



Jim Russell maintains accounts on magnetic board.

American Exterminating

It's Good Business To Circulate

THE RUSSELLS of Springfield, Mass., are literally "spokesmen for the pest control industry" in their area. For more than a quarter of a century they have maintained constant communication with their community by speaking and listening with social, civic and religious groups.

The Russells are Matthew and his son James Alan, president and vice president respectively of the American Exterminating Co., Inc. Matthew Russell's wife, Dorothy G. is secretary-treasurer.

"We take every opportunity of speaking out and being heard on the subject of exterminating and proper pest control," says Jim Alan, a third generation member of this firm. "The more we bring these subjects to the attention of the public, the more they become aware of existing situations that require their serious attention. The more conscious they become of these existing situations, the better they can control them and under more economical conditions.

"While we do not commercialize in any way on our presentations to the public, we must admit that this has proved to be an excellent means of public relations for our firm. This has naturally helped to give our firm more widespread attention and to have been the source of considerable new business."

The business was founded by Abraham Russell in 1913 who used every means of early transportation to service his accounts. With his bag and a personal formula of borax, cocoa and sugar, Abraham Russell plied his trade with confidence and certainty.

Matthew Russell helped his father from as far back as he can remember, and in bringing this to light, also mentions that his son Jim has been helping him since the latter was 10 years old. While this has now made American Exterminating a three generation business, Jim's son, Robert David—age 6, is now "hanging around" the office and shop so that one day it is hoped there will be a fourth generation to continue this New England enterprise.

There is a continuing demand for the presentations made by the Russells. They use colored sound pictures in making the presentations and use various types of literature supplied by the associations, manufacturers and other sources.

"Our presentations have been made before fraternal organizations, service clubs, real estate boards and to other groups which have included architects, builders, public officials, etc.," explains Russell.

"We are not only interested in reaching the average homeowner and businessman but also the architects, builders and others who might very well lay the groundwork for preventive termite control which could save a lot of money and anguish later on.

"You know the old saying—A stitch in time—well this also goes for preventive termite control. Through our presentations, we are getting our message across. This has been shown by the ever increasing demand for our preventive termite control program. We don't mind saying that our competition has benefited from our efforts just as well. We can only hope that they do their job as well as we do ours so that the entire industry, in general, can benefit from the educational program upon which we have embarked."

The most popular presentation made by Russell is the one on—U. S. INSECT ENEMY NO. 1, THE TERMITE. After the presentation, a question and answer period follows, and this may cover any phase of the pest control program.

However, presentations are but one phase of American Exterminating's public relations program. The Russells are continually in the news, debating and offering suggestions wherever the occasion may arise. At one time, Matthew Russell voiced opposition to the termite findings of the local building commissioner. It made news in the Springfield newspapers. From time to time, American Exterminating has found itself in the news with subjects akin to its business activities.

"My father and I have been interviewed on many radio and television programs," says Jim. "These were live shows and were very well received. While the pest control industry, in general, benefited from these presentations, we feel that we did just as well."

For the past 15 years, American Exterminating has featured display booths in Springfield's annual Home Builders Trade Show and for 15 years at the Eastern States Exposition. American Exterminating's public relations program is further backed up with 15 years of radio spots



Matthew Russell and his son Jim in front of American's Springfield headquarters.

and five years of T.V. spots. Keeping its name out front and synonymous with pest control has been the underlying factor for this aggressive organization.

Currently located in a downtown location, American Exterminating operates a fleet of service vehicles and supplements its force of servicemen as the season and conditions demand.

A recent innovation by American has been the use of magnetic type signs that are placed on the panels of the service vehicles. If desired, the signs can be removed and replaced at will.

A stickler for rigid customer

follow-up, Russell employs a magnetic schedule board in maintaining visual supervision over his accounts.

Russell credits use of the magnetic schedule board to James Thomas, President, Mid-Hudson Pest Control Company, Poughkeepsie, N. Y. where he first saw it some time ago. PCO Thomas was very pleased to show Russell how he employed this magnetic schedule board, and the latter explains that it has more than paid for itself time and time again.

The magnetic schedule board provides Russell, his service manager and service personnel

Office area of headquarters building.



with an immediate review of assignments for each day of the week and the continuity that must be maintained.

Basically, the magnetic scheduling board columnarizes each work day of the week in a four-week sequence. A fifth week is used where such may be the case in certain months.

The name of the account to be serviced on the particular day of the week is placed in the appropriate column. A white card is used for accounts that are to be serviced monthly; blue for those which are serviced on an every other month basis. A salmon-colored card identifies night jobs and green is used for the inspection of properties treated for termites.

A small red circular magnet is placed on an account card when it has not been serviced in time. A yellow magnet is used when the account has been serviced in advance of a regular visit.

As contracts are signed for an annual termite inspection the following year, the account is noted on a card and placed by

month onto the magnetic scheduling board.

"This board has saved us considerable time and effort in routing our servicemen, determining whether a service has been rendered and keeping track of our daily service calls," says Jim. "Without question, this magnetic scheduling board provides us with an instantaneous visual check on all phases of our business. This enables us to meet our needs quickly and efficiently and, in this way, give the service to our customers the service they have come to expect from American Exterminating."

The firm backs up the quality of the service that it renders with trained personnel. New servicemen are first thoroughly indoctrinated into various pest control procedures under the supervision of the service manager and then service personnel before they are allowed to make independent service calls. Under the supervision of young Russell, training is a never ending pro-gram at American.

"We attend all the national

and conferences so that we can absorb as much as we possibly can about our industry," says Russell. "We bring back as much of this information as possible to our personnel. The more we know, the more we learn there is to know and the seminars that we attend have proven to be of tremendous help to us."

Under Jim Russell's guidance, American Exterminating diversified and expanded its area of operations. Smoke deodorizing, bird and preventive termite control were diversified services that he initiated. American Exterminating's services have now been extended to all of the six New England states. They have also been extended to the large estates on Fishers Island, L. I., New York.

"There is no substitute for reliability and confidence which we have always stressed," explains Russell. "This has helped us to retain regular accounts and to continually acquire new ones. Through a continuation of this process, American Exterminating has become a dominating factor in the pest control field in the areas that it serves."

Each vehicle is carefully outfitted for its particular job.

