

# KEYNOTES

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the state of locksmithing —  
and how to prepare  
for the future



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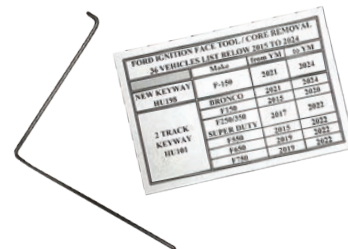
**BD1070** | TriMark KS970 KS960  
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## FORD IGNITION FACE / CORE REMOVAL TOOL

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# KEYNOTES



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# SAFE Dealers...

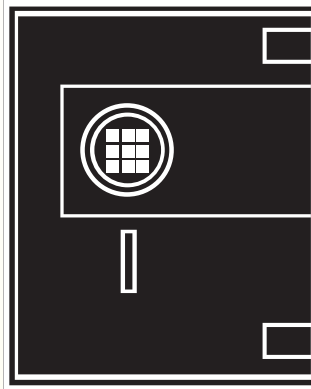
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***The Turn 10 Ladies:***  
Top Row: Lisa, Stephanie  
Bottom Row: Vivian, Melissa

# KEYNOTES

December 2024 | Volume 70, Issue 12

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CMIL, CML, CMST, ARL

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### 2001-2003

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### 1999-2001

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### 1993-1995

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### 1991-1993

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*Keynotes* (ISSN 0277 0792) is published monthly except for combined January/February and July/August issues by ALOA Security Professionals Association, Inc., 1408 N. Riverfront Blvd., Dallas, TX 75207. Subscription rates are \$25 per year for members. Periodical class postage paid at Dallas, Texas and additional offices.



# The State of the Industry

**T**HE THEME OF THIS ISSUE OF KEYNOTES is the state of the industry. Would you like to make a difference in the industry? Run for a position on the ALOA board. Teach a class. Mentor a new locksmith. There are many ways to help the industry grow and be better. All you need to do is step up and try to help.

Is the industry dying? I do not think so, but some aspects are slowly drying up. Residential locksmithing has come under assault by big-box stores and Amazon, eBay, etc. With the mass movement to purchasing on the internet, people can buy the same locks as we do for sometimes less than we pay our distributors. However, buy one of these locks and take it apart. It is often made much cheaper than what we buy at our distributors. Put it on your counter so you can show the customer what they are buying and how you can sell them better locks.

Car keys and fobs are all over the internet. Sometimes they work, and sometimes they do not. The average consumer has no idea what kind of car keys and fobs they need or how to tell if they bought the right thing. And then they need them cut and programmed.

Does your customer need a master key system? You can't buy that on the internet. Take a few classes and learn how to do this kind of work. Make money. That is the name of the game. While a computer program can spit out the numbers, it cannot tell you how to use the numbers to achieve the end result your customer wants.

## Take Classes for Rounded Knowledge

I hear all the time that locksmiths do not need to take classes, as everything is on the internet now. While there is a lot of good information out there,



**Bill Mandlebaum, CML**  
President  
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[president@aloea.org](mailto:president@aloea.org)

“  
There are many ways to help the industry grow and be better. All you need to do is step up and try to help.  
”



there is also a *huge* number of staged videos and people (not locksmiths) trying to show how much they *think* they know. With a little background information from classes, you can usually tell who is knowledgeable and who is not.

Why take a class from ALOA (either at the conventions or online)? The ALOA classes are designed to teach about *all* the different manufacturers' locks of that type and not just one brand. You can then advise your customers about what would work best for them. Take care, and I hope to see many of you at the various shows and events.

*W. Mandlebaum*

# A Look Back at 2024

## IT'S BEEN A GOOD YEAR HERE AT ALOA SPAI.

We had two fantastic, successful conventions in 2024, and we've made some positive changes in ALOA Education that have benefited members.

At SAFETECH 2024 and ALOA 2024, attendance was up, and we held new classes at each convention. Additionally, this year saw the return of free evening seminars for convention attendees. We had so much interest at SAFETECH that we had to call in volunteer instructors to assist! At the ALOA Convention, we had up to seven seminars in one evening, which is incredible. This is one way we've added value for those attending conventions — free education!

Education is at the cornerstone of everything ALOA does, and that shows in how we use our resources. But education also is a source of income for ALOA through class and certification fees. In addition to bringing in the more than \$366,000 in convention education income this year, ALOA SPAI had nearly \$230,000 in other education income. This came from things like PRP testing, the AFDI program, the Fundamentals courses in Dallas and other such areas. We continue to reduce expenses so we can offer more programs and increased member services.

## Membership Renewals

As the end of the year approaches, don't forget to renew your membership! Renewals can be done online at [www.aloamembers.org](http://www.aloamembers.org) and are due by December 31 and. Log in to see and pay your invoice. If you need assistance or have any questions, please contact us at [membership@aloea.org](mailto:membership@aloea.org) or (214) 819-9733. We are always happy to help.



**Mary A. May**  
Executive Director  
[mary@aloea.org](mailto:mary@aloea.org)

“Education is at the cornerstone of everything ALOA does, and that shows in how we use our resources.”



Don't forget to send in your ALOA board elections nomination forms! See pages 21 and 22 for more information and the form. In 2025, we will be electing the president and the Southeast, North Central, Southwest and Associate directors.

For ALOA to serve its members best, we rely on the active, engaged involvement of its board members in steering the association. If you're passionate about the future of the industry and want to help shape it, consider running for an open position if you're eligible. This is your association, so why not be a bigger part of it?

If you can't run at this time, consider getting more involved in other ways: Ask to join a committee, teach a class, or volunteer at a convention. Or perhaps you'd like to send us concrete ideas on possible new programs or benefits. Get in touch with us at [membership@aloea.org](mailto:membership@aloea.org). We'd love to hear from you.

I hope you enjoy the rest of your holiday season! Thank you so much for your support, and we look forward to seeing you all in 2025.

*Mary A. May*



# STRIKING ADAPTABILITY



45-4SU  
UniFLEX™



55-AU  
UniFLEX™



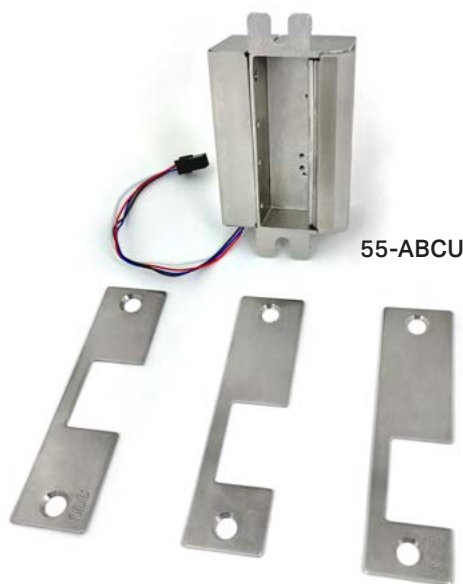
25-4U

## Back to Basics: Electric Strikes

In 1982, SDC's first electric strike design initiated the adoption of strikes by the door hardware industry. Then, we engineered the UniFLEX™ 45 and 55 series – the first electric strikes with interchangeable faceplates and field reversibility for failsafe or failsecure operation. The interchangeable design of these strikes allows SDC to also provide multi-application strike kits that include one electric strike and three faceplates to meet common

applications, making them easy to stock and maintain in inventory.

Today our strikes integrate with a variety of mechanical locksets, devices, door and frame styles. Our less expensive, value-oriented 15 and 25 series are designed with budgets in mind without compromising quality.



55-ABCU



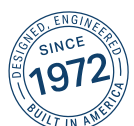
45-A



*the lock behind the system*

sdccsecurity.com ■ 800.413.8783

[www.sdccsec.com/estrikes](http://www.sdccsec.com/estrikes)



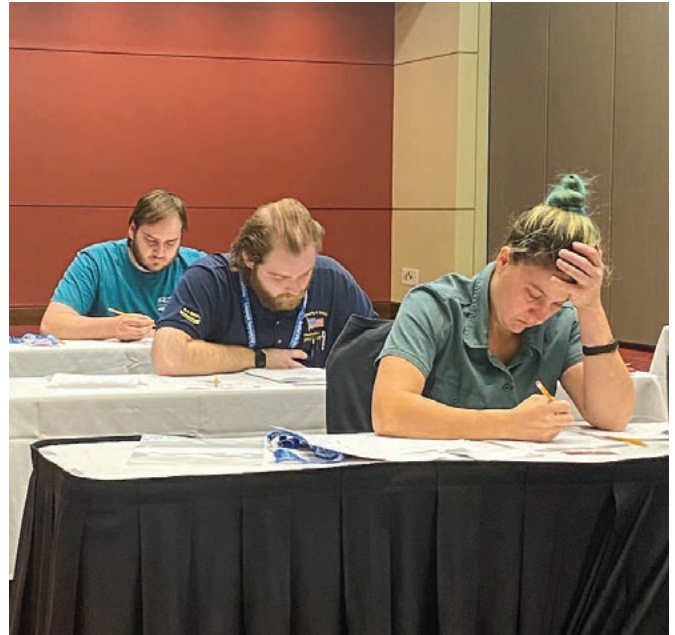


## ALOA Board Nominations Due March 1

**A**LOA IS ACCEPTING NOMINATION FORMS FOR board positions coming open next summer. Positions that will be available include president and directors for the Southeast, North Central, Southwest and Associate regions.

There is a nomination form and information on pages 15 and 16 in this magazine. For questions, please contact membership@aloe.org. Remember to submit your forms by March 1, 2025!

## PRP Sitting at the Yankee Security Convention



At the Yankee Security Convention in October, ALOA held a PRP test sitting. Pictured front to back are test takers Amanda Folcarelli, Eric Bensanceney and James Johnson III. Thank you to everyone who tested!

## New Registration Process for Autel Tools

**A**UTEL WILL IMPLEMENT A NEW REGISTRATION PROCESS to improve the security of its Key Programming Tools. Tools using the new registration will be the KM100, IM508 and IM608 models registered after October 31, 2024.

The new process will include mandatory registration before active use, including a two-step process using an activation code sent by both SMS and email. These enhancements aim to better identify and secure the tools in the event of theft or unauthorized use. For questions, please contact USSupport@autel.com.

## ASSA ABLOY Acquires Lawrence Doors in the U.S.

**A**SSA ABLOY HAS ACQUIRED LAWRENCE DOORS, A U.S. manufacturer of coiling steel doors, grilles and counter shutters.

"I am very pleased to welcome Lawrence Doors into the ASSA ABLOY Group. This acquisition delivers on our strategy to strengthen our position in mature markets through adding complementary products and solutions to our core business," says Nico Delvaux, President and CEO of ASSA ABLOY.

Lawrence Doors was founded in 1925 and has some 120 employees. The main office and factory are in Baldwin Park, CA. Lawrence Doors will be part of the Business Segment Residential within the Entrance Systems Division.



## PRODUCT BRIEFS

➤ **Don-Jo Manufacturing** has new remodeler plates for use with BEST locks. Models available include dimensions of 3½" x 4½", 3½" x 9", 3½" x 15" and 4½" x 14". Finishes include 605, 613, 622 and 630. They are 22-gauge and have four #8 x ¾" Truss Head SMS fasteners.

➤ **CodeLocks** has introduced the XtraD Heavy Duty Gate Lock. This single-point, bolt-through, fixed gate lock is designed for gates needing a coded lock that can withstand tough conditions. It's engineered to work with CodeLocks' CL500 and CL600 mechanical locks for basic access control and the electronic CL5000 lock for time-sensitive codes. It has been tested to over a million cycles, and can have a marine-grade finish and be operated by either a knob or a lever. The heavy-duty latch bolt with a separate deadlocking plunger bolt can be adjusted up to 5/8". For more information, visit [www.codelocks.us/gatesolution-xtradgatelock](http://www.codelocks.us/gatesolution-xtradgatelock).



➤ **Lucky Line Products** released another 20 Hook Combination Locking Metal Key Cabinet. It is compact, has a programmable, triple-tumbler combination lock and comes in the same matte black finish as the previous Locking Metal Key Cabinets. The cabinet also includes plastic key tags with rings and adhesive identification labels. It has a continuous piano hinge, pre-drilled holes and included mounting hardware, and measures 6¼" x 7⅞" x 2⅞". It comes individually or in a case of six.

## NEWS BRIEFS

➤ **AKG Academy** is transforming into the **Locksmith Pro Academy** under the new leadership of **Niki Smith**, director of sales and customer success. Training options range from entry-level to advanced, and courses will be available in person, online and on-demand. Find out more on the new website at [www.locksmithproacademy.org](http://www.locksmithproacademy.org) and follow the Locksmith Pro Academy Facebook page.

➤ As of January 31, 2025, the pdqSMART platform will be discontinued and no longer operational. **PDQ** is offering several replacement options, including solutions from their trusted partners as well as its own newly

released PDQ Spirit Series. The Spirit lineup includes models such as KMS, MRS, GTS, SDS, CLS, and 6EWS locks — all designed for integration with the new PDQ Spirit app.

➤ Until December 31 or while supplies last, **Lockmasters** is offering a \$20 Amazon or Shell Gift Card with every 30 Ilco Transponder Key Blanks purchased.

➤ Registration is open for the **Locksmith Pro Expo**, presented by **Key Innovations** and **UHS Hardware**. It will be held at the Sheraton DFW Airport Hotel in Dallas March 12-14, 2025. For more information, visit [www.locksmithproacademy.org/expo-attendee-registration](http://www.locksmithproacademy.org/expo-attendee-registration).

## CALENDAR

### DECEMBER 2024

December 17-18

#### **ALOA Fire Door Inspector (AFDI) Certification Webinar**

4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Central  
education@aloea.org or  
(800) 532-2562, ext. 101  
Register at [www.aloamembers.org](http://www.aloamembers.org)

### JANUARY 2025

January 21-22

#### **ALOA Fire Door Inspector (AFDI) Certification Webinar**

4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Central  
education@aloea.org or  
(800) 532-2562, ext. 101  
Register at [www.aloamembers.org](http://www.aloamembers.org)

### FEBRUARY 2025

February 12-17

#### **5-Day ALOA Fundamentals of Locksmithing Course**

Embassy Suites  
Dallas, TX  
education@aloea.org or  
(800) 532-2562, ext. 101  
Register at [www.aloamembers.org](http://www.aloamembers.org)

### APRIL 2025

April 6-12

#### **SAFETECH 2025**

Griffin Gate Marriott  
Lexington, KY  
conventions@aloea.org  
[www.savta.org](http://www.savta.org)



### MAY 2025

May 15-18

#### **IAAL Auto Lock Expo**

Cedar Rapids, IA  
conventions@aloea.org  
[www.aloea.org](http://www.aloea.org)



### AUGUST 2025

August 3-9

#### **ALOA 2025**

Hilton Orlando  
Orlando, FL  
conventions@aloea.org  
[www.aloea.org](http://www.aloea.org)



## NEW APPLICANTS

## ALABAMA

Decatur

## ■ Justin Rowell

Lock Doctor

*Sponsor: Michael Paul Sims, CRL*

## ARIZONA

Tucson

## ■ Harvey Arkaw, ARL, CAI

Rabbitsoft

*Sponsor: Thomas R. Demont, AHC, CAI, CFL, CML, CMST, CFDI, IFDI*

## ARKANSAS

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## ■ Andrew Ferguson

University of Arkansas

## COLORADO

Castle Rock

## ■ Nathan H. McClain

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*Sponsor: Barry F. Meyer, CPL*

Grand Junction

## ■ Amanda L Stevens

Simmons Lock &amp; Key

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## ■ Chris DAmico

## FLORIDA

Tallahassee

## ■ Jeremy Enders

Florida State University

## ■ Cody Lawrence

Florida State University

## ■ Paul Denver Porter

Florida State University

## ■ Brendan Stamper

Florida State University

## GEORGIA

Jackson

## ■ Robert J. Perdue III

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*Sponsor: Daniel S. Perdue, ARL*

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## ■ Sean Kimbrough

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South Bend

## ■ William R. Weber

Cyber Foundry

## LOUISIANA

West Monroe

## ■ James E. Green Jr.

The Truck Stop

## MAINE

Waldoboro

## ■ Valdemar C. Skov

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Frederick

## ■ Samuel Wulff, AFDI

Able Locksmiths, LLC

*Sponsor: Christopher K. Christie*

Westminster

## ■ Jennifer White

WFX

## MASSACHUSETTS

Salisbury

## ■ Forrest M. Lazer

Masslock

*Sponsor: Anthony E. Wiersielis, CPL, CFDI*

## MONTANA

Bozeman

## ■ Arthur Erickson

Dave's Lock and Key

## ■ Mark Turner

Dave's Lock and Key

## NEW MEXICO

Taos

## ■ William Iko

Iko's Auto Repair

## PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

## ■ Paul S. Bilker

Lock Systems, Inc.

