire Technician for NETSA member Pete’s Tire Barn in North Franklin, Connecticut.  
**Congratulations Tyler!**

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## EXPERT TIPS CAN HELP PROTECT YOUR BUSINESS FROM NEEDLESSLY LOSING MONEY ON CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS

The system that allows you to collect money from your clients can also be costing you more money than it should—sometimes a lot more. That's because there are hidden costs that reduce your bottom line without you realizing it!

We all know that running a business costs money. You have all the typical expenses, such as rent, employee salaries and benefits, insurance, marketing, equipment, etc. Furthermore, if you accept credit cards—and almost everyone does—you have an expense that comes with this capability. What most don't realize is this revenue collection system can also cost you significantly more money than it needs to, acting as a "silent siphon" that slowly takes money out of your business.

There are ways to reduce this cost and to optimize the fees that you pay. Unfortunately for most people, the credit card industry has made it impossible to really understand exactly what it is you are paying for. To start with, there are hundreds of different cards (there are now over 700 different VISA®, MasterCard®, and Discover Card® categories at last count), many of which have different costs spanning a very wide range: from 0.05 percent of the transaction total to over three percent of the transaction total.

On top of the hard cost of the credit card used, there are dues and assessments imposed by the card associations, monthly fees tacked on by the processor, costs for equipment (most of you have heard of free credit card equipment, however we all know nothing is truly free), gateway fees, transactions fees, PCI compliance and non-compliance fees; the list can go on and on!

## YOUR RATE VS. ACTUAL COST

Choosing a credit card processor is not all about your rate. Many times, I've been told, "I have the lowest rate, as we have looked at this expense many times." While that might in fact be true (although many times it isn't because it's not always that simple to see what your true rate is), it doesn't mean that you have the lowest cost. Other factors make up the total cost of accepting credit cards besides the markup your processor is charging you, and there is almost no way a business owner will ever be able to digest and understand the intricacies of this industry.

So, what do you do? You need to find a third-party expert that understands every aspect of the industry, knows all the costs behind accepting cards, and is someone that can help your businesses digest the information and make

sure you are processing both optimally and at the lowest cost. I want to share just a few of the factors you need to understand.

## WHAT ELSE IS THERE BESIDES PRICE?

First, your business must use proper procedures when accepting a card. It is entirely possible that the same card taken by your business can cost you different fees depending on how it is accepted. Most businesses should already understand that if the customer presents you their card and it is swiped into the terminal, it cost less than when you have to take the payment at a later date and the card is not present (unfortunately many businesses can't avoid this issue, as it is just the nature of the industry); what most businesses don't know, however, is that the information you enter into your system when you charge the card that is not present will determine the cost of the transaction. There can be several reasons why your business is not getting the lowest rate possible on each and every card not present: The individuals charging the card were not educated on proper procedure. Your staff is too busy to be worried about the details. Your processor did not set you up correctly, because they will make more money when your staff is not paying attention. Yes, this can be true. Depending on your rate structure, it is actually more profitable for the processor when you don't enter in all the important information for each transaction! Unfortunately, some sales people in the industry will either not understand this and you end up with equipment that is not programmed correctly, or they will intentionally set up your equipment improperly because they know they will make more money.

Not knowing proper procedure can siphon off anywhere between 0.5 to three percent of your gross profit, which can translate to over five percent of your net income. Imagine that adding a few simple steps to your daily procedures can increase your income five percent!

Another example is proper coding. Once again, the credit card processing industry has made things difficult. There are a couple of simple coding errors that can cost you thousands of dollars a year. When you initially sign up for processing services someone will usually help you fill out the application. Even though this person might have completed it perfectly and you double-checked everything, the application now has to be entered manually at the processor in order for your account to be activated. If the person entering this information is not paying attention, or had a bad morning, is under the weather, or maybe didn't get enough sleep, they can make mistakes, such as: Making an error when entering your SIC (standard industry code) incorrectly. This can potentially increase the cost to accept certain types of credit cards. I have seen this happen many times in my career. One particularly bad example I recall is a medium sized business being charged thousands of dollars a year over what they should have because someone entered the wrong code.

