

# AUTO OUTLOOK

*Olson Brothers Service, Inc.,  
Milwaukie. Garrett in the red  
shirt, Matt in the white shirt,  
and Bryan in the blue  
shop coat.*



*David's Automotive and Warren  
Automotive @ Napa Scappoose*



# AUTO OUTLOOK

## NATA - AUTO OUTLOOK STAFF

November | December | January 2011/2012

### NATA Staff

#### Executive Director

Barbara Crest [barbara@aboutnata.org](mailto:barbara@aboutnata.org)

#### Insurance Specialist

Cathi Webb [cathi@aboutnata.org](mailto:cathi@aboutnata.org)

#### Office Manager

Laurie Kolar [laurie@aboutnata.org](mailto:laurie@aboutnata.org)

#### Contributing Author

John Yoswick

## AUTO OUTLOOK INFORMATION

### Editor

Barbara Crest

### Graphic Designer

Julie Almquist, [www.AlmquistProductions.com](http://www.AlmquistProductions.com)

Mail editorial news, notices and correspondence to:  
NATA Administrative Office:

7931 NE Halsey St., Suite 212, Portland, OR 97213

### Article and Advertisement Deadlines:

Jan. 10 for the February **NATA Auto Outlook**

Apr. 10 for the May **NATA Auto Outlook**

July 10 for the August **NATA Auto Outlook**

Oct. 10 for the November **NATA Auto Outlook**

Copyright 2011/2012 Northwest Automotive Trades Association  
All rights reserved. This material may be reprinted only with the  
expressed written permission of NATA.



**NW Automotive Trades Assn.**

Administrative Office: 7931 NE Halsey St. Suite 212,  
Portland, OR 97213

**1.800.730.7282 Fax: 503-253-9890**

**503.253.9898**

**[www.aboutNATA.org](http://www.aboutNATA.org)**

## AUTO OUTLOOK ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE

**Letter from the Editor** \_\_\_\_\_ 2

**Winning Ticket: Allure of the Automobile** \_\_\_\_\_ 3

**NATA News** \_\_\_\_\_ 4

**Car Care Month** \_\_\_\_\_ 6

**What Keeps You Awake at Night?** \_\_\_\_\_ 7

**Making Social Media Work** \_\_\_\_\_ 8

**The New RIGHT TO REPAIR:  
Forcing the Repair Industry into the 21<sup>ST</sup> Century** \_\_\_\_\_ 9

**AWA Oktoberfest – A Success!** \_\_\_\_\_ 10

## NATA Members

How many of us have made it to our 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary? NATA is proud to salute the many small businesses who celebrate their silver 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of NATA membership. We thank them for their support over the years, and wish them many more years of membership in our family.

### 25+ years

- 205 Auto Salvage
- AAMCO-Eugene
- Art of Maintenance
- BC Auto Body
- East Portland Auto Body
- Esquire Motors
- Everist Brothers
- Fairview Travel Service
- Frank Warrens Automotive & Marine Services
- Garry Small Saab
- Ger-Brock & Co.
- Hal Jones Automotive
- Hall Tool Co.
- Harold's Auto Service
- Heitzman Body Shop
- Jim Estes Enterprises
- Johnson Automotive NW
- Krueger's Automotive Service
- Light Truck Parts
- Lukas Auto Painting

*25 Year Member*

- Majhor-Murray Ltd.
- Mascott Equipment
- Master Transmission
- POSSY
- Precision Automotive and Machine
- Rose Auto Wrecking
- Schnell Automotive and Supply
- St. John's Truck and Equipment Repair
- The Line-Up Shops
- Transmission Exchange
- TVG
- Wally and Son Auto Service
- Wright Brothers Glass

## Northwest Automotive Trades Association

### Board of Directors

President

**Bob Anderson**, AJs Auto Repair, Salem

Vice President

**Ross Bradshaw**, Portland Transmission Warehouse, Portland

Secretary

**Rick Field**, Salem Transmission, Salem

Treasurer

**Kurt Garbe**, Esquire Motors, Portland

### General Directors:

**Scott Asla**, Baxter Auto Parts, Bend

**Jerry Geiszler**, Jerry's Custom Paint, Gresham

**Jim C. Jones**, Jones Oil Co., Salem

**Dennis Mattoon**, Mt. Hood Community College, Gresham

**Ron Reichen**, Precision Body & Paint, Beaverton

**Catherine Skiens**, RGS Auto & Marine, Albany

**Jerry Titus**, Portland Service Station Supply, Portland

**Mary Ann Trout**, Hillsboro Auto Wrecking, Hillsboro

## Oregon Automotive Trades Association

(Insurance Programs & NATA Building)