*Sponsor: Thomas R. Demont, AHC, CAI, CFL, CML, CMST, CFDI, IFDI*

## ■ Elliott M. Kolner

Temple University Health - Episcopal Campus

*Sponsor: John D. Truempy, CRL, CMIL, IFDI, CFL*

## ■ Raymond T. Wible

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## ■ David J. Welch

Northeastern Security Safe &amp;

Lock

## TEXAS

Dallas

## ■ Peter Johnsen

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## ■ Manuel Rodriguez

Hans Johnsen Company

Lubbock

## ■ Ryan Burden

Lubbock Lock and Key

## ■ Roger May

Texas Lock

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## ■ William C. Coppersmith, AFL, CLL

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## ■ Marks C. Ryan, CRL

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## ■ Aaron Thyrell, CRL

Portland, OR

## ■ Wayne Winton, CRL, AFDI, CAI

Glenwood Springs, CO

## WE NEED YOUR HELP

## Attention, ALOA Members:

Help us eliminate the industry scammer problem by screening these applicants, who are ALOA members, to ensure they meet the standards of ALOA's Code of Ethics. Protests, if any, must be made within 30 days of this *Keynotes* issue date, addressed to the ALOA membership department, signed and submitted via email to [membership@aloea.org](mailto:membership@aloea.org) or via fax to (469) 543-5241. For questions, contact Kevin Wesley, membership manager, at [Kevin@aloea.org](mailto:Kevin@aloea.org) or (214) 819-9733, ext. 219.

## IN MEMORIAM

➤ **Ray C. Talton, CPS**, of Talton's Security Systems in Raleigh, NC, has passed. He was a life member of ALOA and had been a member for 38 years. He was a member of SAVTA for 12 years.

➤ **Curtis Robison**, a former *Keynotes* author and ALOA instructor, has passed after a battle with Parkinson's disease.

➤ **Anthony Hoffman**, 69, has passed. He had been a member of ALOA since 1977 and a SAVTA member since 1990.

➤ **Dennis Cacciola**, 73, of York, PA, passed away. He was a member of ALOA for 41 years.



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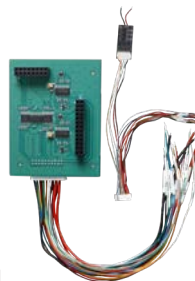


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# SAFETECH Registration Opens Soon!

**T**HE DAY IS FAST APPROACHING — SAFETECH 2025 registration opens in January! Look for registration information and full class listings on SAVTA.org and ALOA.org. There will be classes for every level of knowledge, from beginner to advanced.

If you've been thinking about learning to do safe work, this is your opportunity!



“  
If you've been thinking about  
learning to do safe work,  
this is your opportunity!  
”

There will be classes suitable for those entering the industry, such as Mechanical Lock Combination 101, Basic Safe Opening, Safe and Lock Servicing for Beginners, Common Safe Key Locks and more. In addition, there are so many networking opportunities, and this is an incredibly welcoming crowd. Come make connections, learn and have fun while you're at it.



## SAFETECH 2025

We will also be having free evening seminars! On Tuesday, April 8, attend the Government Security Update seminar and the Ask the Experts panel sponsored by TMi Corp.







## Location

SAFETECH 2025 will be held at the Griffin Gate Marriott in Lexington, KY, April 7-12. This has been a fantastic and convenient location for us the last few times SAFETECH has been in Lexington, and you're sure to love it. There is plenty of on-site complimentary parking for hotel guests, and the rate of \$159 per night (plus tax and \$15 resort fee) includes so much. You get high-speed internet access, complimentary bottled water at front desk, daily bike rentals, pickleball equipment rentals, practice putting green access with rental equipment available, s'mores kits available for use at our outdoor fire pits and more.

Book your room by calling (800) 228-9290 and using the group name "SAFETECH." Reservations can also be made at SAVTA.org. Be sure to book by March 14, 2025, to get the group rate. Reservations made after that date will be based on availability at the group rate.

## Events

This year, we have some great events as well! The Swap Meet has a new night, Wednesday. This is due to an exciting new event this year on Thursday: Sargent & Greenleaf's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration! Join us at Sargent & Greenleaf's facilities to celebrate the company's 50th anniversary. There will be a facility tour, food and drinks. Transportation to and from the event will be provided.

For the Kick-Off Party and Friends of SAVTA Live Auction, we also have something special planned. This year, it will be held off-site at the Lockmasters, Inc. headquarters. This is a unique opportunity to tour its headquarters, learn company history and celebrate its 75th anniversary! This is a great chance to mix and mingle with suppliers and colleagues while raising money for SAVTA. Lockmasters, Inc. has generously sponsored the event for years, and now they get to play host as well. Transportation will be provided to and from the event.

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## Celebrate Lockmasters' 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!

Thank you to Lockmasters for its generous sponsorship

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### IAAL Auto Lock Expo

Don't forget that the IAAL Auto Lock Expo is coming up as well. Join us May 14-17 in beautiful Cedar Rapids, IA. This location in the heart of the country is centrally located and accessible via car from so many parts of the country! We will be at the DoubleTree by Hilton Convention Complex for three days of classes and a trade show. Look for more details soon in *Keynotes* and on [ALO.org](http://ALO.org). 📱



# ALOA Security Professionals Association, Inc.

## Board of Directors Nomination Petition



### What ALOA Board Positions Are Open and Where Am I Qualified to Run?

- There are currently **four regional director positions** open for election in addition to the position of **President**.
- ALOA members now elect the directors from their own regions.
- Only ALOA members from a region are eligible to run for the open position(s) in that region.
- Members from any region are eligible to vote for or run for the position of **President**. **To run for the position of President, one must serve on the board for one year.**
- You must have been an ALOA member for at least three years to be eligible to run for a director position.
- The following vacancies will exist for the election that will be held on June 2, 2025:

President	one position
Southeast	one director
North Central	one director
Southwest	one director
Associate	one director

On this page you will find the required nomination petition, and on the following page, the commitment to ALOA board service form.

The following is the number of signatures required for each board position:

Secretary	25
Southeast Director	11
North Central Director	10
Southwest Director	9
Associate Region Director	1

If you have any questions, please contact the ALOA secretary:  
Tom Foxwell, RL, CFDI, CAI,  
(410) 206-5772 or by email:  
secretary@aloea.org

I, the undersigned, request that \_\_\_\_\_  
(name of nominee and member number)  
be placed on the ballot for \_\_\_\_\_ for the election to be  
(position for which individual is being nominated)  
held at the special meeting of ALOA-SPAI members to be held at the ALOA-SPAI International Headquarters, 1471 Prudential Drive, Dallas, TX, 75235 on June 2, 2025 at 11 a.m. Central time or any adjournment thereof.

I am eligible to vote in the \_\_\_\_\_ region.  
(Associate, International, Northeast, Southeast, North Central, South Central, Northwest, Southwest)

1.	_____	_____	_____
	Printed Name	Member Number	Signature
2.	_____	_____	_____
	Printed Name	Member Number	Signature
3.	_____	_____	_____
	Printed Name	Member Number	Signature
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25.	_____	_____	_____
	Printed Name	Member Number	Signature



## YOUR COMMITMENT TO ALOA BOARD SERVICE

*(Please read carefully and sign where indicated)*

The ALOA Board governs with emphasis on organizational vision rather than on interpersonal issues of the Board; encourages diversity in viewpoints; focuses on strategic leadership rather than administrative detail; observes clear distinction between Board and Executive Director roles; makes collective rather than individual decisions; exhibits future orientation rather than past; and governs proactively rather than reactively. (If you were not supplied a copy of the ALOA Board of Directors Governance Policy with this document, you may obtain one by contacting the ALOA headquarters office, or visit [www.aloa.org](http://www.aloa.org).) The responsibilities of an ALOA Board Member include contributing a moderate amount of personal time, and a significant degree of professional guidance and expertise to the organization.

You will be expected to come to all Board Meetings and the Annual Membership Meeting. You will need to be prepared to sensibly discuss matters of great importance to your profession and participate in setting policy as part of a governing body. Your course of action during your tenure on the ALOA Board should be guided by fair-minded, constructive goals pertaining to matter of consequence for ALOA and for the industry. Your contributions are expected to benefit ALOA as a whole, taking individual member rights and concerns into account but free of the taint of partisan politics of personal gain.

On a practical note, ALOA Board Members are expected to behave and dress professionally at all times, especially when actively representing the association. ALOA Board Members are required to participate in three Board meetings per year, of two or three days in length, one each fall, spring and one during convention, in addition to the Annual membership meeting, which is also held during convention. Incoming Board Members are also required to attend Governance training classes and events during convention. Board Members may also be asked, on a voluntary basis, to represent ALOA at related local, state or regional functions, including serving in the ALOA booth, and otherwise promoting ALOA. When travel is required for a Board Member, expenses covered by ALOA include lodging, travel and a reasonable per diem. The Board has stipulated that assigned travel will be reimbursed at the lesser of the 30-day advance tourist class airfare in effect at the time of travel, or the current per-mile rate for travel by personal automobile, whichever is less. Spouse expenses, including extra room charges, etc. are the individual's responsibility.

I have read and agree to adhere to the ALOA Board of Directors Governance Policies. Furthermore, I understand the above responsibilities of an ALOA Board Member, and agree to commit my time and energies as needed. I certify all of the information contained on this form and supporting documentation to be true and complete.

Candidate Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Member #: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Status:

Active \_\_\_\_\_ Life \_\_\_\_\_ Associate \_\_\_\_\_

Employer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please attach a recent photograph of yourself along with a 150-word-or-less biography and retain a copy of this form for your own files. This form and all supporting documents must be received no later than March 1, 2025. Mail or email to:

Tom Foxwell, RL, CFDI, CAI  
Secretary, ALOA Board of Directors  
1408 N. Riverfront Blvd. #303, Dallas, TX 75207  
Email: [secretary@aloa.org](mailto:secretary@aloa.org) Phone: (410) 206-5772

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# Opportunities for Locksmiths

Dave O'Toole continues his series on how locksmiths can leverage the changing environment to grow their businesses.



*The previous installment in this series was in the October issue of Keynotes.*

**O**NE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL things in life that people require is security and peace of mind. People need higher security, but they also want convenience. They want to secure their possessions but also access them in the shortest possible time with the greatest ease. This usually means secure mechanical locking combined with electronic technology and access control to authorize who can enter and when, along with an audit trail telling who entered and when. The lock market is constantly evolving, with new products constantly coming to the market that locksmiths should be aware of and use.

Door and window manufacturing has changed drastically in recent years. Multipoint locking systems are slowly replacing traditional deadlocks. These new types of locks are not as robust and are more complicated in design. They tend to break quicker and are more difficult to open, which increases the market for locksmiths. There are many brands of multipoint locks, which confuses the end users and their ability to replace them.

New legislation for disabled persons has created many opportunities for

locksmiths to supply and fit products. These may include locks and handles as well as remote control operation in homes or door operators in commercial buildings that need regular servicing and maintenance.

Standards are required for panic hardware to be repaired and fitted in accordance with set guidelines. With proper knowledge of the regulations and using best practices for fitting, this can be a lucrative market for locksmiths.

Repair and maintenance of doors and transom closers is a steady stream of business for some locksmiths. You may be called out to repair a lock and discover that the door has dropped because of worn hinges or pivots. Many locksmiths walk away from this type of job, but with a little training and product knowledge, door repairs and maintenance can be quite repetitive and rewarding — especially in high-traffic areas.

New equipment introduced by key machine manufacturers has made auto transponder keys and diagnostic programming much easier. Many of these machines will program the popular keys that customers need copies of at a low cost.

Electric locks are getting more popular now due to constant failure with magnets fitted by security companies.

Security companies fit magnets because of the ease of installation and low maintenance required thereafter but do not comply with building regulations in many cases. There is a bigger demand now for fail secure locking with inside handle and key override facilities on the outside as there are problems when the power fails or the emergency break glass units are vandalized. Many security companies are afraid to fit these locks, especially on aluminum and plastic doors. There are great opportunities for locksmiths to enter the access control market or to subcontract installation of electric locks for security companies.

Locksmith-friendly wireless access control products are now distributed by all the leading lock manufacturers and suppliers. These are battery-operated handles and cylinders operated by transponder keys or RFID cards. They are much cheaper and easier to install than hard-wired access control systems. Locksmiths have the opportunity to compete against security companies by fitting complete online access control systems at an affordable price without the need for wiring. There is minimum labor and a good margin on the products to make it profitable work, especially in small business and office environments.

The biggest change coming for



locksmiths are smart locks operated by smartphone apps. This market is going to be huge, and we will discuss that later.

### What Type of Business Do You Want?

You have to decide what you want from your business. Do you want an easy lifestyle or to grow the business into something you can hopefully sell and allow for early retirement?

Some locksmiths just love doing the work and are uncomfortable with book-work or employing staff. Others want to grow the business and have many employees to do the work while they concentrate on the business side. Either way, you have to build the business to suit your requirements and abilities and to adapt to changes in the marketplace. The locksmith industry is changing so fast now, with products and technology constantly coming to market that you need to keep abreast of.

### Locksmith Categories

The locksmith business traditionally had different categories and skill sets, and each area has its own opportunities for growth.

- General locksmithing, including residential and commercial
- Physical security, including door repairs and physical barriers and gates
- Automotive
- Safe work
- Electronic security

Most locksmiths start doing general locksmith work and then branch into other sectors. This is either due to a preference and love of a particular sector of the business, falling into it or being forced to it for economic reasons. Traditionally, most locksmith companies had a retail shop where they cut keys, sold locks etc. In recent years, the trend for

“  
If it's professionally run, a retail shop can be very profitable, but you should treat it as a standalone business to maximize its potential.  
”

most new companies is to have a mobile operation as a sole trader.

