# TRASH FLOW

## presents the TRASH TALK Newsletter



## MEET TRASH FLOW TEAM MEMBER NAOSHA

Naosha, or Nao, works in the Trash Billing department and is our Lead Payment Processing Facilitator. Nao has been a Trash Flow team member for 3.5 years. Nao is originally from Cape Cod Massachusetts, but has lived in Vermont for the last 10 years. Pictured with Nao is her dog Luther. In her spare time she spins fire. That's right, Nao swings flaming objects! Naosha has had extensive training in the ACH world, and is our resident ACH specialist.

## A NOTE FROM GEORGE

As Ivy has grown it has become more and more difficult to go by just first names, with some form of John or Andrew being the most popular requiring added initials or nicknames. But there is still only one George, and I still run the joint. Since starting 38 years ago, on the dining room table.

Well, I have a question for you. AI (Artificial Intelligence) is all in the news these days, and I expect it won't be very long before you will see "AI Enhanced" cornflakes on your grocery shelves. It is getting out of hand. But ironically AI is a real thing, and it makes its way into the conversations out at the office basketball court. Back in the original days of Ivy Computer, when we were a custom software house, and computers came with hand cranks, people didn't understand computers very well. So, when I was doing a proposal meeting, I would tell clients. Don't try to guess what a computer can or cannot do. Tell me all the things you imagined computers doing to help your business, and they can come right out of the Science Fiction Movies, and let me tell you what they can't do. This worked well and was a lot of fun.

Now it is your turn. I want your input on AI. As you listen to the news stories and hear all about things like ChatGPT. What do you imagine AI can do to help make your company easier to run, more profitable, or generally more successful? Grab a beer, sit back, and send me your crazy ideas to Survey@IvyComputer.com.

I don't get to talk with our haulers anywhere near as much as I used to, and I do miss that sometimes. And, Ivy Computer as a company is older than most of the people who work here, but every year we are in the top 10 of Vermont's fastest-growing Vermont Businesses. This year we were 4th. By the time you read this, we may be in our new 22,000 sq ft office building. Ivy as a company has plans for decades of future growth to come as it adds other industries to Trash, more and more features to our Waste products, even into the days when my time in the Ivy halls will be just a visit with my dog (not anytime soon). In those early days, a lot of you wouldn't buy unless you could meet this "kid" face to face, and I was treated to a lot of really good home-cooked meals where we discussed raising families and running a business, alongside Trash Flow. This computer kid has spent a lot of his life hanging out with Trash Haulers, and you guys are a great bunch. Thank you.

# TECH TALK

### Profiles

Trash Flow's Profiles feature is a game-changer when it comes to streamlining report running processes! If you are frequently using the same report options, Profiles can save you time.

Here's how it works: Simply select the report options you want to save, then navigate to **Profiles → Save as New** at the top of the report window. Name your profile, hit OK, and you're set! Your settings are now saved for future use. The next time you run that report, just click Profiles, and choose the desired profile from the list. With each report window capable of storing up to 10 profiles, accessing your preferred settings is as easy as a few clicks.

And if you need to make adjustments, simply tweak your options, and click "Profiles" → "**Save to [profile name]**" to update your existing profile.

-Cole, *Technical Support Specialist*

# PRODUCT HIGHLIGHTS

### Hands-Free Teleroute

With safety and time savings in mind, we bring you a hands free version of Teleroute. This new feature will allow your drivers to keep their hands on the wheel. Once they've selected a route, they can use voice commands to run their routes. Simply say "Gizmo Picked Up" at each stop and your device will pick up the current stop and select the next one. We have a wide array of supported commands for both Routes and Work Orders, so your drivers can focus on their work. We even offer French and Spanish support.

### Trash Flow Mobile

Trash Flow Mobile has hit a slight delay in development but we still expect it to be available soon.
Trash Flow Mobile is the beginning of providing mobile capabilities to Trash Flow, and will start with reporting. You will be able to run all your favorite reports on your tablet, or browser sitting in your favorite chair during the commercials on the football game. Please note that TF Mobile only works with cloud base installations.

### TipTick Rate Profiles

TipTick users are now able to save sets of rates that they can pull up for each ticket. This can be saved by customer or system-wide, so when Joey rolls up with another truck full of C&D waste, you can pull up the C&D rates you gave him last time without having to remember what they were.

### Why is Hands-Free Teleroute Taking So Long?

Listen, I get the pain. There's something you want, you're told it's coming soon, and it only arrives several months later. It's only natural to ask why it's taking so long. But the truth is we've been hard at work and adding improvements this entire time, and this is pretty common in the world of software development. And because there were some good stories this time, I thought I'd take a moment to highlight some of the adventures the development of Hands-Free Teleroute went through.