President

**Steve Hopkins**, CARQUEST Distribution Center, Thrifty Auto Supply, Gresham

Vice President

**John Meyerhofer**, JM Mechanical, Canby

Secretary

**Spencer Hodes**, Transmission Exchange, Portland

Treasurer

**Nancy Scheewe**, Du Fresne's Auto Service Inc., Portland

General Director

**Shanon Griesen**, Bradshaw's Service Center, Portland



**Executive Director**  
Barbara Crest

This October NATA members stepped up to celebrate Car Care Month in Oregon. On the cover and inside this issue of Auto Outlook you will see pictures of some of the events around the state. Car Care Month is like a snowflake in that each one is unique and different. For instance, some shops celebrated Car Care Month by giving vehicles a free Car Care check all month. Others held a one-day event, and set up canopies, tents, tables of food and tables of exhibits. Consumers were impressed and thankful for our members who took time out of their busy day/month to educate them about proper car care.

We must also thank the Car Care Council in Bethesda, MD, for sharing their Car Care kits and tire gauges with our members, and for a visit from Rich White, Senior Vice President, Marketing and Member Relations, who attended our "How to Do a Car Care Month" workshop in September 2011. He spoke well about the event pluses, and the many goals to reach for marketing, public relations, and good customer service. NATA members left the workshop with their free Car Care Month marketing materials and a "let's go" attitude for planning and conducting their individual Car Care Month activities. NATA is planning for their April Car Care Month 2012 with another workshop in January.

### Car Care Month Workshop



Patty McConnell, Old Dominion Collision Center, had this to say about their Car Care Month event: "We had a great turnout for our first annual 'What Women Auto Know' class. We deployed an airbag, had a demo on texting while driving, a demo from police department with their drunk driving goggles, checked some fluid levels, tire pressure, learned about ABS systems and learned how to apply aquapell to the windshield along with several other interactive things. **45 women came along with several teenage daughters.** We ate pink cupcakes and drank good coffee and everyone went away with a goodie bag with aquapell, tire gauge and lots of other fun stuff in a cute reusable bag. We think it was a success!!!"

Also, special thanks goes to Mary Ann Trout, Hillsboro Auto Wrecking and Scott Asla, Baxter Auto Parts, for providing goodie bags for Car Care Month participants and shops.

# Winning Ticket: The Allure of the Automobile

This summer, the Portland Art Museum presented "The Allure of the Automobile" exhibit, an extraordinary showing of 16 of the world's most luxurious and brilliantly conceived cars from the 1930s to the early 1960s. Across the street at the Oregon History Museum was Pedal to the Metal (Oregon Motorsports Tradition) as a part of the summer of the automobile in the Portland Park Blocks. Pedal to the Metal celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Indy 500. NATA participated in a ticket giveaway for "The Allure of the Automobile," drawing from a hat weekly.

Saturday August 13<sup>th</sup> by "luck of the draw" was a real treat for my wife and me to attend the "Allure of the Automobile" exhibit at the Portland Art Museum.

Along with the "Allure of the Automobile" they have a series of automotive exhibits varying from All Chevrolet, Muscle Cars, Rod & Custom, American Vintage to Italian cars, Hot Rods, All Fords, Mercedes and BMW and others each weekend through the end of the exhibit held outside along the park blocks. The day we attended was all English cars with Triumph's, Jaguar's, Lotus, and Morgan's, Austin-Coopers, Anglia's and more. It was impressive to see what some of the local owners had to offer with their collections of automobiles.

The real treat however was indoors where on display were some of the more rare automobiles from private collectors. Each of the cars on displayed had a full description of the car, listing when they were made and something about the history that made them true pieces of art.

In the years I have been around automobiles it has never ceased to amaze me how something built by hand, without the machinery and tools we have today, can be built with such precision and beauty, it is almost mind boggling. Between the Bugatti, Ferrari, and Alfa Romeo, Tucker, Corvette, Steve McQueen's 1957 Jaguar XK-SS Roadster and the 1954 Dodge Firearrow III Concept Car was almost too much to take in.

As we left the museum that day my only regret was wishing there were additional automobiles to view and continue taking in the unbelievable beauty and craftsmanship each one offered.

If the exhibit returns next year and displays a new group of automobiles this is one person who will make certain to attend and take in the "Allure of the Automobile".