### Mobile Locksmiths

Many locksmiths operate their locksmith business from a van, which any type of locksmith service work can be run from. The benefits of having a mobile operation include:

- Low startup costs
- Low running costs
- High net profit
- Flexible working hours
- Less administration and paperwork
- Opportunity to chase work in slack times

There are some drawbacks to working solely from a van, including:

- Working from home
- Usually a 24-hour, 7-day service
- Difficulty with taking holidays and sick days if working alone.
- Driving license and reliable vehicle necessary
- Reliant on good mobile phone coverage

Many mobile locksmiths rely on emergency work. This is a reactive business and gives no control over your time or daily schedule. There are now many other trades offering this type of service, and professional locksmiths need to distinguish themselves. Locksmiths working solely mobile need to supply a service that the typical handyman or general maintenance companies do not

provide. It's vital to have several strings to the bow and supply specialist services such as:

- Installing own profile master key systems
- Aluminum/UPVC multipoint locks and door repairs
- Specifying and fitting high-quality burglar-resistant locks and hardware
- Fire and ADA hardware
- Car opening and programming new keys
- Safe opening and repairs
- Smart and electronic locks for homes and businesses
- Wireless access control systems
- Automatic door operators

### Retail Shop

Some locksmith companies start off mobile-only but graduate to having a retail or industrial unit when the business grows or they start providing specialist services or just want a base to operate from. A retail shop can be an important part of a locksmith business, as it provides high visibility in the local community and reassurance to customers. A shop can generate additional income, although it will usually have direct competition from other types of local businesses that offer key cutting and locks. Retail shops are not as profitable as they used to be due to the high cost of opening and operating them. The following pros and cons need to be considered if opening a shop.

### Pros

- Key cutting and retail sales possibilities
- Workshop and office facilities
- Sales display area
- Main road/street presence
- Legitimacy and customer reassurance
- Customers come to the shop
- Set daytime hours

- Steady cash flow with retail sales
- Repeat commercial customers
- Generates outside work
- Foundation to expand the business

### Cons

- High fit-out and startup costs
- High running costs, including rent, property taxes, staff, etc.
- Dedication and ability to work in a shop environment when necessary
- Theft and pilferage (staff and customers)
- Subject to rent reviews and increasing costs
- Short leases can be terminated
- Higher level of stock items going obsolete
- Threat of local competition in the future
- Staffing problems (holidays/sick days)
- Consistent and expected opening hours
- Constant worry of burglary, fire and flood
- Street logistics can change with parking, pedestrianizing of streets, change of traffic flow etc.

Although the traditional retail lock shop faces increased competition, there are still many opportunities to increase sales and opportunities. A well-located shop in a busy town can easily advertise and promote:

- Own security key section with repeat key cutting
- Master key systems
- Copying RFID tags and fobs for apartment blocks
- Keys by code for office furniture and lockers
- Auto transponder key-cutting, repairing and recoding car locks
- Copying remotes for cars and garages
- Aluminum and UPVC locks sales and repairs to the trade and end user

**In recent years, the growth in electronic security and access control has been phenomenal.**

- Supply locks and ironmongery to local boards and hospitals, etc.
- Fire and panic hardware and DDA products
- Handles and brassware
- Roller shutter repairs
- Safes and fire cabinets for local homes and businesses
- Electric locks and access control products
- A call-out service

There are other services that locksmith shops can provide to increase sales and revenue.

This should only be done if necessary and they do not disrupt your core business. Some ancillary services provided by locksmith shops to encourage customer traffic or that may have been provided before doing lock work include:

- Engraving
- Signs and rubber stamps
- ID badges
- Tools and hardware
- Sharpening
- Shoe repairs

If it's professionally run, a retail shop can be very profitable, but you should treat it as a standalone business to maximize its potential. Constant investment is needed to keep abreast of changing technology, particularly with key cutting. Every couple of years, newer and better machines come on the market. These machines are normally electronic, all singing and dancing, and come at a great cost. Unless a machine brings

value to your business or cuts down on labor time, do not be tempted unless you have the money to spend or you want to minimize your tax liability. You are better off investing in marketing and retail stock that you can sell to generate instant profit.

Having a shop generally means that you employ staff and have a more structured business to run. Staff can either make or break you, and we will deal with that in a later chapter. The cost of running a shop is increasing every year, and you should pay special attention to the actual running costs and profits generated. Outside service work should contribute to the running costs because of the workshop and office facilities, but the shop itself should be self-financing. Some companies with profitable service contracts are financing the shop and reducing the owner's income substantially.

### Industrial Units

Some locksmiths are now finding the typical shop in busy retail areas unsuitable for their business. The street landscape may have changed, or they have outgrown the premises. Some have relocated to an industrial unit in an out-of-town location. There are many advantages to an industrial unit if you have big-account customers or specialized services, or want to concentrate on your outside service work. Some reasons worth considering:

- Cheaper rent and rates per square foot
- Improved parking for delivery and collection facilities
- Bigger sales showroom and office space
- Improved storage and workshop areas for security safes
- Drive-in auto service bay
- Better investment for retirement if they buy a unit.

## General Locksmithing

General locksmith work can include:

- Key cutting, rekeying and making keys to locks, primarily in the shop
- Supply, repair, installation, and opening of locks and door hardware on the road
- Basic fundamentals in safes, autos and electronic work to supplement sales

General locksmith work is now considered basic and is taught in “fundamental locksmith” courses run by ALOA. I have seen many different claims advertising “Start your own locksmith company for less than €3,000 (\$3,145).” These courses are inadequate and only provide very basic training but do provide competition against professional locksmiths. There is an urgent

need to upskill with new products and services to overcome this threat, as 80% of traditional locksmith work can now be done by handymen because of the popularity of basic deadbolt locks and the ease of opening, rekeying or replacing them.

## Physical Security

Many locksmith companies originated from carpenters who did door, frame, and window repairs and still continue to do so. In many areas, it has become necessary to fit steel sheeting to doors and bars and grills to windows due to the high crime rate.

In recent years, there has been a demand for high-security doors and grilles that are aesthetically pleasing. Although customers want high security, they do not want to feel they are living

in a prison. Many products are available to fit to doors and frames to secure them from forced entry, including frame bars and lock shields. These provide added security, are not too hard on the eyes and provide an alternative to expensive security doors.

There are opportunities to fit other physical deterrents, like driveway bollards to prevent car and caravan thefts. Parking posts are used in commercial car parks, and ram bars have been fitted in front of premises to prevent ram raids. With proper tools and equipment, these products can be fitted quite easily.

## Auto Locksmithing

More locksmiths have recently gotten involved solely in auto locksmith work. This is a very specialized area, dealing



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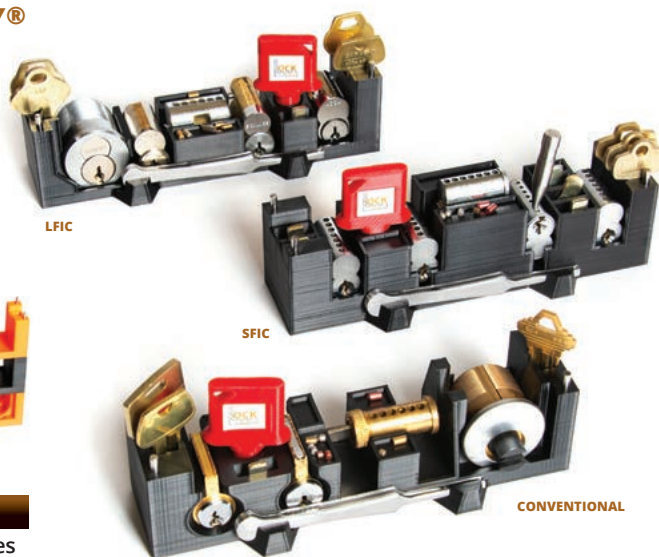
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with transponder keys and electronic control units that garages and body shops cannot service their customers with, especially in emergencies. The locksets and control units for cars are so expensive to replace that there is a huge demand for repair. You can get involved gradually in auto locksmith work by:

- Duplicating transponder keys
- Repairing broken key fobs and replacing batteries
- Opening vehicles
- Supplying and fitting security locks to vehicles
- Repairing locks and making keys roadside
- Programming ECUs

Huge investment is required to specialize and offer a complete auto locksmith service. There is a lot of expensive machinery required, including computerized key machines and diagnostic equipment. Good soldering is a must for repairing ECUs. If there are no specialist auto locksmiths in your area, it is worth considering entering this market, as there is a growing demand with high margins for auto locksmiths if run properly.

### Safe Work

Safes have always been an integral part of a locksmith's work. Many still advertise as "locksmiths and safe and vault engineers." Locksmiths work on safes due to the historical practice of sales and installations. Safe work can be categorized into different sections:

- Supply and installation
- Safe moving
- Opening and repairs
- Retrofitting digital locking mechanisms
- Time and delay locks
- Cash deposit facilities

“Safe sales are not as lucrative for locksmiths as they used to be.”

Some locksmiths love the challenge of opening safes and invest time and money in learning professional techniques so they can work solely as safe engineers. The cost of specialist picks and scopes is quite high. They should be treated with care, as they break quite easily.

Safe sales are not as lucrative for locksmiths as they used to be. There are many specialist safe companies that supply and maintain safes for large companies and banks. Some safe suppliers are supplying, installing and servicing safes to end users through their own websites and office equipment suppliers. Internet sales of safes have skyrocketed but with very low profit margins, which has seriously affected safe techs' retail sales.

### Electronic Security

In recent years, the growth in electronic security and access control has been phenomenal. This market has been dominated by security and alarm companies that have always run cables as part of their business. Locksmiths generally have been slow to get involved in this sector mainly due to a fear of wiring and electricity. New technology has changed that with battery-operated digital locks, battery-operated motorized euro cylinders, electronic handles and cylinders, while electronic key systems are so simple to program and install. These products give full access control facilities with no hard wiring and reduced labor costs. This is a huge advantage over the traditional hard-wired access

control systems fitted by other security companies. Nearly every lock manufacturer produces electronic cylinders and handles.

There is still a huge demand for hard-wired keypads, proximity card systems, magnets, electric locks and intercom systems, especially on main entrance doors to commercial buildings and multifamily housing units. Associations and manufacturers have many classes for locksmiths to learn about these products. Locksmiths have an advantage in that they are more capable of fitting electric locks that are more secure than the magnets fitted by security companies for ease of installation. There is a massive market out there for access control, and it is the fastest-growing market in our industry.

CCTV systems, security alarms and gate automation are more complex to supply and install and are regulated to ensure proper and safe installation and maintenance. Investing in proper education will pay dividends.

Management software is a booming business. This allows the property manager to control who can access a door and when and monitor activities in a building. There is additional revenue to be earned in selling software products with a subscription model. There are many software packages that operate with an open platform on most lock brands. 📱



**Dave O'Toole** is the European Director for ALOA and president of the European Locksmith Federation. He has owned and operated a locksmith business in Dublin, Ireland, for 41 years. He is the founder and owner of Bella Smart Lock, a hands-free smart lock technology for the elderly and people with disabilities.



# ALOA

## ALOA Security Professionals Association, Inc.

# Membership Application

### CANDIDATE PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT

Name: ☐ Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Ms. First \_\_\_\_\_ Last \_\_\_\_\_ MI \_\_\_\_\_ Designation \_\_\_\_\_

Business Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth (required) \_\_\_\_\_ Place of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security # (required) \_\_\_\_\_

US Citizen? ☐ Yes ☐ No If No, citizen of what country? \_\_\_\_\_

ALOA occasionally makes its members' addresses (excluding phone numbers and email addresses) available to vendors who provide products and services to the industry. If you prefer not to be included in these lists, please check here: ☐

### PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION

Please check the description that best describes you (check all that apply)

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Locksmith Owner     | <input type="checkbox"/> Automotive            | <input type="checkbox"/> Employee Technician              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electronic Security | <input type="checkbox"/> Security Professional | <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Door Locks & Hardware |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Institutional       | <input type="checkbox"/> Safes                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Investigative                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____         |  |   |

Are you licensed to perform Locksmith/Access Control work in your state? ☐ Yes ☐ No If Yes, License # \_\_\_\_\_

Business License # \_\_\_\_\_ EIN # \_\_\_\_\_

Any other license held by applicant (Contractors Lic., Low Voltage) \_\_\_\_\_

Any other states you do business in and licenses held in those states \_\_\_\_\_

List all phone numbers used by your company/companies: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Employees \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Store Front Business ☐ Mobile Only

How did you learn locksmithing/access control? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you worked in the locksmithing/security industry? \_\_\_\_\_

ALOA member Sponsor Name/Who introduced you to ALOA?

Sponsor Name (Required) \_\_\_\_\_ ALOA Number \_\_\_\_\_ Years known \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been a member of ALOA before? ☐ Yes ☐ No If Yes, when? \_\_\_\_\_ ID #, if known \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a member of any local locksmith association? ☐ Yes ☐ No If Yes, name of association: \_\_\_\_\_

Give the names and phone numbers of two industry-related references:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Company \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Company \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

**IMPORTANT:** Have you ever been convicted of a felony? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please give details on a separate sheet.

All convictions are reported to the Advisory Committee for review.

A routine background check is performed on all new applicants, unless you live in a State in which passing a background check is a part of the licensing requirements. Non-US citizen background checks are required. If you live in a country that does not allow third party background checks, you will be required to submit an authentic report upon request (no copies/duplicates allowed) before final membership approval can be granted. A copy of your business permit/license, license number, business card, company letterhead or suitable proof of employment in the locksmith/access control business must accompany application.

## TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP AND REQUIREMENTS

Check only one box from the categories listed below:

### Active Membership

Persons actively engaged in the locksmith/access control industry for a minimum of two years and have achieved one of ALOA's recognized program designations.

- |  |       |  |       |
|--|-------|--|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> US and US Territories | \$285 | <input type="checkbox"/> I elect to Go Green | \$240 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> International         | \$295 | <input type="checkbox"/> I elect to Go Green | \$210 |

### International Association of Investigative Locksmiths Membership

Must be an ALOA Member in order to join the IAIL.

- |  |      |
|--|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> US and US Territories | \$65 |
|--|------|

### Probationary Membership

Persons undergoing training to qualify as an Active member, who have not received one of ALOA's recognized program designations. No person shall be a probationary member for more than three years.

- |  |       |  |       |
|--|-------|--|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> US and US Territories | \$285 | <input type="checkbox"/> I elect to Go Green | \$240 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> International         | \$295 | <input type="checkbox"/> I elect to Go Green | \$210 |

### Probationary Membership – No Sponsorship Required

Persons undergoing training that are new to the industry and do not know any Active member for sponsorship. Probationary period extended from 90 days to one (1) year. Probationary status lifted if sponsor acquired within year. Must obtain license if residing in State requiring licensure. A second background check will be performed by ALOA after 2 years of the 3 year maximum term. Any violation of ALOA Code of Ethics during probationary period will result in immediate termination of membership.

- |  |       |  |       |
|--|-------|--|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> US and US Territories | \$285 | <input type="checkbox"/> I elect to Go Green | \$240 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> International         | \$295 | <input type="checkbox"/> I elect to Go Green | \$210 |

### Allied Membership

Persons whose position in the locksmith/access control industry relates to locksmiths, and cannot qualify for any other class of membership.

- |  |       |  |       |
|--|-------|--|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> US and US Territories | \$285 | <input type="checkbox"/> I elect to Go Green | \$240 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> International         | \$295 | <input type="checkbox"/> I elect to Go Green | \$210 |

Note: Your application will be processed with a 90 day waiting period.

Any institutional locksmith not using his/her work address must submit a letter from employer stating that you are an institutional locksmith.

## DUES AND FEES

An application fee and the appropriate dues must accompany the application in order for processing to begin.

Application Fees Schedule:

US and US Territories .....	\$80
Canada, Denmark, Ecuador, New Zealand.....	\$170
Australia, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bermuda, China, France, Haiti, Philippines, UK .....	\$210
Israel, Korea, Papua New Guinea, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates .....	\$360

Applicants from countries not listed must submit background check and report from local Law Enforcement with application.