Making an error when entering how you accept cards. If the ratio between how often you swipe a card vs. how often you take payment over the phone or through the internet is not accurate, this seemingly little mistake can once again cost you thousands of dollars a year. Unfortunately, these and other errors will normally go undetected as no one monitors your account to ensure that you are processing optimally. Once you are signed up and processing, you will rarely talk to your processor unless something goes wrong. What all merchants need is someone who works for them, who is on their side, and whose incentive is to keep their processing costs as low as possible.



GfK’s US Tire panel continues to expand, having recruited over 200 more shops in just the past few months. This growth puts us that much closer to launching our weekly/regional reporting. In the interim, our weekly Leader Panel continues to inform the market on sales trends. “While COVID-19 had a huge impact on tire retail, the market is rebounding at remarkable speed,” says Neil Portnoy, Managing Director of POS Tracking (Tires) at GfK. “Our Leader Panel provides an early indicator of emerging trends, helping US manufacturers and retailers make the decisions that will build a strong recovery.”

### Key Findings from June 2020:

Segment	Monthly: Unit share change vs. year ago	Monthly: Units % change vs. year ago	Monthly: Dollars % change vs. year ago	Year-To-Date: Units % change vs. year ago	Year-To-Date: Dollars % change vs. year ago
<b>TOTAL TIRES</b>		-2.0	-2.5	-10.2	-9.1
Non-Light Truck*	-0.2	-2.2	-4.1	-10.9	-10.7
Light Truck	0.2	-0.9	2.9	-6.4	-3.4
18"+ RD	1.0	1.2	0.3	-3.9	-4.6
Non-Light Truck*	0.2	-1.1	-3.9	-5.6	-7.3
Light Truck	0.8	16.6	18.6	6.6	7.0
UHP Speeds	-0.3	-6.0	-9.4	-14.2	-15.1
Run Flats	-0.3	-23.6	-22.2	-25.4	-24.5

\*Non-LT tires includes P-Metric, Euro-Metric, and Hard-Metric tires

- As seen in the monthly data, sales continue to rebound towards pre-COVID-19 levels.
- Year-to-date, however, we are ~10% behind last year’s pace (both units and dollars)
- Tires used on “essential” vehicles, like delivery trucks and construction pickups, continue to outperform the overall market.
- Discretionary purchases, like non-LT 18"+RD (regular passenger car) and run-flat tires, are down.
- A shift towards lower-tier brands continues (not shown in table).
- GfK Consumer Pulse studies in June indicated that consumers will focus on limited travel, relying heavily on personal cars (not ride share, planes, trains). Expectations are that this will result in continued growth in tire sales, especially discretionary vehicles. To watch our last COVID-19 Webinar, [click here](#).

# Returning to Office... or Not?

Blog Transcript; Wayne Rivers, Family Business Institute - August 2020

The Road Runner  
Fall 2020



Hello. This is Wayne Rivers at The Family Business Institute. Thank you for tuning in as always. Click on our social media icons, don't forget your comments. And best of all, sign up for our upcoming Boot Camp class, or sign up your high potential rising leaders anyway.

This week I want to talk about returning to the office and obviously 2020 has been filled with surprises. And one of the surprises is that we all are participating in the world's

biggest work from home experiment. It was March 15th, everything went virtual and some of us are still coping with the ramifications of not being able to get in very easily to our offices. So, some of this information comes from an article from the Harvard Business Review, July 15th of this year. And it kind of explores the positives of this working from home experiment, the negatives, and then where to go next. And so those are the three things that I really want to talk about today.

So, let's talk about positives. Well, productivity was expected to fall down considerably. That's normally what happens in work from home situations, lots of companies have tried it. And actually, the trend was going away from virtual or working from home situations in favor of people coming back into the office. Even the big IT companies out West that started that progressive movement realized that they got more productivity from their employees when people were together in the office. Now, why is productivity up this time? I don't know and the Harvard people didn't know either, but I do have a theory.

It's kind of like that old, maybe a parable I'm not sure, about a king lands his troops on a foreign beach in an attempt to invade that land and he burned his ships behind him, giving them no possibility of retreating back and going home again. They had to win, or they'd be slaughtered. And this is kind of the same thing, we didn't have any choice. We had to figure it out, all of us had to figure out new things. I'd never used Zoom before and probably none of you had either. But we learn all these new things and the learning curve was pretty steep, but we managed to overcome it. So, productivity is high, that's the first positive.