The initial development wasn't too difficult, to be fair. You can tell Android phones to activate the microphone and listen for particular phrases pretty easily. You need to ask the user permission to do so, but we think privacy is a good thing. What was more difficult was making sure it would work for you. For example, garbage trucks are MUCH noisier than our office space. Our developer worked on that problem by hopping in the industrial forklifts we're using to build our new office building. We also needed to have the app listen for a keyword, preferably one that wouldn't be said by accident. It took several tries, but we eventually landed on "Gizmo" or "Work Order" depending on which screen you're on. And of course, we needed to come up with voice commands for everything the app does.

Eventually, we thought we had a good feature together, and we showed it to the company at large so people could chime in. People were generally happy with it. It was pointed out, though, that once you said a command it was hard to tell whether or not the app heard you. This was a good point, so we decided to have a voice respond when a command was successful or unsuccessful. Unfortunately, that meant we needed to record hundreds of voice lines. We could have tried AI. However, we quickly determined that an AI voice was not the way to go.

Once we completed all that, it was off to Testing, whose job is to make sure everything is working as it should. They had a lot of fun testing this project, but they noticed that it was hard to tell if the app was listening. Our developer had a Google Pixel, which has a green light appear when the phone is listening. But Testing uses the Samsung Galaxy tablets that we recommend, and there was no green light. Because of that, we needed to add something to Teleroute to show that it was listening. In the meantime, documentation was drawing up a cheat sheet of commands for you to refer to, and we had to deal with issues where some commands weren't working or weren't being recognized.

We also needed to add something that, when a command fails, we could automatically and anonymously be notified. This enables us to fix our commands if needed, and that way the app won't be frustrating forever if one of your commands doesn't work. Because of that, we needed to build a mechanism for that and update our privacy policy to say: "Yes, we're sending back failed commands. No, we don't know who sent them. And no, we aren't saving them."

Bear in mind all of these steps need to be done in English, French, and Spanish. Which means you need to add translations to every step. This is also a mere sampling of the many issues that can pop in the middle of a project.

In short, we're sorry it's taking so long. But we promise it's for good reason and it'll be worth it in the end.

-Matt, *Programming Manager*

## TRAINING



**Left to right, Michelle of Trash Flow, Crystal of Trash Taxi of GA, Justin and his dog Mr. Billy Triscuit of Trash Flow, and Steve of Trash Taxi of GA**

We were happy to welcome **Trash Taxi of Georgia** to Vermont for in-person training in December.
"We found the sessions to be very beneficial and helpful with improving our usage with the system. Trash Flow has been a good partner, and we appreciate your staff's support of our operation." - Steven from Trash Taxi of Georgia

# DOGS OF IVY: LUCA, DAISY, AND DEJA



Luca, Daisy, and Deja are the canine companions of Jeff and Christa. They live their lives based on three simple principles - Be Loud. Be Lazy. Be Loving. They enjoy barking at squirrels, lounging around on the furniture, and cuddling their humans. When they visit the office, they make it a point to visit everyone to maximize their scratch intake for the day. Luca especially loves hearing everyone talk about his large head.
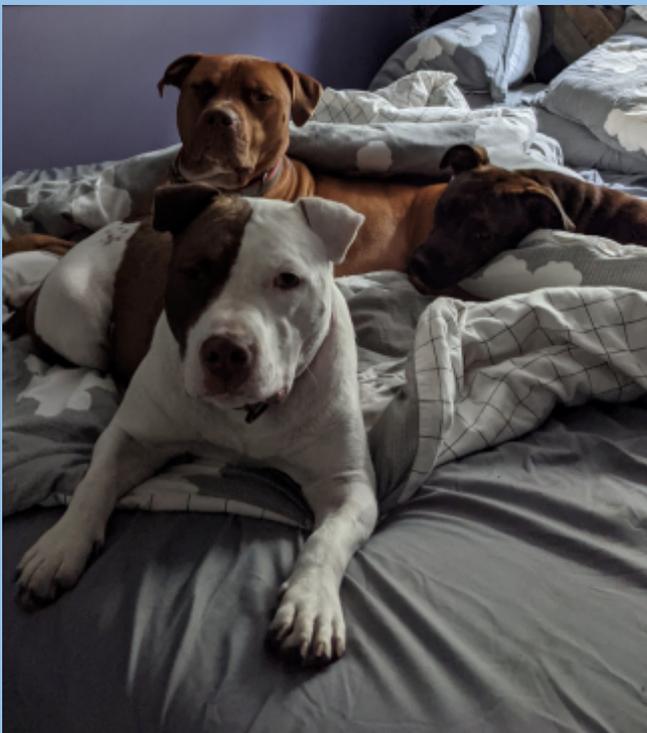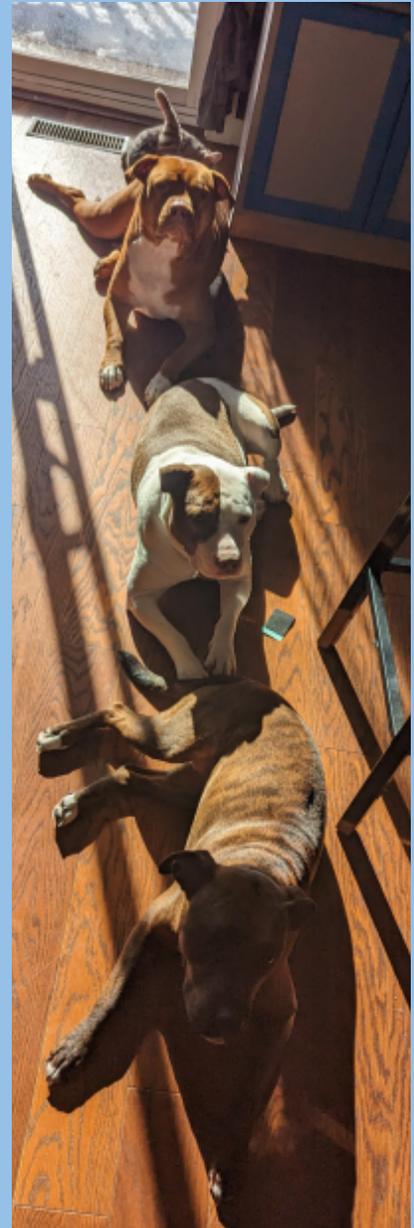
# TRASH BILLING TOOLBOX