## FINAL CHECKLIST

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Required Proof of Employment in Industry | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Annual Dues Amount                       | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Application Fee                          | _____ |
| Total Amount Due  | _____ |

## METHOD OF PAYMENT (Effective 2/1/2024 there will be a 3% surcharge on all credit card payments.)

- ☐ Check   ☐ MasterCard   ☐ Visa   ☐ American Express   ☐ Discover

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_ SEC \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name on Card \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I understand and consent that in the course of reviewing this application ALOA may review publically available information for the purpose of verifying the information submitted and do a background check.

I certify that all statements are true and, if accepted as a member, I agree to abide by the rules, regulations, and Bylaws of ALOA, and further agree to adopt the Code of Ethics of ALOA as my own, and adhere to it to the best of my ability. Should my membership be discontinued, I agree to return my membership card and cease use of all ALOA insignia.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Dues, Contributions, Gifts are not deductible as charitable contributions for Federal income tax purposes. Dues payments are deductible as an ordinary and necessary business expense. However, donations made to the Legislative Action Network ARE NOT deductible as a charitable gift or business expense.

### Return to:

ALOA, 1408 N. Riverfront Blvd #303, Dallas, TX 75207

Fax (469) 453-5241 • Email: [membership@aloea.org](mailto:membership@aloea.org)



# Education: Today, Tomorrow and Forever

By ALOA SPAI Director of Education William M. Lynk, CML, CPS, ICML, CMIL, CAI, M.Ed.

**O**FTEN, THE YEAR-END brings a time of reflection and the desire to map a new direction. We look at what we have done that has proven successful, what has failed and what we can do to right a path that may be askew. So, too, does the security industry. And sometimes the most obvious answer is right in front of us: education.

## Change Is Constant

Trends will change, products will become obsolete, and others will take their place. Technical data will continue to proliferate, and the internet AI will continue to influence our direction. Techniques will be modified, distribution methods will be updated, and the workforce will undergo changes. Policies and procedures will be restructured. Customer bases will fluctuate. Methods of manufacturing will be modernized, marketing approaches will be expanded and opportunities in the profession will be reorganized. One thing that will *not* change is the need to stay on top of these factors — and education is the way to do it.

*“There is nothing in this world constant, but inconstancy.” — Jonathan Swift (1667-1745)*

Over the centuries, notable individuals who were more worldly and eloquent than I have commented on various

aspects of education. I will include more of their thoughts below. But you may ask: “What exactly is education?” One dictionary defines education as:

*education - noun. 1. the act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and generally of preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life. 2. the act or process of imparting or acquiring particular knowledge or skills, as for a profession.*

## Education

Education is a combination of learning, experience, knowledge, teaching, reading, writing and ability. With the proper blending of these factors — and with patience — one’s future can be appropriately shaped. Education is definitely an ongoing process that never really ends. The true locksmith security specialist will learn until final expiration, an inevitable consequence of life. So, why not embrace that which molds the future of one’s direction — lifelong education?

*“The great aim of education is not knowledge, but action.” — Herbert Spencer (1820-1903)*

The beauty is that education comes in many forms and not just via formal training: daily activities, reading, writing, conversation, trips, leisure activities and even through occasional blunders.

However, advancing in a focused manner is fundamental to developing and sharpening skills, knowledge and experience — the backbone of any excellent locksmith. Education is a gradual, ongoing process that requires focus and patience to produce its best outcomes. The fruitfulness of your locksmithing career depends on it.

*“Patience is a long lane that has no turning.” — Samuel Richardson (1689-1761)*

## Learning

Even as infants, we learn as we grow. The art of learning is the art of knowing. Learning can be done in many ways, from formal classroom education to apprenticeships and book learning. Do what suits you best, and try different approaches so your level of knowledge blossoms.

*“All men by nature desire to know.” — Aristotle (384 B.C. – 322 B.C.)*

## Experience

The more training you get, the more exposure you have in the field. Networking accelerates, and your job experience multiplies. Things may even get easier. But don’t worry or feel ashamed about making mistakes — it’s a great way to learn. Thomas Edison was once asked how he felt about failing 99 times before inventing the lightbulb. He replied, *“Oh, I didn’t fail 99 times, I just learned 99*

ways how NOT to make a lightbulb.” It’s all perspective.

“Experience is the name everyone gives to his mistakes.” — Oscar Wilde (1854-1900)

## Knowledge

Education can certainly offer many great things. Wisdom is often the ultimate reward. It’s all within your power to ensure your education gives you whatever you want and need.

“Knowledge is power.” — Francis Bacon (1561-1620)

## Teaching

I am proud to have been teaching for 51 years in various scenarios. Regardless, I have found that I always learn when I teach. Mentoring young locksmiths is also an excellent way for you to not only give back to the industry, but you will learn as well. Your impact on a young, budding locksmith may be the single most influential career opportunity for that person.

“A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.” — Henry Adams (1838-1918)

## Reading

Be sure to take advantage of all the free technical manuals written by manufacturers and industry scholars. Take five minutes daily to familiarize yourself with a topic you may not know or are rusty on. Education does not have to be costly.

“Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body.” — Joseph Addison (1672-1719)

## Writing

Don’t forget to write down your yearly goals. Adjust your written business plan regularly. Make sure education is part of your professional development. If you have the knack, write for industry magazines and your local locksmith

**I have found that I always  
learn when I teach.**

association. Whether you realize it or not, you, too, have gems of wisdom for your colleagues that should be shared. Just do it.

“The chief glory of every people arises from its authors.” — Samuel Johnson (1709-1784)

## Ability

The success of your security career will depend on your ability to synthesize all these elements of education into one cohesive unit that will work for you. Yes, the industry is changing — that we know. But the direction it will grow and how it welcomes the younger generation is partly your doing. As long as you are prepared to play a part in its metamorphosis, your career will be bright.

“A man who qualifies himself well for his calling, never fails of employment” — Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826)

## ALOA Resource

For over 50 years, ALOA has offered premium opportunities for locksmiths and security professionals to stay current and expand their skill levels through its top-notch educational programs. That being said, be wary of only exposing yourself to YouTube videos and “quick fixes” found on the internet. Some of that material is good, but it is often laden with misinformation and inaccurate information. We all need to avoid complacency concerning our own education. When we do not know something, it simply means we are ignorant of those facts. It’s not a slam; it’s just the truth. Our goal should be to stay informed with accurate and reliable

information that sheds a positive light on our profession and helps us to maintain professionalism.

“Ignorance is the night of the mind, but a night without moon or star.” — Confucius (c. 551 B.C. – 478 B.C.)

## Conclusion

I will leave it up to the industry soothsayers to predict the industry’s future, trends and overall health. What I *can* do is advocate for continued education in this profession so we all have the capacity to “ride the wave” of change and better adapt to whatever it may bring. Being prepared through formal education is like providing nourishment to one’s body. And there’s no escaping it: Every moment you breathe, you’re being educated in some way. So, don’t fight it — some things are forever! Allow education to be an integral part of your business strategies, as it’s a fundamental part of your everyday life. Your future — and the future of the industry — depends on it.

“We know what we are, but know not what we may be.” — William Shakespeare (1564-1616)



**ALOA SPAI Director of Education William M. Lynk, CML, CPS, ICML, CMIL, CAI, M.Ed.,** has been a locksmith since 1975 and is the owner of

[www.ICLSglobal.com](http://www.ICLSglobal.com). Bill is an IC specialist, an industry author, the subject matter expert on IC for ALOA, and an ALOA ACE instructor, teaching classes on interchangeable cores and master keying across the country. He has originated SFIC Technical Manuals for both national and international lock manufacturers, and maintains a working relationship with the major lock and security manufacturers throughout the world. In 2013, he was named *Keynotes* Author of the Year.

# One Membership. Endless Value.

When you join **ALOA Security Professionals Association Inc.**, you're not just becoming a part of the preeminent association for security professionals worldwide. You're also becoming a part of the industry's future — and you're securing your own future as well with the endless benefits and invaluable networking.

Join today and get all these benefits and more.



## Professional Development

- Webinars for members
- *Keynotes* magazine with actionable technical information
- Certification programs to show your expertise to customers
- Discounts on classes at ALOA and SAFETECH conventions and the IAAL Auto Lock Expo, plus classes at ALOA headquarters



## Business and Marketing

- Free listing in FindALocksmith.com – free leads for your business!
- Free \$15,000 industry bond
- Referrals
- ALOA Job Center
- Access to insurance policies for medical, dental, life, vision and more



## Advocacy and Networking

- Participate in state and federal licensing issues
- Legal guidance and advice on locksmith scammer practices
- Connect with the foremost experts in the industry at conventions, via the member directory, through technical support and more



[www.aloa.org](http://www.aloa.org)  
[membership@aloea.org](mailto:membership@aloea.org)

**Start your membership  
application today!**  
[bit.ly/ALOAMemberApp](http://bit.ly/ALOAMemberApp)







# The Future of Our Industry

**O**UR KEYNOTES THEME this month is “Future of the Industry.” What can we expect in the coming years, how should we prepare for the future, and — perhaps most importantly — how can we shape our future?

Inside the investigative locksmithing realm, there is good reason to believe that the future can be bright. I consulted with Tom Demont, who has pointed out that investigative locksmithing is its own specialty career within the locksmithing profession. It intersects with the highly technical and professional field of forensics, but it is also its own field of study. It is an area that professional forensic investigators and attorneys typically have limited experience with.

This career requires the best of the best in locksmithing, stretching our skills to demanding professional standards that derive from the investigative and legal communities. This career requires such in-depth knowledge that the field can be broken down even further into specialized sub-disciplines.

Perhaps the most active or in-demand of those sub-disciplines is automotive. With luxury and collectible cars costing six figures and more, there is serious demand for qualified investigative automotive locksmiths. According to Tom’s experience, the second-most sought-after skill set for investigative locksmithing is for doors, frames, codes

“  
All the trends toward  
specialization and differentiation  
will be increasingly  
important in the future.  
”

and hardware expertise. Finally, safe and vault investigations continue to be a highly tuned field of knowledge as well, requiring many years of experience in this field.

Some real-life examples of cases given to investigative locksmiths are:

- Reports of stolen vehicles
- Swinging door injuries
- Automatic or sliding door injuries
- Door closer injuries
- Safe opening determinations
- Safe lock malfunctions
- Door lock malfunctions
- Cylinder lock opening determinations
- Padlock openings
- Fire door and life safety code violation liabilities

Have we missed any? Let me know.

If you are one of the few studying the skills to stay current and certified in these specialized disciplines, as a forensic or investigative locksmith, you can distinguish yourself, build an impressive CV to establish a highly professional brand and attract a unique

clientele. Professionalism and success breed more customer demand and even greater success.

All the trends toward specialization and differentiation will be increasingly important in the future. As products, tools, attack techniques, and knowledge become more and more specialized, and as liability damages grow and the world becomes a more dangerous place, investigative locksmiths will need to work hard to stay ahead of the curve. Education, networking, certification, specialization and dedication will become even more critical. Choose your area, study, do the research and succeed.

As for the future, what might be best of all about investigative locksmithing? AI won’t be replacing this expertise anytime soon! 📧



**Clyde T. Roberson, CML, AHC, CPP, CMST, CFMST, AMKS**, is president of the International Association of Investigative Locksmiths. Email him at

[iailpresident@aloa.org](mailto:iailpresident@aloa.org).

## GET PUBLISHED!

IAIL members: Submit your articles for the Investigative Spotlight department. Send your information to Tom Demont at [thomas@assatechnicalservicesinc.com](mailto:thomas@assatechnicalservicesinc.com).



# Institutional Locksmith Career Essentials: **Understanding the Americans With Disabilities Act**

Steve B. Fryman CRL, CAI, CISM, AFDI,  
tells you what you need to know.

*This is the fifth article in a series about fundamental skills and knowledge necessary for institutional locksmiths. The fourth article in the series pertained to writing and establishing key control/issuance policy.*

*Key areas and points covered in the fourth article:*

- **Steps in creating policy**
- **Establishing a purpose statement**
- **What the policy is for**
- **Who the policy applies to**
- **Why the policy is needed**
- **Where the policy applies**

## ■ **When the policies apply**

*Sample policy provided contains:*

- **Objective**
- **Overview**
- **Key levels/required authorizations**
- **Policy basics**
- **Chargeable/non-chargeable key issues**
- **Record keeping**
- **Audit**
- **Electronic access control**
- **Non-university locks**

**J**USTINDART, A SUCCESSFUL entrepreneur, is often thought of as the father of the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990. After leaving university, he had ambitions of becoming a schoolteacher. Due to his disabilities, he had to teach from a wheelchair and was denied a teaching certificate.

## **Presidential Power Given to Disabled Advocates**

In 1981, President Ronald Reagan appointed Dart as vice chair of the

National Council on Disability. As an appointed advocate, Dart traveled the country. His mission was to meet with other disability advocates.

### Political and ADA Advocates Partner to Promote Bill

The National Council on Disability gained political power and got the backing of Senator Lowell P. Weicker, a Republican from Connecticut. Along with Congressman Tony Coelho, a Democrat from California, he introduced the ADA bill of 1988, but it unfortunately did not pass that year. In 1989, the bill received support from Senator Tom Harkin, D-Iowa.

### Final Passage of ADA into Law

On March 12, 1990, 60 ADA advocates left their wheelchairs at the foot of the capital steps and crawled 83 steps as a demonstration to urge lawmakers to pass the ADA.

The ADA was signed on July 26, 1990.

History has not been kind to people with disabilities in the U.S. Disabled people had been marginalized and discriminated against, prohibited from attending schools and often denied employment. They were often forced to live in institutions, segregated from society.

Many were separated from their families as children. The institutions that most children were sent to were inhumane, warehouse-like situations. An example of the cruelty was evident in Georgia State Hospital grounds. The discovery of approximately 30,000 unmarked graves is appalling. This had gone on for decades.

### A Movement Started

A grassroots moment was born out of the disgust and poor treatment of disabled

“  
At our institution, we have encountered challenges with ADA compliance, particularly in the older parts of our campus.  
”

people. This took place during the civil rights movement. These were all basic rights that were being denied to people simply because of their disabilities.

### ADA Then and Now — Revisions

On September 25, 2008, an amendment was accepted by the 110th Congress to give more clarity to the ADA enacted in 1990. In 2010, there were more revisions, with technical corrections and guidance on regulatory provisions. Title III considers communications. This could range from providing visual translation at public events to providing large print for publicly circulated documents from municipalities and states. Does this directly affect us as security professionals?

### How We Should Relate to ADA Regulations

At our institution, we have encountered challenges with ADA compliance, particularly in the older parts of our campus. Much of the hardware there is not compliant with ADA-required lever handsets. As spaces are renovated, new ADA-compliant hardware is installed. In addition, if there is a need in an older building for compliant hardware, we will always accommodate. This process of identifying non-compliant areas, planning for renovations, and ensuring accommodation in older buildings is a practical example of how to relate to ADA regulations in our work as

institutional locksmiths.

That's not to say that there isn't wheelchair accessibility in every building, regardless of building age. This means that every public building on campus has ramps, and automatic operators on two of its entrances and accessible restrooms.

There is a sizable portion of our facilities budget that goes toward maintaining and renovating space to make it more accessible. We have redesigned space in buildings for both staff and students, making their work and learning space more accessible. This includes parking spaces outside of handicap entrances, providing greater accessibility to the building itself.

### Personal Satisfaction

There's a deep sense of satisfaction in knowing that our work is contributing to the greater good. Our efforts to provide greater accessibility to staff, students, and the public significantly enhance their quality of life, and this is something we can all be proud of.