Job satisfaction was reported to go down for most people the first few weeks of the pandemic, but it's now come back to a normal level. So, that's a positive. People seem to be better balanced in their work life combination now. Obviously if you're at home, you have more access to family and children than you did before when you were in the workplace all the time. So, work life balance, people may be working at night now after their children have gone to bed, but they're still getting their work done, which is the important thing.

A real positive, no commuting and no travel. So, we're not getting on airplanes to fly across the country for a two-

or three- hour meeting and then flying back again. So, that's quite a time savings that's benefited everyone. I keep reading about the people who have gained weight during the pandemic because they're home and they're able to eat more. But in my neighborhood, it looks like people are fitter than they were before. People are out exercising. You've cut out all of that commuting and all that travel. Meetings are shorter than they used to be. So live, face to face meetings, there tends to be a lot of conversation versus productive communication and so meetings have become a little bit shorter.

Now negatives and these negatives to me are significant. The lack of unplanned interactions. I can't tell you how many of our members in our peer groups have talked about the informal communication that they have when they're together. They get value out of the formal part of our meetings too, but the informal communication and the informal communications that we have in the hallways here at The Family Business Institute, we're surrounded by super talented people. And having that many smart people in one place that you can just feel the ideas bouncing around, it's like electrons. It's just energizing and that's something that is missed. Employees reported to the Harvard researchers that they'd increase their communications with their closest associates by about 40%, but at the expense of their more distant associations, those were actually down quite a bit. So, the lack of that interaction, that live face to face interaction, is problematic. Onboarding new people is problematic when you can't see them and train them and that's just filled with problems.

Harvard talked about the weak ties that people have together, this relates to the first point. But they said that organizational performance and attaining milestones is directly correlated with what they call weak ties. And we don't have those weak ties when we're not together face to face and in-person.

Zoom fatigue, this virtual meeting stuff, it was so necessary at first, but now people are really excited about the prospect of getting back together live and in person this fall in our peer group meetings. So, Zoom fatigue is a very real thing and that's a negative.

And then the lack of being able to just provide pointers. When you're in the office and you walk down the hallway and you see a colleague sort of

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scratching his or her head wondering, how do I do this or how do I solve this problem? The inability to offer those pointers and that guidance and the benefit of experience in all those things is missing.

Okay, now what do we do next? What do we do next? We can't put the toothpaste back into the tube. So virtual meetings and working from home are going to be a part of the equation going forward, so five quick pointers there. Number one, be flexible. Some people really enjoy working from home and find it really, really works for them. I don't care for it personally, but some people do. So, we're going to have to be flexible in our requirements to be in the office live and in person versus virtual.

Second thing, you've got to be crystal clear. For people who aren't around and are missing those weak ties and those unplanned interactions, you've got to be crystal clear, your vision, your mission, your priorities. If you can't be crystal clear in your priorities as the leader, then you're going to have a really hard time holding people accountable for their own priority. So, you have to be crystal clear, plans, priorities, milestones, vision, mission, all those things.

The third thing is avoid creating two classes or two tiers of employees. It's natural because we're humans. It's natural to be closer to people that we see live and in person versus people that just sort of report in virtually. So, you really need to be careful that the people who elect to work from home and that you allow to work from home, that you're including them in meaningful ways so they don't feel like they're left out of company activities and interaction.

The fourth thing, you've got to have a working from home policy. You're going to have to formalize it. There are going to be people who try to take advantage, and there are going to be employees who perceive that other people are trying to take advantage. So be crystal clear and have a formal written working from home policy as we go forward.

And then finally, number five, establish your communications rhythms. We have an all hands once a week meeting, some virtually now, right? But that is very important to us just to remain cohesive as a group, because we've got people flying all around the country and people doing work in far flung locations. And so, having that touch point, that every single week meeting that people can count on, where we do get to cut up and share some soft things, as well as the agenda items that we have, is super important to us. So, I'd like to hear what you're doing to normalize things as we cope with this virtual world that we live in now and I'd like to hear your philosophy on returning to the office. This is Wayne Rivers at Yhe Family Business Institute. Thank you.

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# Sorry, that's our policy!