**ACH Payments 101:**

**What They Are and How do They Process?**

This is the first in a series about ACH Payments. In this issue, we will cover what an ACH Payment is and how it is processed. Future articles will review what a pre-note is, ACH account invalidations, declines, and reversals.

**What is an ACH Payment?**

ACH (Automated Clearing House) is a nationwide network of banks and financial institutions that use a batch file system to send and receive debits and credits.
An ACH payment is triggered when a customer chooses to use their financial institution's routing and account number to submit a payment. This movement of credits and debits are electronic funds transfers (EFT). You may also know these types of transactions as "direct deposits". In the world of Trash Billing when we are talking about an ACH payment, we are referring to an EFT made on the ACH network.
Fees: Unlike debit/credit card payments which have a flat fee and a variable fee- ACH payments only use the flat fee. So, they are very cost-effective to process. However, if an ACH payment declines, there is a $4.00 fee. Nacha, the institution that governs the ACH network, charges institutions in the ACH network for declines in hopes of reducing errors and decreasing declines throughout the overall network. We will discuss declines in more detail in a future newsletter but you can always call Trash Billing with questions.

**How Do ACH Payments Process?**

**Recording the Submitted Payment:** Trash Billing first makes sure that the record of the submitted payment is sent to the customer's account in your Trash Flow. For payments at TrashBilling.com, that record appears when the hauler's office uses the "pick up web payments" from their Trash Billing window in Trash Flow.

**Making the Money Move:**

ACH payments take a longer time to process than Credit Card payments due to the moving of the file through the ACH network. A typical response time for an ACH payment is 2-3 business days. The ACH network only accepts transactions Monday through Friday excluding bank holidays. Here is the process, step-by-step for an ACH payment with an account that has been previously validated by a pre-note*:

1.Beginning at 2:00 PM EST on a banking day, Trash Billing takes your ACH payment and sends it as a file to our partner financial institution.

2.Our financial institution then sends the file to a central ACH operator (The Federal Reserve or The Clearing House) who disburses the file to your customer's bank.

3.Once your customer's bank receives the file, they will debit the customer's account and then send a file back through the ACH system to our financial institution and send it to Trash Billing.
*In our next issue (Summer 2024), we will review what a pre-note is and how it impacts the processing of ACH payments.

**Trash Billing is Here for Your ACH Questions and more!**

ACH payments are highly situational and Trash Billing is always happy to speak with haulers, their customers, or their customer's financial institutions in regards to ACH payments. If you have any questions or want to learn more, please never hesitate to reach out to the team at Trash Billing! Stay tuned to this newsletter for more ACH educational resources coming shortly.

-Shannon, *Payment Processing Facilitator*, Trash Billing

## TRASH FLOW IN THE COMMUNITY

During the summer of 2023, Ivy Computer put out a call to find local organizations that could benefit from a bottle drive. The Clyde Whittemore Little League in Waterbury, VT answered our call, and our partnership has strengthened since then.

In April of 1957, Clyde Whittemore joined the Waterbury Little League Baseball Association as Vice President. He quickly saw many possibilities for the league to pursue. Clyde acted in all capacities, serving as adviser, umpire, and chief safety officer. During Clyde's life-long association with the Little League and Babe Ruth programs participation grew from 60 to 248 youngsters. After Clyde's passing in 1980, the residents and members of the Waterbury Little League named the league in his honor. Since then, the league has continued to grow.

From the bottle drive collection to providing additional financial support, every dollar helps the Little League to reach as many families as possible to help pay for league registrations and upgrade equipment including implementing a new CPR/First aid program for coaches. Ivy's partnership with the Clyde Whittemore Little League continues to strengthen.

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