Our sole motivation should be people-driven rather than compliance-driven. This kind of mindset gives us satisfaction knowing that we are adding to society, not just taking from it, — and it fosters a sense of connection and empathy with those we serve.

### Dealing With Repairs Related to ADA Power-Operated Doors

This year, I created an in-house response to repair and replace automatic door operators rather than contract the work out. We have spent millions of dollars over the years maintaining our automatic doors. There was a significant learning curve, with many hours of research.

I want to share with you some of what was learned.



## Who Controls the Automatic Door Operator industry?

You should be familiar with American Association of Automatic Door Manufacturers (AAADM).

The information below was taken directly from the AAADM website:

1. As a prerequisite to taking the AAADM Certified Inspector Training Program, a candidate must be an individual who has a) worked in the automatic pedestrian door industry for 6 months immediately preceding the application for an AAADM training course or b) worked in the automatic pedestrian door industry for at least 90 days immediately preceding the application for an AAADM training course and has taken the factory training course of an AAADM member.

An individual who has worked in the automatic pedestrian door industry is directly employed by a company in the industry that sells, services, or installs automatic pedestrian doors that comply with ANSI/BHMA A156.10 as its primary business or a person employed by an AAADM member company or a company with a current distribution agreement with an AAADM Full Member company to sell full power operated doors that comply with ANSI/BHMA A156.10.

Individuals directly employed by end users, including but not limited to the following, are not eligible to be certified: facility maintenance for retail, health-care, hospitality, education, government, and building owners. However, these individuals can audit the course.

2. AAADM defines “primary business” as follows:

- A distributor of automatic pedestrian door products, not only hardware, for an AAADM Full Member Company, and
- A company that derives over 50% of its business from selling, installing, and/or servicing full-power automatic

pedestrian door products that comply with ANSI / BHMA A156.10.

In a nutshell, institutional locksmiths can only be certified by AAADM if they work in the automatic door industry as their primary business. The above is the prerequisite for inspectors and installers. I understand this. Certification is closed to their sector only.



**We have spent millions of dollars over the years maintaining our automatic doors.**



## Where Does That Leave You As a Caretaker?

As an example, your institution has 400 buildings, with an average of six operators per building — around 2,400 operators campus-wide. In addition, there is a set of two handicap door activation switches per operator, equaling 4,800 total. It does not take a rocket scientist to figure out the switches see the most action and need constant repair. Also, the batteries operating push activation switches need to be changed regularly. Perhaps yours are hard-wired, which is always good. We went to a kinetic button that does not need batteries. It is well worth the price and effort to upgrade.

## Finding a Hardware Distributor

Now, you find yourself in a difficult situation because most companies that sell new operators and replacement parts only deal with AAADM-certified customers. I say *most*, but not *all*.

I found a very helpful hardware supplier that would sell to my institution, knowing we were not AAADM certified.

Please understand that all the repair work was going to be on low-energy power operators, not sliding or revolving doors, where there would be more liability issues involved. I had a meeting with our risk management folks and got their blessing.

## Where to Get Training for Our Team

This may be tricky. I was fortunate enough to ask the hardware distributor from whom we were buying the parts if they would train my team as a consultative sales initiative. The approach was a win-win. I scheduled work to be done on-site at the job site. The trainer from the hardware distributor walked our folks through the repair. We even brought some of our electricians in for the training. The training paid for itself. We would have had to have a contractor to repair it anyway.

Whether your institution does the ADA-compliant work in-house or contracts it out, we must all agree that it is important to maintain the functionality of the operators and paddles for those who need it most.

I am proud that our role as institutional locksmiths supports the Americans With Disabilities Act. The ADA has had a major impact on people with disabilities over the years. Access to public buildings has broken down many barriers, improving the quality of life for millions. 🍷



**Steve Fryman, CRL, CAI, CISM, AFDI**, is a second-generation locksmith with over 45 years of experience. He has been a business owner

for 20 years and is currently working at Florida State University as a key compliance manager. Steve is a subject matter expert in institutional shop management.



# ALOA Scholarship Foundation, Inc.

## Purpose

The **ALOA Scholarship Foundation (ASF)** is an independent, educational, non-profit 501(c) (3), tax-exempt corporation established in 1993 to:

- Encourage and provide for educational services, programs and materials concerning locksmithing and security devices and procedures.
- Develop scholarship and assistance programs for persons interested in pursuing a career in the security and locksmithing field.
- Solicit funds and perform such acts necessary, convenient and proper for the attainment of ASF objectives.

## What Are the Scholarships for?

The **ALOA Scholarship Foundation** can be an important source for educational funding. We support all locksmith efforts to seek education via technical training and business management from all educational providers. Scholarships are not limited to ALOA educational programs. While ALOA does have impressive training and certification programs, the independent ALOA Scholarship Foundation encourages locksmiths to apply for funding for any of the following industry related training:

- A full **ALOA** convention package which includes: four or five full-day classes with lunch and two days of exhibits
- A full **SAFETECH** convention package which includes: four full-day classes with lunch and one day of exhibits
- Courses offered at the **ALOA Headquarters in Dallas** and ALOA classes offered at regional conventions and local educational events
- Industry-related education programs offered by other organizations that meet the criteria established by ASF

*Limited travel and lodging to the above events may be awarded depending on individual need and funds available.*

## Selection Criteria

ASF awards scholarships based on several criteria, including:

- Individual applicants' financial needs
- Written statement discussing how they will benefit from the scholarship and attesting to the desire, willingness and ability to use such training to further themselves within the industry
- Demonstration of commitment to the locksmith industry
- Industry experience; those applicants applying without industry experience must submit a detailed strategic plan on how they intend to achieve their goal of building a career in the locksmith industry
- Three letters of recommendation from individuals who have personal knowledge of the applicant's background, character and work ethic. One recommendation must be from within the locksmith industry
- Availability to attend the event for which the award is given

Application forms are available on the ALOA website, in *Keynotes* and *Safe & Vault Technology* magazines, at ALOA and SAVTA booths at local shows and from ALOA headquarters.

Applications for ALOA or SAFETECH conventions must be submitted at least 75 days (or May 20 for ALOA this year and January 22 for SAFETECH) prior to the first day of the event for which the scholarship is being requested. Scholarships for other educational events must be submitted at least **40 days** prior to the event being requested, in order to be given adequate consideration.

The ASF Board of Directors awards all scholarships within **30 days after the event deadline** for submission of applications.



# ALOA Scholarship Foundation, Inc.

An educational, non-profit 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt corporation — Federal Tax Id# 75-2478220

Headquarters Office • 1408 N. Riverfront Blvd., #303, Dallas, TX 75207 • (214) 819-9733 • Fax (469) 453-5241

## SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_ PRP/STPRP Level \_\_\_\_\_ ALOA/SAVTA# \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B. \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
Fax \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
Employer \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Work Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Position \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Full Time ☐ Part Time Take Home Pay \_\_\_\_\_ per \_\_\_\_\_  
Educational Level \_\_\_\_\_ (years) Degree/Certification (if any) \_\_\_\_\_  
Previous Recipient? ☐ No ☐ Yes Date \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_  
Length of Time in Locksmithing \_\_\_\_\_ (years) Membership in Trade Associations (list by name) \_\_\_\_\_  
Marital Status \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Dependents \_\_\_\_\_ Most Recent Tax Adjusted Gross Income \_\_\_\_\_  
Classes Desired \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Classes \_\_\_\_\_  
Organization Sponsoring Classes: ☐ ALDA ☐ SAVTA Other \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_  
If granted an ASF Scholarship, will you be able to pay for your own air travel/transportation and hotel accommodations? ☐ Yes ☐ No  
If no, please explain (use another sheet if necessary): \_\_\_\_\_

ASF Scholarships are granted to selected individuals desirous of entering the locksmithing field or to selected individuals already in the locksmithing field who wish to improve their professional skills through education. The ASF Selection Committee on an objective and nondiscriminatory basis will review applications. The Selection Committee shall hold all materials and information pertaining to the applicant's financial status and background in strict confidence. Applications for non-convention classes must be received 40 days prior to the date of the non-convention class desired and will be reviewed as they are submitted. Applications for classes at the SAVTA or ALOA convention must be received 75 days prior to the event. All scholarships will be awarded within 30 days after the event deadline for submission of application.

Please include with this form your most recent Federal Tax Return and a letter stating: your financial situation, your reason for applying for a scholarship, what you plan to do with the knowledge you obtain and any other information you feel may be helpful to the Scholarship Board in making its decision. In addition, attach three letters of reference from individuals who have personal knowledge of your background and character. The letters should contain their names, addresses and phone numbers. One reference must be from a locksmith or someone in the locksmith industry, and it is helpful if the person is an ALOA or SAVTA member. All scholarship recipients will be required to provide a 3" x 5" photograph.

## APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Only COMPLETE applications will be considered for scholarships. All information must be received before the deadline: **75 days for SAVTA and ALOA convention** OR 40 days prior to the non-convention classes. Please send this application after checking off each of the items below.

- ☐ I have filled in each blank on this form.
- ☐ I have written and enclosed a letter explaining my reason for applying.
- ☐ I have enclosed three letters of reference (at least one must be from a locksmith or someone in the locksmith industry).
- ☐ I am submitting 75 days prior to the SAVTA or ALOA convention classes OR 40 days prior to a non-convention class or event.
- ☐ I have enclosed a 3" x 5" photograph.
- ☐ I have enclosed a copy of my most recent tax return.

## CERTIFICATION OF APPLICANT

I certify that the information contained herein, and all supplemental forms are complete and correct to the best of my knowledge. I further certify that if I am selected as a scholarship recipient I will use the knowledge gained for the improvement, development and advancement of the locksmithing profession. Also, if asked by an authorized ASF official, I agree to give proof of the information that I have given on this application. I understand that if I choose not to provide the additional proof that I may not receive the Award. I understand that this application is valid only for the event/class specified and is not transferable.

I understand that I may be asked to give permission to the ASF to perform a background check.

As a potential recipient of a scholarship awarded by the ASF for the purpose of receiving specialized training in locksmithing or related fields, and as a condition of accepting this scholarship should it be awarded to me, I agree that, should I fail to complete the training for which the award has been issued, without at least 30 days notice or an excused absence granted by the ASF, at the sole discretion of the ASF, I may be held liable for the amount of the awarded Scholarship and I agree to reimburse the ASF for the amount of the scholarship awarded.

Should an emergency occur prior to or during the training period that prohibits my attendance at or completion of the training, I understand that it is fully my responsibility to contact the ALOA Headquarters to make arrangements to complete the training or obtain an excused absence or I may be liable for the reimbursement of the Scholarship.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please send all completed applications to The ALOA Scholarship Foundation at the address at the top of the page.

Revised 11/2024



# Our Industry: Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow

See what some experts in the industry think about the state of locksmithing — and how locksmiths can prepare for the future.

By Rick Karas, RL,  
CFDI, AFDI

**A**LTHOUGH MOST OF MY articles have been “how-to” articles about jobs I’ve done or products I’ve used, this article is different. It’s about our industry — the past, present and future. I knew that the basic format would be to develop a list of questions and ask for responses. To get a full and varied perspective, I needed to figure out who I wanted to speak with.

Just like locks and security hardware, through the years, I have learned that it’s important to use good, reliable, tried and tested security products — the real McCoy that will hold up and are considered the best in their class. There are products that look similar, but they are not built the same and they usually don’t do the job. Just like those tried-and-true tested “good” security products,

I wanted to pose my questions to the tried-and-true experts in the security field. It would have been easy enough for me to get online responses from anybody in our industry, and maybe that would have been good enough ... but I don’t like good enough. I shoot for the best, so I reached out to experts in several different areas of our industry. The eight experts who responded gave me solid, genuine, substantial answers to my questions. I really appreciated all the time and thought the security experts put into the answers (as well as their frankness).

To move forward, it’s important to look at history. Each contributor to this project has interesting stories about their early years in the industry and how those early experiences informed their opinions about the changes they’ve seen

and would like to see. These security experts have many decades of combined experience. The group reflects expertise and experience in general locksmithing, safes, vaults, GSA locks and containers, automotive, electronic security, electronic locks, inventors, electronic access control, hotel locks, product testing and service as an expert witness. All had ideas for how to help our industry move forward.

## Methodology

I sent questions to several experts in our industry. The content of this article is based on the answers I received. I used “locksmithing” to refer to locksmithing, safe work, physical security, automotive, institutional, residential, commercial and forensic. I received responses back from eight people.



## Contributors

I had the amazing opportunity to pick (no pun intended!) the brains of experts to get their thoughts on our industry: where it's been, where it is and where it's going. There were differences of opinion on some issues but common viewpoints as well. The content for this article came from the following eight individuals, to whom I am grateful for taking the time to answer my survey questions.



**Andy Dennison, CMST, CML**

Director of GSA Security Training for MBA USA, Inc., instructor, 34 years in the industry



**Bill Mandlebaum, CML**

President of ALOA and has a general locksmithing business (*His opinions are his own*)



**Joe Cortie, CML, CPS, CAI, CMS, GSAT**

Past president of SAVTA, instructor, GSA expert, 48 years in the industry



**Bob DeWeese, CML, CPS, CAI**

Owner of Bear Lock & Safe Service in Baltimore, Maryland, past president (and a handful of other "hats") of Maryland Locksmith Association, past Northeast Director for ALOA, past vice president of SAVTA, past ALOA Scholarship Foundation board member, current member of The L.I.S.T. Council, 42 years in the industry



**Jon Payne Sr., CML, CAI**

Owner of Locksmith Lessons LLC, 50-plus years in the industry, instructor, past officer of the Maryland Locksmith Association, past board member of ALOA, one of the first two locksmiths in the world to earn the CML certification, business owner



**Tom Demont, AHC, CAI, CFL, CML, CFMST, CFLSFDI, CFFDI, CMIL, IFDI**

President, ASSA Technical Services, Inc., past president of ALOA and IAIL, instructor, past director of sales and marketing for ASSA, IAIL CFL Committee Chair, trustee for Pennsylvania Ohio Locksmith Association



**John Kieffer**

Regional sales manager for Lockmasters, Inc., 35 years in the industry



**Wayne Winton, Com CRL, ACI, ALOA ACE instructor**

ALOA Board Director, owner of Tri County Locksmith Service and Wayne's Lockshop





### Becoming a Locksmith

**I**N EARLIER YEARS, WHEN EDUCATION IN THE field was more scarce, on-the-job training was a common path to becoming a locksmith. “All of my initial training was done job by job and by the owner of the shop I was working for,” responded John Kieffer. Tom Demont said, “Initially an apprentice was trained by the shop they worked for, and if they were lucky, the company had a training program that assigned a mentor and a challenging curriculum for self-taught training.”

For those who did not know a locksmith to apprentice with, correspondence courses advertised in

magazines such as *Popular Mechanics* was the other alternative, noted Jon Payne, who started in the industry in the 1970s: “For ‘the man on the street’ without any trade connections, correspondence courses were the only option when I got started.” Although Andy Dennison began locksmithing by taking a class at a local community college, he said other locksmiths he met when he was starting out had taken a mail-order course or, in some cases, had “enough experience in building maintenance or a related skill and got a job as a locksmith.”

Decades ago, even if you could get a job or apprenticeship at a locksmith job, you might have to earn the shop owner’s trust before learning the tricks of the trade. As Joe Cortie explained, “When I first started locksmithing, information sharing was scarce, and almost everything was mechanical. You had to earn trust from an older locksmith before they would share knowledge of the trade.” These days, the internet provides — for better or worse — a path for the self-made locksmith. That is not necessarily a good thing. In Bill Mandlebaum’s opinion, “All locksmiths should take classes to get started. There is just too much misinformation on YouTube, etc. to try to learn that way.”