By Nancy Friedman, Keynote Speaker; Customer Service Expert; President, Telephone Doctor Customer Service Training

The Road Runner  
Fall 2020



Few business phrases can be as disheartening and conversation-stopping as "Sorry, that's our policy." Rules, regulations, and policies are there for a reason, and ideally, your team members will provide the best service possible within those guidelines. But the reality of some situations is that a one-size-fits-all approach simply doesn't always fit.

Sometimes, customers make reasonable requests that may run counter to the black-and-white rules outlined in your company's policy. The

important thing for you, your employees, and your organization to consider is that your customer is your customer: they're normally not out there to rip you off or to bend the rules merely for the sake of bending the rules. Sometimes, standing too firm on a policy will alienate and ultimately lose your customer. That's a frightening consequence considering that getting new customers is far more difficult and expensive than retaining your existing ones.

## So what's the answer?

Let's take a step back. There's an old joke that goes something like, "There are two kinds of people in the world: those who believe that everything can be divided into two categories...and the rest of you." When it comes to delivering world class service, not everything can be divided into two categories, into absolute right or absolute wrong. But sometimes, employees may act out of fear—such as fear from messing up, not doing the right thing—rather than compassion, and compassion and empathy are where the solutions exist. Let's take a look at what each of these words mean:

- **Compassion** means being able to feel the concerns and misfortunes of others, especially when they're not your concerns or misfortunes.
- **Empathy** is the ability to understand and share the feelings of others.

Neither of these mean "pity," which is about feeling bad for someone else. Compassion and empathy are about feeling alongside another person, taking into account what it would feel like if it were happening to you. Or, in short, it's being able to put yourself in another's shoes.

When you say, "Sorry, that's our policy," you've immediately shut the door on compassion and empathy. You've created an "us vs. them" dynamic that can be a very steep hill to climb. And rather than retreating to the lead-lined bomb shelter of company rules and regulations, what if you stepped into the customer's shoes and considered what he or she were experiencing? Are you able to make a second effort to accommodate a client's reasonable request? Maybe extenuating circumstances truly put the customer in a bind that caused the "policy referees" to reach for their penalty flags.

In today's world of abundance and information, many companies and competitors likely provide services similar to yours. This is another area where empathy and compassion become game-changers. By encouraging your employees to exhibit these traits and to meet reasonable customer requests, you are doing two hugely important things:

**You are differentiating yourself from the competition.**

1. You are encouraging an environment of authenticity, which builds client trust.

The first point is a cornerstone of marketing: offer something that no one else does. But the second? Just try and put a price tag on building customer relationships.

Now all of this isn't to say that every customer sob story needs to be met and mopped up with an endless supply of tissues. That's why you'll find the word "reasonable" used throughout this post. This also doesn't mean that logic needs to be thrown out the window and that your company should be moved to a picturesque mountainside retreat where you talk about feelings and hug out all of your client issues. Logic and emotion are both entirely useful, vital components to any business.

Yes, logic without emotion is cold, sterile, and unfeeling, but, as Daniel Pink writes in *A Whole New Mind*, "Emotion without logic is a weepy, hysterical world where the clocks are never right and the buses always late. In the end, yin always needs yang."

Pink goes on to note that it's our ability to be logical that makes us human. But our world is saturated with information and analytical tools, the rules and regulations of company policies. In other words, logic alone just doesn't cut it.

What separates those who merely exist and those who succeed are the folks who recognize the humanity of our professions. Simply stated, expressing care and concern for your customer can forge and strengthen relationships.

***And that's a policy that anyone can support.***

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Dental health can affect how well children learn in school. Many children with dental problems struggle to learn. They may lack self-confidence and are reluctant to smile. Parents and caregivers can help children do well in

school by teaching good dental habits. Review these tips for better dental health for children.

### Early stages of decay

When children are born, their 20 baby teeth are already present in the mouth below the gums. The early stages of tooth decay often begin when children are young – when the first teeth erupt. Sugars in foods, juice and milk linger around the new teeth and lay a foundation for tooth decay.

### Common problem

Tooth decay is a common infectious disease. It can affect dental health for children of all ages.

- About 20% of children ages 5 to 11 have at least one tooth with decay.
- Nearly 13% of older children ages 12 to 19 have untreated tooth decay.