Training classes “have been a way to learn new things and keep up with what is new,” Andy Dennison says..





# SAFETECH 2025



**Classes**  
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**Trade Show**  
April 12, 2025



**Griffin Gate Marriott**  
Lexington, Kentucky

**SAVE THE  
DATE!**

Information  
coming soon  
on [SAVTA.org](http://SAVTA.org)





### Education

**B**OB DEWEESE EXPLAINED HOW education was treated in his early years in the industry: “When I started, shop owners actually discouraged education and even joining associations for their employees. The consensus seemed to be that if an employee took classes, he would think he was worth more money. And if he joined the local association, he would (a) find out what other locksmith employees made, and (b) be ‘poached’ by other shops. I once asked one of the owners of the shop I started out in, ‘Isn’t there some kind of ‘locksmith association’ around here?’ To which I was told, ‘Yeah. But it’s just some guys that get together and drink once a month.’” Bob doesn’t know whether education is more widely available today or whether it was always available, and he just didn’t know it “because of the discouragement [he] received back in [his] early years.”

The importance of providing education for our

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***‘Education, education, education.  
Today’s locksmith simply can’t get too  
much education in today’s crazy  
high-paced work environment.’***

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industry members drew a unanimous response. As Wayne Winton put it, “Education, education, education. Today’s locksmith simply can’t get too much education in today’s crazy high-paced work environment.” There was also agreement on the importance of attending trade shows and in-person training opportunities. “Training classes at schools and conventions have been a way to learn new things and keep up with what is new,” responded Andy Dennison.

Bill Mandlebaum said that although online classes serve their purpose as an alternative for locksmiths who can’t take time off to attend in-person classes, “there is still a huge need for in-person classes, as most locksmiths learn best by hands-on training.”

“Today, the best continuing education for locksmiths is provided by trade association classes, whose members and instructors are top professionals in the field,” said Jon Payne. For John Kieffer, attending trade shows was how he learned in the early ’90s. Tom Demont also mentioned the importance of in-person schools: “There are many schools that teach the fundamental locksmith course, and ALOA and Lockmasters are two great schools. Fundamental training is just a stepping stone to learning more, and an assigned mentor is critical to the growth of the apprentice.”

Jon Payne expressed concern that “trade associations have not kept pace with modern trends, and without urgent adaptation, they risk becoming obsolete. Their primary value lies in delivering high-quality education and certification. Meanwhile, locksmith education is being diluted daily on social media, where self-promoting ‘content creators’ chase ‘likes’ and admiration as if they were a form of currency. These so-called ‘instructors,’ often with questionable backgrounds or anonymity, offer only superficial content through quick hits and sound bites across various platforms.”





# **AUTO LOCK EXPO 2025**

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**W**HEN IT COMES TO OUR INDUSTRY'S reputation, I found that there was some consistency but also differences among the group. Both Andy Dennison and Bob DeWeese mentioned the locksmith-handyman comparison. "When I was running service calls [years ago], locksmiths seemed to be viewed as specialized handymen or just opened locked doors or cars," said Andy. And Bob said, "Locksmiths have had — and seem to continue to have — a reputation of being a glorified 'handyman,' although this does seem more prevalent in residential work than most commercial work. Safe technicians and automotive locksmiths, on the other hand, probably seem more, to the general public, like overpriced 'magicians.'" In Wayne Winton's view, "The locksmith in the field today is the one building the reputation for the entire industry."

Although Bill Mandlebaum thinks that most locksmiths have a great reputation, he also thinks that it's "been sullied the last 10 or 15 years by the scammers." He was not the only one to raise the issue of scammers; so did Joe Cortie: "Locksmithing has a mixed reputation. There are good, reputable locksmiths who take pride in their work, and there are scammers that just go after the money."

John Kieffer mentioned scammers in his response as well: "It's probably just my perspective

because I've been around a long time, but some locksmiths in today's world do not have the ethical standards of 30 years ago. The term 'locksmith scammer' was unknown to me when I started in this industry, but now we all know 'locksmith companies' that don't seem to take pride in being fair and honest. I think the internet and being able to get business from Google ads, etc. have contributed greatly to this. With that said, most well-established locksmith companies are very reputable and ethical."

John Kieffer mentioned that licensing may be a way to help with the industry's reputation: "Many states now have locksmith licensing requirements, which did not exist in the late '80s and early '90s. It's debatable whether these licenses increase the quality and ethics of our industry, but some states do have fairly severe penalties (North Carolina is one). I would like to see locksmith licensing that helps weed out the companies that are just looking to scam or take advantage of customers, who are mostly residential homeowners."

In Jon Payne's opinion, the industry has a poor reputation, in part due to the lack of national licensing and the fact that Google makes it easy for people to advertise themselves as locksmiths: "As an industry, [the reputation] is poor. Failure to agree to national licensing when it was proposed in the '80s has allowed anyone to claim the title of locksmith, when in fact many are 'mocksmiths.' Google is much to blame because they allow anyone to advertise on the platform, and those who pay the most rise to the top of search results. Every single day this continues, more and more of the public are ripped off, casting a dark shadow over the entire industry. We are at an inflection point. If we don't do something now, today, with the participation of all our members, ALOA won't exist in five years, and the industry and professional standards will decline. We need to up our standards, have each member aggressively advertise our standards, and purge the bad actors from our rolls. We can work to fix this with well-placed articles in magazines and on social media that work to convert the public thinking. 'When you think locksmith, think ALOA' or, borrowing from Sy Syms, 'Educated consumers use educated locksmiths.'"

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***'The locksmith in the field today is the one building the reputation for the entire industry.'***

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Today's social media and Google advertising options allow anyone to advertise as a locksmith, regardless of qualifications.

Jon shared some specific steps that the industry can take to repair our reputation and “combat scammers and restore trust among consumers,” including creating a verified industry seal of approval “awarded exclusively to vetted, licensed member locksmiths. This seal would act as a trusted indicator for customers, assuring them they’re hiring a legitimate, reliable professional. ALOA could require certified members to display the seal prominently in all advertising, along with a unique registration number. Customers could verify the number on the ALOA website to confirm the locksmith’s membership, helping to prevent unauthorized use of the seal.”

He also noted the importance of educating the public through “public awareness campaigns, both online and locally, to inform consumers about the risks of hiring unqualified ‘mocksmiths.’” Also critical, he says, is strengthening online presence and reviews by “actively cultivating online reviews on trusted platforms like Google, Yelp and the Better Business

Bureau. Encouraging satisfied customers to leave positive reviews can help counteract the influence of scammers and push legitimate businesses higher in search rankings.”

He also wants to see lobbying for industry regulation by advocating for “national or state licensing requirements that can set a legal standard for locksmith qualifications and behavior. The industry can work with lawmakers to draft fair and enforceable regulations, adding a layer of accountability that can make it easier to identify and remove scammers.”

He also suggests encouraging ethical marketing practices by avoiding misleading advertising and being transparent about services and pricing.

His final thought about reputation repair is that trade associations should collaborate with Google and other platforms to “implement verification procedures or ‘verified locksmith’ badges in search results. Google already has some verification processes in place, and the industry could advocate for more rigorous standards specific to locksmithing.”





## Marketing

**ALSO ASKED THE GROUP TO SHARE THEIR** perspectives on marketing. They had a variety of responses as to what they use/don't use and what is effective/not so effective.

Bob DeWeese, John Kieffer and Jon Payne all mentioned the Yellow Pages as the early go-to for advertising that has now been replaced with other vehicles. When Bob DeWeese started his business, he spent money on ads in the Yellow Pages. Today,

he said, "Some even pay for Google Ads, but I never have. I just rely on referrals, organic Google searches and a good website. And other than website hosting and truck lettering, I haven't paid for advertising in over 10 years!"

John Kieffer said that "marketing has completely changed from Yellow Page ads to internet ads and websites since I started in 1986. The larger, more established companies often have outside sales representatives/project managers who actively seek new business."

Jon Payne said: "Generally speaking, locksmiths don't market themselves effectively, as marketing isn't part of the typical locksmith skill set. As a result, they often rely on imitation or hire others to handle it, usually without a clear, strategic approach. Marketing is a profession in its own right, and locksmiths could greatly benefit from professional guidance. In the past, the Yellow Pages provided a trusted directory of legitimate businesses. Today, however, the internet enables anyone to claim the title of locksmith, regardless of qualifications. The most effective marketing today remains face-to-face and word-of-mouth. Social media and search engines are valuable, but the industry would benefit from a 'seal of approval' that only legitimate locksmiths can earn, to help boost customer confidence."

Joe Cortie agrees that word-of-mouth is still the best way to advertise: "I think the best marketing for a good locksmith is through word of mouth. A good reputation for honesty and craftsmanship will get around better than any other type of advertisement."

Tom Demont views marketing as "vital to the growth of your business. Letter your truck(s), have business cards for every locksmith that works for you. Do monthly flyers to your existing customer base promoting different services you offer. Have a website that exhibits ethos, logos and pathos. If you don't know what those words mean, look them up and incorporate them into your marketing."

Wayne Winton suggests that locksmiths educate themselves about social media advertising. "Social media platforms are all offering advertising opportunities, and locksmiths should be taking advantage and learning about all of them to Google-proof their business."



Successful marketing for your business can include social media, paid advertising, email campaigns or signage and word-of-mouth approaches.





## Changes in Products

**A FEW MENTIONED PRODUCT CHANGES** they've seen over the years. Joe Cortie said that when he entered the industry, "electronic locks were just beginning to show up on the market, and most old-time locksmiths thought it wouldn't last because of the unreliability of the locks. I thought then, and still think, that electronic locks were designed to fail. It has become a 'throw away and replace' market. Most electronic locks

are not repairable like the mechanical locks were. I think this holds true for all locks across the board. Be it residential, commercial or government."

Tom Demont described the changes in the automobile industry as "unbelievable," saying that "this area has skyrocketed from unlocking cars and code-cutting keys to full-blown electronics. This area is a big profit arena and specialty for the locksmiths today."

Tom also described the impact of electronic safe locks on the safe industry. "Electronic safe locks have rocked the safe industry and will continue to do so, and the LBB (Little Black Box) and Phoenix tools will only evolve with the newer versions of e-locks."

Wayne Winton also mentioned electronic locks. "Everything is headed toward electronic access control and live monitoring with a video element. A decade ago, electronic locks just barely started hitting the residential market. Now, it's all everyone wants."



## Trends

**THE LOCKSMITHS I** surveyed identified some industry trends. Andy Dennison is seeing that fewer commercial locksmiths work on GSA containers because they don't feel they can get a return on investment to get certified. "Many of them give up on the work in this area because their customers want them to be certified to work on their GSA security equipment.

The government, especially the military, gets their own people trained and certified, reducing the demand for the commercial locksmith to do the work. However, the few commercial locksmiths that do get certified seem to, for the most part, get returns on their investment."

One trend mentioned by John Kieffer is that the industry has become highly specialized. "In the last 10 or 15 years, certain areas of our industry have become very specialized. Automotive work is a perfect example of this. And this has created an industry where certain locksmiths only do automotive work or safe work, for example. In fact, many commercial locksmiths do not do any automotive

work due to the specialized equipment and training needed. I'm not sure if this is good or bad for the industry as a whole, but it is different from 30 or 40 years ago when most locksmiths were 'full service.'"

Bill Mandlebaum noted that "there is a lot more money to be made in access control and automotive work than when I first got started. But it also takes more training and classes." He also noticed a trend in distribution, where there are fewer distributors, and the distributors are carrying fewer product lines.

Simplification resulting from advances in live monitoring of electronic access control systems is a trend pointed out by Wayne Winton, who commented, "Advances in live monitoring of electronic access control systems are making installation simpler, so just about anyone can do it. An example is Pacific Lock Company, PACLOCK and PAC-BLU. They have eliminated the need for power supply."

Joe Cortie sees a negative trend in the industry in terms of craftsmanship versus convenience/lack of ability. "I think the true craftsmanship of locksmithing is dying out. Everything is becoming throw away and replace. I have seen on various locksmith websites where the locksmith couldn't make a flat spring for a perfectly good lock and wanted to know where they could find a replacement lock. That saddens me."



***Needed Changes  
in Manufacturing  
and Distribution***

**F**OCUSING ON MANUFACTURING AND distribution, I asked the group whether there are any changes that they'd like to see to prepare the industry for the future. "Making their products better, not just cheaper," is one area where manufacturers need to make improvements, said Bill Mandlebaum.

Bob DeWeese would like to see changes in how warranties work and in how products are shipped. "I wish manufacturers would make their warranty from the day of actual installation rather than when it was purchased from the distributors — or worse — the day it rolls off the assembly line. And I wish some distributors would get away from this new practice of hosing customers on shipping. You don't

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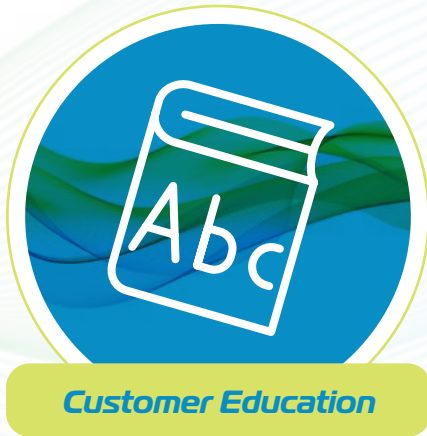
***'The manufacturers need to be teaching the end users how to use their products properly, in my opinion.'***

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need to put 10 key blanks in a 12 x 12 x 12 box!"

John Kieffer would like to see manufacturers and distributors provide more education to better position locksmiths for the future. John said, "Education, education, education! We are living in the information age, and technology is evolving at a very fast rate. Manufacturers and distributors (and locksmith associations) need to focus on training current and upcoming locksmiths in order to keep themselves relevant. If not, I fear that large corporate entities, who manage entire building facility systems, will begin to push the average locksmith out of certain markets." Wayne Winton also commented on the need for better education — but of the customers. "The manufacturers need to be teaching the end users how to use their products properly, in my opinion."

Increased honesty with customers is an improvement that Tom Demont would like to see. "If they ask for a specific product, don't push a cheap import item because you make more margins. Explain the difference accurately, and let the dealer decide." Jon Payne also commented on the quality issue and would like manufacturers to "adhere to the established hardware standards. The Builders Hardware Manufacturers Association ("BHMA") or ALOA needs to step up with a customer awareness program" that emphasizes the importance of BHMA certification to combat the use of low-quality products from Amazon, Temu and China in general.



**E**VERYONE WHO RESPONDED TO MY question about whether customers (government, commercial, residential or institutional) need to be better educated about the profession said “yes,” and some offered suggestions about how to do so. Bill Mandlebaum pointed out that because most customers have very little knowledge about the full range of what locksmiths can do, they don’t know what to ask for. Bill “would like to see an ad campaign aimed at these customers, as that is where the repeat business really comes from.”

John Kieffer and Jon Payne both agree that better-educated customers would benefit the industry. Although John is not certain about the best approach, he said that both states and associations could have a role. “It would be nice if states that require licensing would promote that at the local government level, but ultimately, I believe associations like ALOA should focus resources on educating the general public about licensing, certifications, etc.” Jon Payne suggested a public relations campaign and adoption of the use of a logo or trademark to help consumers identify certified locksmiths: “Consumers need to be better educated, and that can be accomplished with a coordinated public relations campaign of ‘infomercial-type’ articles about real locksmiths. We need to coin and trademark a term relating to our ALOA Certified Locksmiths. Once created, its use must be vigorously protected.



Our industry leaders agree that customers need to be better educated about the locksmith profession.

The point is, we need to push certified locksmiths, but only ALOA certified locksmiths, since anyone can come up with their own certification program.”

Jon also suggests that improvements be made to both ALOA’s Findalocksmith.com site and to SAVTA.org’s technician search. Then, once fixed, Jon would like to see a media blitz to get the word out about those sites. Jon said, “Once fixed, we need to write press releases and a list of step-by-step instructions for all members on how to send the press release to local news outlets, and how to post it on social media as a blitz campaign, and instructions on how to maintain the program. We need 12 infomercials released to news outlets and social media, one per month for a year. But in conjunction with that, we need to step up ALOA education and apprentice training to fill the void for the extra work that will be generated.”

Tom Demont said that “manufacturers, distributors and locksmith associations need to continually promote locksmiths in all of their advertising.”





### **Attracting the Younger Generation**

**C**OUNTLESS LOCKSMITHS HAVE BEEN around for a long time and have invaluable experience. However, as more locksmiths retire, we need to mentor the next generation of locksmiths and make the profession more attractive to them.

Bill Mandelbaum suggests that we educate about the breadth of what locksmiths do — that it's not just picking locks and opening cars. As Bill said, "They have no idea how much money an educated locksmith can make." John Kieffer pointed out that locksmith associations could take an active role in promoting our industry to younger locksmiths. John said, "I think that associations in our industry should allocate some resources to promoting locksmithing as a viable trade for young people who may not want, or have the resources, to attend college. I started college, but it just wasn't a good fit for me, so I knew I needed to learn a trade of some sort in order to support my family and future. More community college locksmithing courses would certainly help as well."

Jon Payne would like to see ALOA's apprenticeship program reactivated. "ALOA actually has a registered apprenticeship program with the U.S. Department of Labor. However, the staff

person that created it is no longer available. This needs to be reactivated, made available to members and a workbook created so a business owner knows exactly how to use and administer the program. We also need to tap into government programs that might help us fund our own full-time trade school."

Tom Demont and Wayne Winton both commented on how experienced locksmiths can help foster young people's interest in our industry. Tom would like to see experienced locksmiths show younger people "the path from beginning to end. Most people don't know where to start. In today's society, the average locksmith makes \$65k+ a year, and a three- to five-year apprenticeship can get you there."

Wayne said, "First of all, the older generation needs to welcome the younger generation. I know that I certainly remember the 'good old boy' clique scenes at the conventions, and that needs to stop. Show the younger generation that having a real skill in a trade has the opportunity to earn just as much as a person with a college degree, and probably more job security. The locksmith and security industry as a whole is pretty recession-proof, unlike most jobs."



***As more locksmiths  
retire, we need to mentor  
the next generation of  
locksmiths and make  
the profession more  
attractive to them.***







### *Preparing for the Future*

**S**O, WHAT IS NEEDED TO PREPARE FOR THE future in terms of education, marketing and customer targeting? What products or tools should locksmiths invest in to better position themselves for success?

Bill Mandlebaum thinks locksmiths need to take classes — in particular, learning SEO because “the Yellow Pages are almost dead. They need a good website and to learn how to change and promote it.”

Bobby DeWeese suggested that locksmiths “invest in tools that make the job easier and faster, and take classes to expand their knowledge.” And, important for all of us, “to save for retirement!”

Wayne Winton focused more on the financial aspect and income flow. “Targeting customers through social media and working directly with general contractors is where you want to be. Offering service contracts to hotels, schools and government facilities creates RMR (recurring monthly revenue) to keep money flowing.”

Tom Demont’s response focused on education in preparing for the future. “Encourage education for all levels of locksmiths. You can never have too much education!”

John Kieffer mentioned marketing and education. He shared his ideas from his perspective of having

spent more than 25 years in a sales role. “My answer on this may be biased because I’ve been in a sales role for 25-plus years, but I would highly recommend locksmith shops (retail) consider hiring a sales rep to promote their business. Rather than running internet ads, I would recommend using those funds to hire a sales professional. Google ads are a good start for a new business, but it takes personal relationships to develop a strong customer base. Regarding education, locksmiths (retail or commercial/government) need to be constantly learning about new products and procedures (including building codes, etc.). The large corporate entities, some of which have great locksmiths, practice this because they understand that technology is changing and improving, which leads to better overall security. The most successful retail locksmith shops I call on, all have regular training sessions with their technicians and/or send them to LSI (Lockmasters Security Institute) and trade shows for training. I think it’s easy to get complacent and comfortable with certain products, but in order to keep pace, locksmiths need to get regular training.”



Continuous education is key to the future of the industry.



### AI — Friend or Foe?

**T**HERE HAS BEEN A LOT IN THE NEWS lately about the increased use of AI in our lives. I surveyed the group to get their thoughts on whether AI is a positive or a negative for the industry.

“I think AI *might* be useful, but I can see a lot of ways it can be harmful,” said Bill Mandlebaum. Bob DeWeese got right to the point: “As far as AI, it scares the hell out of me. Let’s just leave it at that.”

John Kieffer admits that he does not know a lot about AI and acknowledged he should take his own advice — get some training on it. From what he does know, however, he can see both some negatives and positives: “From the little I do know, I can see it being a negative if used to bypass certain security protocols. And I can see it as a huge positive if used to help locksmiths (especially entry-level) learn and develop new skills.”

Jon Payne also has a positive view regarding AI. “I use AI every day to prepare industry-relevant papers and articles. I have also used it to develop training programs.” He added that he used “AI to help clarify” some of the written responses he sent

me and “to generate some of the ideas” he shared with me. However, for all of AI’s positives, Jon also added: “AI can’t operate a screwdriver!” So yes, there are limits to what AI can do for the locksmith industry.

Wayne Winton shared a historical perspective. “I look at the AI revolution age like the Steel Age of Andrew Carnegie of its time. We’re only seeing the tip of the iceberg, and it’s going to revolutionize every aspect of our lives both personally and professionally.” In comparing AI to the dot-com revolution, Wayne said that “AI will just speed everything up 100 times. It’s technology, and much like the dot-com era changed the landscape, AI will do the same.”

He added, “AI is affecting every aspect of everything, and security will be no different. How electronic access gets managed and operates will be the biggest impact in our trade. Facial recognition and personal identification will probably be the biggest factors that AI improves.”

He continues, “As to whether AI would be positive or negative, AI is in the eye of the beholder. If you think it will improve your job, then it will if you are willing to learn how to use it properly and how it works. If you remain ignorant, then it will probably take your job.”

Although AI can’t operate a screwdriver (yet), it is making inroads in the locksmith industry. Tom has also seen AI use “with automatic SFIC pinning machines that will produce 100 master keyed cores an hour.” He said that those SFIC pinning machines are not just in manufacturing, as he’s seen them in two locksmith shops. Tom thinks that although AI would make production more efficient, it will probably be quite a while before a robot locksmith can “be set at the bench and master key 1,000 cylinders, answer the phone and interact with customers.”

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***Although AI can’t operate a screwdriver (yet), it is making inroads in the locksmith industry.***

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**T**HESE DAYS, YOU CAN FIND A YOUTUBE how-to video on just about anything, including locksmithing. I asked the contributors whether they thought such videos are beneficial or harmful, if they're educational and if they're giving away industry secrets.

Wayne Winton does not view YouTube as a benefit to our industry and cautions that, in his experience, much of what's on YouTube simply is not accurate. "YouTube university is 80% poor advice and information, with random people just saying whatever they want, with 20% accurate information. I think as manufacturers like ASSA ABLOY, Allegion and Alarm Lock provide factory-based training that is accurate, the platform will improve over time." As for giving away industry secrets, Wayne responded that "there are no more secrets. The way things are set up, YouTube (and now every other platform) rewards whoever brings information to the platform first and in the most entertaining format."

Andy Dennison recognizes that the internet, especially YouTube, has "changed the world," but he doesn't think it's for the better because it's probably causing some locksmiths to lose work. "Locksmiths may feel it is nice to get the free information, but their customers are getting it too. I'll watch YouTube videos to figure out how to fix an appliance before I would even think of calling a repairman. I'm sure it's the same with lock installation and repair for a large part of the population," said Andy.

He also commented on the impact that the internet has had on in-person attendance at shows and conventions: "These days, with the internet offering free or nearly free instruction, it seems the



YouTube and online "training" are generally not viewed as trustworthy resources in the industry.

magazines have dwindled down to next to nothing, convention attendance has decreased considerably, and the training my company offers is mostly attended by people sent by the government or large contractors."

John Kieffer had a similar view: "In today's world, many younger locksmiths are relying on YouTube. Industrial and government locksmiths will often attend classes at Lockmasters or similar schools, usually at the expense of their employer."

Bob DeWeese shared his concern about the negative impact from the internet on the associations and trade shows: "One sad result of the internet is that it is killing many associations and trade shows. Just about anything that used to include human contact is now available 'online.' I'm not saying it's a bad thing. I wouldn't be the safe tech I am today without ClearStar back in the early days of my transition into the field. It's just that it seems to be replacing the good, old-fashioned, in-person handshakes and listening to the 'old-timers' telling war stories in the hotel bar. Which, by the way, is some of the best 'education' in the industry!"

"YouTube can be both beneficial and extremely harmful," said Bill Mandlebaum. Although he thinks that YouTube has a lot of good information, "there are a lot of people trying to show off

how much they know when they really know very little. To someone trying to learn from this method, they need to take classes so they can tell when the information is beneficial. It is like master keying. You need to take several classes to really learn how to utilize the system. A computer program will give you the cuts, but does not really tell you how to use those cuts in a real system.”

John Kieffer also sees both the positive and the negative in having industry information on the internet. John said that he was initially “very opposed to everything that was being posted on the internet,” but now understands that “in most cases, it does help the average locksmith learn, which is great.” Although there is a downside because posting locksmith know-how on the internet amounts to giving away secrets and compromising security,” John also recognizes that “it’s not going away ... ever. This is yet another reason why our industry professionals need to stay vigilant in learning about the latest products and solutions. Locks, safes, cameras, keys ... it’s always been a cat-and-mouse game in that once a product is developed, someone will work on trying to defeat it. I don’t feel that has changed, ever. So, my advice is to keep up to date with what is being published on the internet and learn about improvements and solutions to present to your

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***‘I would like to see more people at live, hands-on professional events like ALOA conventions and SAVTA’s SAFETECH week.’***

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customer base. Even before the internet tools that we have now, locksmiths learned to recognize weaknesses in security products and recommend solutions. Manufacturers need to be keenly aware of this as well, and I believe most are.”

Jon Payne does not think that locksmith secrets can stay secret forever, but he also doesn’t think locksmiths should be posting information on YouTube. In his opinion, “One of the underlying principles of great security and encryption is that it cannot rely long term on a ‘secret.’ While I disagree with locksmiths posting information on YouTube and violating our code of ethics in the process, I simply turn it around and use it as a tool to sell higher-security locks.”

Tom Demont pointed out that if you are watching YouTube to learn a process, you need to pay close attention to the video, and he also warned that a lot of what we see on YouTube is staged. Tom said, “YouTube training is great, but the watcher needs to pay attention and watch how they are doing the process. When it comes to defeating cylinders, keep in mind that this is a staged event, and the presenter is always going to look good.”

Wayne Winton sees a place in the industry for YouTube, but it is not a replacement for trade shows and in-person learning. In Wayne’s opinion, “Now you can get an education through YouTube University. I slightly laugh, but it’s true. Honestly, I actually am leading the charge with video-based, on-demand education that I have collected and built throughout my time as a professional locksmith. Honestly, I would like to see more people at live, hands-on professional events like ALOA conventions and SAVTA’s SAFETECH week.”



## What Does Our Future Look Like?

If we are going to take steps to bring the new generations into our industry, we need to assess where the industry is going. Is it dying out or going strong? Although Andy Dennison feels like traditional locksmithing is dying out, he pointed out that he works in his own small corner of the trade and doesn't see much of the rest of it. Bobby DeWeese somewhat agreed — to an extent. “I don't know if I'd go as far as to say the industry as a whole is dying. But parts of it are. Again, thanks to the internet. Especially residential. Today, if Joe Homeowner needs to replace a lock on his door, he can just watch a YouTube video and go to Home Depot. Even if he needs his locks rekeyed, very often he can just go buy new locks for less than calling a locksmith. And with products like SmartKey, he can even rekey them himself.”

Others were more optimistic. Bill Mandlebaum said, “I do not see the industry dying. It is changing. The keys will not go away for a long time, but keyless is becoming more prevalent.” Bill's optimism was shared by John Kieffer and Jon Payne. John Kieffer said, “I don't think the industry will ever die out due to the demand for security in all parts of the world, but especially in the area that I work and live in (Washington, D.C.). There will always be a need to secure openings, secure assets, avert liability and create accountability. But the industry must keep up with technology or the sole proprietor locksmith will definitely get bumped to the side by large entities that want to control all aspects of a facility's needs. Even at the residential level, I see national service providers (NSP) gaining traction.” Jon Payne said that although the industry is in danger of being overrun by the scammers, it is currently doing well.

Tom Demont also does not see the industry dying out. “No, the industry is not dying, and it

never will as long as we have mechanical locks. And for every electronic locking system, there is a mechanical lock!”

Wayne Winton expressed similar optimism and enthusiasm for the future. “The industry has more money pouring into it than ever before! Safes, electronic locks, door operators, and electronic access control systems cost 10 times what mechanical hardware used to and still need the mechanical hardware to function! If you're not making money in today's climate, you're certainly doing something wrong. There's more opportunity than at any point in history!”

## Conclusion

I asked the questions, and our physical security experts provided the answers. However, it's up to all of us to act on what we learn. Keep thinking and progressing, and keep our industry moving in a positive forward direction. We can all do our part, even if it's a small one.

Please think about what our industry experts have kindly shared with us. What they have shared has taken decades to learn and is a valuable resource for everyone.

A huge thank you to Andy, Bill, Bob, Joe, John, Jon, Tom and Wayne for their thoughts, insights and time. 🙏



**Rick Karas, RL, CFDI, AFDI**, started in the locksmith industry in 1983. A licensed locksmith, he has experience with many physical security disciplines, including access control systems, intrusion detection systems and video monitoring systems. He works in both commercial and institutional settings. Rick owns Phil-Rich Lock, which serves the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. He was named **Keynotes** Author of the Year in 2023.



# “I Thought It Would Be Easy ...”

Sometimes the “easy” jobs turn out to be anything but.

By Tony Wiersielis, CPL, CFDI

**I**N MY OCTOBER ARTICLE, I started with examples of some things contractors do that a locksmith wouldn't. One thing was what you see in *Figure 1* in this article: a black plastic spacer being used when a six-pin BEST core is installed in a seven-pin lock and *not* used with a seven-pin core. Right after I submitted it to the publisher,

I wound up on a job in a large, newly completed office building installing cores.

Contractors had installed several hundred BEST mortise locks and, no surprise, more than half of the cylinders had black spacers in them. If you missed my October article, this means that a seven-pin core isn't fitting into the cylinder unless that spacer is removed.

This situation is a time killer and one of those “I thought it would be easy, but no” moments — also known as a “why me?” So, we started putting in the cores and pulling out the spacer when the core wouldn't fit. I used a fairly stiff spiral key extractor that wouldn't bend and kind of screwed it into the spacer to pull it out (*Figure 2*).



FIGURE 1. A contractor used a black plastic spacer in a six-pin BEST core that was installed in a seven-pin lock.



FIGURE 2. The author used a fairly stiff spiral key extractor that wouldn't bend and screwed it into the spacer to pull it out.