Parents and caregivers can help protect children's smiles. Create a [toothbrushing and flossing chart](#) to remind them to take care of their teeth. Each time they successfully complete their weekly dental care tasks, celebrate.

### Teach good habits

Most children don't know how to take care of their teeth on their own. They need to be educated on the subject. Plus, it doesn't take a lot of time. Practice good dental habits together. This will go a long way in caring for your children's smiles. Make it a fun time for kids to take care of their teeth. In the process, you'll help them develop good habits for daily tooth care. Here are six tips for healthy teeth:

- 1. Wipe baby teeth** – As teeth poke out of the gums, wipe them daily with gauze to remove plaque.
- 2. See the dentist by age one** – Parents or caregivers should schedule a child's first dental checkup by age one. The dentist will check for the correct development of their teeth and gums and look for early signs of decay.
- 3. Use fluoride toothpaste** – As soon as the first tooth appears, start using fluoride toothpaste made for kids. For children age 3 and younger, brush with a dab of toothpaste (about the size of a grain of rice). For kids older than age 6, use a pea-size amount. Show them how to rinse and spit in the sink.
- 4. Brush daily** – Kids' teeth should be brushed twice daily, for two minutes each time, after breakfast and at bedtime. Follow these toothbrushing tips to ensure success.
- 5. Floss between teeth** – As soon as teeth get close enough to touch, gently floss between them once each day.
- 6. Schedule regular dental visits** – Schedule a dental checkup one or two times a year, as directed by the dentist. These regular exams and professional cleanings are vital to a lifetime of healthy teeth and happy smiles.

In addition, help children focus on school by making sure they have good vision and hearing.

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# Vote Yes on Question 1

Tommy Hickey, Mass Right to Repair

The Road Runner  
Fall 2020



I am writing to you today with 9 weeks to go before the November election where Right To Repair will be one of two questions before Massachusetts voters.

Remember, 86% of MA voted in favor of the Right To Repair Question in 2012, but by this year, 2020, advancements in vehicle technology and increasing restrictions by automakers will result in more than 90% of new cars being equipped to transmit real-time diagnostic and repair information wirelessly to vehicle manufacturers, threatening the rights that we enjoy today to choose to get our car fixed at trusted independent repair shops or do the work ourselves.

Without an update to this law our trusted independent repair shops will be unable to fix their loyal customers cars and thus consumers will have less choice and pay more for their car repairs. The spirit of the Right to Repair Law was to ensure a consumer's right to get their car repaired where they choose - technology advancements should not impair that choice!

There are over 3,000+ independent repair shops and auto part stores in Massachusetts who rely on access to repair and diagnostic information to properly repair vehicles. It's critical that this question passes at the ballot so that we can protect mostly importantly the rights of consumers, but also the 30,000 jobs in our independent repair and auto parts industry.

You may have seen ads on both sides of Question 1 as car manufacturers are using egregious scare tactics to continue to hold a monopoly on wireless repair information. Both cyber security experts and law enforcement concur that giving the owner of the car their own car repair information can be done safely and securely - This legislation and ballot initiative do NOT cover GPS or personal information!

We're almost there! Request a sign to put on your lawn and put a bumper sticker on your car and most importantly come out (or mail in) and vote YES ON QUESTION 1 to protect your car repair choice this November!

Warm regards,  
Tommy Hickey  
tommy@massrighttorepair.org  
617-939-4965 (c)

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Vinnie Daboul – (603) 932-6472

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## Legislative Monitoring

NETSA is constantly monitoring the State Legislative activities concerning the Tire & Automotive Industry in all six New England States. We have actively participated in representing our members' views on many such legislative issues.

## Marketing & Analytics

### **TireTutor - NEW**

Jimmy Gogan – (781) 205-9148

Our goal is to make buying tires easy for the consumer while driving business back to independent dealers. Our comparison-shopping website brings visibility to local dealers, helping them compete with larger chains and online retailers. Our proprietary software helps dealers understand where their pricing stands in the marketplace. We offer a free 3-month trial of our platform, followed by a discounted NETSA rate.

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Jim Rogers (860) 250-2076

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## Publications

### **Road Runner:**

Our Newsletter is published four times a year (March, June, September & December) with information & fun articles. Free to members.

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### **Optimize Social Media**

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# The Road Runner

*The Newsletter of New England Tire & Service Association*

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