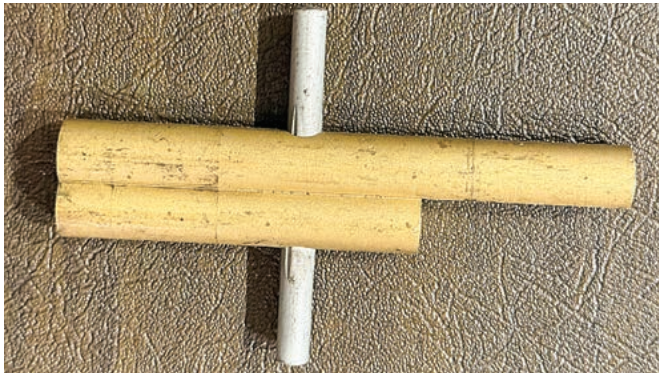


FIGURE 3. This is a brass BEST cylinder wrench. The small end is used to test the functionality of what we are working on if we don't have the IC cores yet.



FIGURE 4. This is a BEST "throw member," or tailpiece, for cylindrical locks.



FIGURE 5



FIGURE 6

FIGURES 5 AND 6. These photos show a mortise cylinder correctly timed versus incorrectly.

That's when we found the "rest of the story," as radio guy Paul Harvey used to say. We started by pulling the black, disposable thumbturns out of the cylinders as we went. We all have brass BEST cylinder wrenches (*Figure 3*), and the small end is used to test the functionality of whatever we are working on if we don't have the IC cores yet.

We also use the small end of the tool to "time" the cylinders before we install the cores. For the newbies, this means that we need to make sure that the "throw

members" for cylindrical locks and the cams on mortise cylinders are in the correct position when we install the cores so everything works correctly. Nobody wants callbacks.

*Figure 4* is a BEST "throw member," or tailpiece, for cylindrical locks. Some cylindrical lock functions require you to make sure you timed it correctly. An example is a classroom function lock that locks and unlocks by a 360-degree turn of the key. If it's mistimed, it will turn 180 degrees in each direction. On

the other hand, a storeroom function lock — on which the outside lever/knob never turns — may not have to be timed.

On the mortise locks we were working on, timing is critical, as it would be on any brand. *Figures 5* and *6* show a mortise cylinder correctly timed versus incorrectly. Remember that you can't see the cam on the cylinder when it's installed. If you don't check the timing before you install the core (with either a BEST tool or the black plastic thumbturn) you risk leaving the cam facing down instead of up, as in *Figure 6*.





FIGURE 7. The author is holding the cylinder ring with the wave washer inside of it.

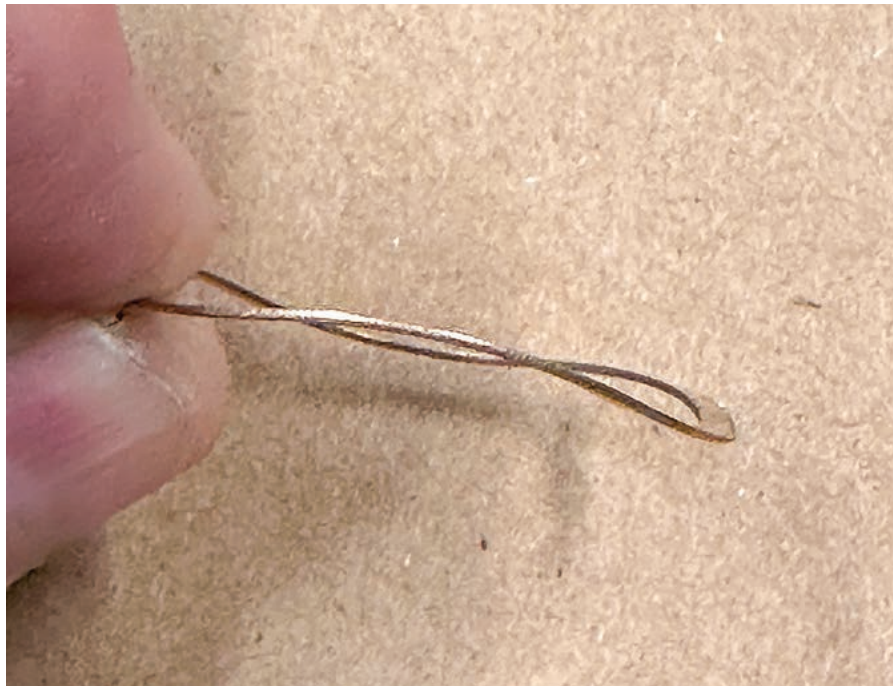


FIGURE 8. When the installers force-turned the cylinder, they flattened the wave washer.



We found that some cylinders had the spacers in place, and some had the cylinder in too far.



Again, for the newbies, the last thing you want is the cam facing down into the chassis of the lock all the time. This can cause trouble if it winds up interfering with the function of the lock and applies to any brand of mortise.

On a BEST mortise lock, here's how you test that the cam is facing up: Use your tool and turn it toward the hinge side of the door. It won't take a lot of turning to pull in the latch. If you have to turn the tool a lot to pull in the latch, then the cam was facing down. Then turn it back to the rest position and make sure the two pins in the cylinder are horizontal and a tiny bit slanted to the right. The slight slant mimics the two holes on the back of the core when the control key is used.

### The "Why Me" Part

Back to the story. We knew we'd have to pull out the spacers, but we soon found that there was another bigger issue that the "installers," and I use the term lightly, perpetuated on us through ignorance. While checking the timing of the cylinders, we found that cams couldn't be turned in a complete circle; we could barely move them.

I suspected that the installers had screwed the cylinders in as far as they could and used force to do it. That meant that the cam was inside the threads on the *back* of the chassis. I used the cylinder wrench to back the cylinder out a full turn. The problem went away, but the cylinder ring was a little loose. Out



of curiosity, I completely unscrewed the cylinder.

In *Figure 7*, I'm holding the cylinder ring with the wave washer inside it. Notice that the wave washer is completely flat. When the installers force-turned the cylinder, they flattened it (*Figure 8*). I had to squeeze it to bend it out again so the cylinder ring wouldn't rattle. Also, there were several instances when I had to turn the cylinder out two turns before the cam would turn.

We found that some cylinders had the spacers in place, and some had the cylinder in too far. Some had both issues, so we checked each one. The annoying part was having to remove the faceplate, loosen the cylinder clamp, back out the cylinder, fix the wave washer and put it all back.

While doing this project, I remembered something I noticed years ago on big jobs, and I saw it happen again with this one. When several people are involved with an installation project, they often split off and work in different areas. By this, I mean Joe installs locks down this hallway, Mike works down another and Jim does too.

This is likely what happened on this job. We would start installing the cores in a hallway with 10 offices, and each had the spacers inserted. Another hallway had all the cylinders in too far. Another hallway had both issues, and yet another was perfect.

You see what's happening here? Each individual is installing the way *he* does

it, and the other installers are doing it their way. Hence, different outcomes, and everybody thinks his own way is correct. Walk down a hallway, and you can tell that the same person did the installation in that area. You may not know *who* it was, but you'll know that's what happened.

If you're running a large install project, as I have, and have numerous people

working with you, here's how to ensure everybody produces the same results. At the start, get everybody together and go over the installation step by step if you have to so everyone is "on the same sheet of music," as one of my bosses used to say. Or point out things like, "We're not using the black spacers on this project because the cores and cylinders are all seven-pin."



On the mortise locks we were working on, timing is critical, as it would be on any brand.



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FIGURE 9



FIGURE 10

FIGURE 9 AND 10. The author saw this shelving in a woodworking magazine and built it years ago. There are only two legs, and it leans against a wall.



FIGURE 11. The author saw this at a school building, and no one there knew what to do about it.

## Useful Things

Figures 9 and 10 show some shelving that I saw in a woodworking magazine and built years ago. It's dark because I installed it late in the day. If you're running out of shelf space in your shop or basement, you might want to try this. Originally, this was in a storage space that I rented. Look closely at the second picture, and you'll see the unique way it's constructed. There are only two legs, and it leans against a wall. Honestly, once you put things on the shelves, this unit is rock solid. I think it took me a couple of hours to build it.

When I built the first one, it was full size, which was 8' long, and I believe it had three shelves. The plans called for a full sheet of  $\frac{3}{4}$ " plywood, and I think it was four or six 2" x 4"s. All you need is a handheld circular or table saw and some screws. The three 12" wide shelves were cut on the long side of the plywood, and the braces were cut out of the last piece. The shelf in the pictures was cut down from the original 8' model.

Figure 11 is something I saw at a school building, and apparently no one there knows what to do about it. Figure 12 was in one of the kitchen areas. I replaced it with a BEST 9K cylindrical lock. Figure 13 was at another school. In this case, the top screw hole — which you can see above the foot of the bar — was stripped. Maintenance just moved the top screw down to the bottom hole and left it. The mantra you get when they do this is usually "I fixed it" or "It still works!"

Figures 14 and 15 show how I take pictures of cores and core marks to take



When I build cores, I never face stamp, but I always side stamp.







FIGURE 12. The author replaced this with a BEST 9K cylindrical lock.



FIGURE 13. The top screw hole, which you can see above the foot of the bar, was stripped.



FIGURE 14



FIGURE 15

FIGURES 14 AND 15. These images show how the author takes pictures of cores and core marks to take back to his shop.

back to my shop when I'm working in Manhattan. You can see core marks stamped on the faces of the cores, and I use my finger to annotate the room number for the cores. When I build cores, I never face stamp, but I always side stamp. If someone loses a key (which is also stamped with a core mark) and someone figures out that it goes to a door, that can be trouble.

I have 15 or so building-specific loose-leaf binders with half the pages falling out and notes in five different handwritings on room number lists and bitting lists. This is why I often go to a specific building and room and pull the core for the core mark. In the pictures of the face-stamped cores, you can see that some clown has two different stampings on the same core. Can't make this up. 🤖



**Tony Wiersielis, CPL, CFDI**, has almost 40 years of experience and has worked in most phases of the trade throughout the New York metropolitan area. He was named Keynotes Author of the Year for 2016 and 2022 and serves as ALOA's Northeast Director. Reach him at [aew59@juno.com](mailto:aew59@juno.com).

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Fax: 859-885-1731  
www.lockmasters.com

### Locksmith Ledger International

Phone: 847-454-2700  
Fax: 847-454-2759  
www.locksmithledger.com

### Locksmith Resource

Phone: 312-789-5333  
Fax: 925-666-3671  
www.locksmithresource.com

### Master Teknik Tasarim

**Mak San Ve Tic LTD Sti**  
Phone: +90 (212) 223-0503  
www.masterpick.net

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Phone: 815-675-0404  
Fax: 815-675-6484  
www.midwestkeylessremote.com

### RAE Security, Inc.

Phone: 832-849-4150  
www.raesecurity.com

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Fax: 800-878-6400  
www.SECLOCK.com

### Southern Lock and Supply Co.

Phone: 727-541-5536  
Fax: 727-544-8278  
www.southernlock.com

### Stone & Berg Wholesale

Phone: 800-225-7405  
Fax: 800-535-5625  
www.stoneandberg.com

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Phone: 859-259-1878  
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Phone: 440-835-1411  
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www.transponderisland.com

### Turn 10 Wholesale

Phone: 800-848-9790

Fax: 800-391-4553

www.turnten.com

### Wesco | Anixter

Phone: 844-522-5275  
www.anixter.com/locksmith

### UHS Hardware

Phone: 954-866-2300  
www.uhs-hardware.com

### U.S. Lock Corp.

Phone: 800-925-5000  
Fax: 800-338-5625  
www.uslock.com

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www.abus.com

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Phone: 052-291-2013  
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[www.hollonsafe.com](http://www.hollonsafe.com)

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 Fax: 978-562-9859  
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**Lock Labs, Inc.**

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**Locksmith Services s.r.o.**

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 Fax: 540-380-1768  
[www.medeco.com](http://www.medeco.com)

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[www.mul-t-lockusa.com](http://www.mul-t-lockusa.com)

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[www.seco-larm.com](http://www.seco-larm.com)

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Phone: 718-392-9000  
 Fax: 718-392-8944  
[www.securitech.com](http://www.securitech.com)

**Security Door Controls**

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 Fax: 866-611-4784  
[www.sdcsecurity.com](http://www.sdcsecurity.com)

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 Fax: 269-323-3815  
[www.selecthinges.com](http://www.selecthinges.com)

**Shenzhen Changguang Technology Co., Ltd**

Phone: 0755-28687293  
[www.cgprogcar.com/en/](http://www.cgprogcar.com/en/)

**Stanley Security Solutions Inc.**

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**Advanced Digital**

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**Zellner Insurance Agency**

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1. Publication Title: **Keynotes**

2. Publication Number: **0 2 7 7 - 0 7 9 2**

3. Filing Date: **12/6/2024**

4. Issue Frequency: **Monthly (bi-monthly July and August and February/March)**

5. Number of Issues Published Annually: **10**

6. Annual Subscription Price: **Member benefit**

7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer) (Street, city, county, state, and ZIP+4®):  
**1408 N. Riverfront Blvd. #303, Dallas, TX 75207**

Contact Person: **Mary A. May**  
Telephone (include area code): **214-819-9753**

8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer):  
**Same/secondary contact: Mario Medina, 817-908-2827**

9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank):  
Publisher (Name and complete mailing address):  
**ALOA Security Professionals Association, Inc., 1408 N. Riverfront Blvd. #303, Dallas, TX 75207**  
Editor (Name and complete mailing address):  
**Mary A. May, ALOA Security Professionals Association, Inc., 1408 N. Riverfront Blvd. #303, Dallas, TX 75207**  
Managing Editor (Name and complete mailing address):  
**Same**

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Full Name: **ALOA Security Professionals Association, Inc.** Complete Mailing Address: **1408 N. Riverfront Blvd. #303, Dallas, TX 75207**

11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. If none, check box ☒ None

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12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates) (Check one)  
The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes:  
☒ Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months  
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PS Form 3526, July 2014 (Page 1 of 4 (see instructions page 6)) PSN: 7530-01-000-9031 PRIVACY NOTICE: See our privacy policy on www.usps.com

13. Publication Title: **Keynotes**

14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: **October 2024**

15. Extent and Nature of Circulation

	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)	2,594	2,398
b. Paid Circulation (By Mail and Outside the Mail)		
(1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	2,284	2,190
(2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	0	0
(3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS® (e.g., First-Class Mail®)	160	156
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f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e)	2,444	2,346
g. Copies not Distributed (See instructions #4 (page #3))	150	52
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16. Electronic Copy Circulation

	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Paid Electronic Copies	939	891
b. Total Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	3,383	3,237
c. Total Print Distribution (Line 15f) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	3,383	3,237
d. Percent Paid (Both Print & Electronic Copies) (16b divided by 16c times 100)	100	100

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17. Publication of Statement of Ownership  
☒ If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed in the \_\_\_\_\_, December 2024, issue of this publication. ☐ Publication not required.

18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner  
Wendy Angel, Managing Editor  
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ClearStar Security Network	page 61	www.clearstar.com	(360) 379-2494
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Hollon Safe	page 55	www.hollonsafe.com	(888) 455-2337
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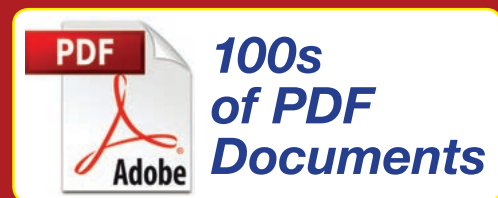
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