Sincerely, Jim C. Jones, Manager, Marketing & Training  
Carson Oil Company, Jones@CarsonOil.com (503) 932-6913

Yay, my three grandsons get to spend one night and 2 full days a week with me this summer. It helps their mom with daycare and I get Grandma time. If they had their way they would be in the pool right after breakfast, fortunately, I get my way and they have to wait until after lunch.

A few weeks ago 8 year old Andrew, the only Beaver fan in the bunch, brought his Beaveropoly game. Usually I'd rather watch paint dry than play board games but I took one for the team as they say. About 30 minutes into the game and I was nearly out of funds. The boys pointed out that since I was the banker I could just sneak some money out of the bank.

ABSOLUTELY NOT! I then took the opportunity to explain Karma, Juju and why we only put good stuff out to the universe so that we get good things back and conversely that when we put bad things out there we get bad things back. Sometimes it's big sometimes it's small, you never know, but it's how everything works.

Don't you know, I checked my e-mail five minutes later and I had an e-mail from Cathi at NATA notifying me that we had won 2 tickets to the Allure of the Automobile show in Portland! I showed the boys, "See," I told them, "it really works!" You would have thought I was Harry Potter the way they looked at me!

So thank you Cathi for the tickets and for helping me teach a very valuable lesson to my grandchildren.

Take care, Deb Gray, Raleigh Hills Automotive

Since 1964  
**POSSY**  
Portland service station supply Co.

737 NE 25th Ave, Portland OR 97232

**revolution**  
www.revolutionlifts.com



10,000lb 2 Post Lift

**RTP10**  
99.95/Month  
36 month lease

**\$0 Down - \$1.00 Residual - OAC**



10,000lb 2 Post  
Asymmetrical Lift

**SPOA10**  
125.95 / Month  
36 month lease

503-234-0744 | 800-871-0744 | www.pdxpossy.com

## Charitable Giving Always Needed



Northwest Automotive Trades Association is involved in charitable giving opportunities in Oregon. As in all small businesses, "families first" hits at the heart of our work. At a recent fundraiser for the Edwards Center, Amy Roloff speaks to the group about the importance of helping adults with physical and mental handicaps. Ms. Roloff and her family appeared in the "Small People, Big World" series on The Learning Channel, and helps children with disabilities. She is a strong advocate for the Edwards Center and the incredible work they do for our communities and our families.

## Congratulations to Laurie and Frank Kolar!



Laurie Vail and Frank Kolar were married September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at the Kennedy School in Portland.

## S.E. Auto Repair Business for Sale or Lease

Well known family business of 49 years – Sale, Lease, or Lease Option. Solid business with great reputation. Established customer base that was developed without advertising. Located within the Central Eastside of Portland. Concrete building 15,150 SF with multiple offices, showroom and British auto parts sales. Building has 4 hoists and two additional repair stations. Enough space to create another part of your business. Has off street parking.

Harold's Auto Service, LLC Attn: Gerri Dick  
2204 SE 7<sup>th</sup> Ave., Portland, OR  
503-232-8304 hdrtr@frontier.com

## Memorial for Steve VonHagen of Oregon Auto Spring

It is with regret we wish to inform you of the loss of Steve VonHagen, the president at Oregon Auto Spring. Steve's passing to a heart attack comes as a significant shock to us all. He has been the heart and soul of Oregon Auto Spring for almost 40 years, serving the company since 1972.

We wish to thank you for your continuing support. Steve's three sons, all active in the business, will be working hard to continue his legacy of quality product, and great service.

Nick VonHagen, who has been working closely along side his dad, will be stepping into the shoes of a well-respected and loved leader in our organization. Brett Banta as general manager of Right Way Spring, and Joe VonHagen in customer service here in Portland, along with all of us at Oregon Auto Spring, look forward to many more great years ahead.

There will be a memorial held on Saturday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> 2011 at 1:30 pm to commemorate the life of our dear friend and colleague. It will be taking place in the Sam Cox building at Glen Otto Park 1102 E. Columbia River Hwy, Troutdale, OR 97060. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Albertina Kerr Center. 424 NE 22<sup>nd</sup> Ave. Portland, OR 97232 in memory of Steve VonHagen.

## NATA New Members

**Discount Import Parts** – In business since 1979, Discount Import Parts provides import auto parts. They have 15 employees. 15100 SE McLoughlin Blvd., Milwaukie, OR 97267  
503-659-7444  
[www.discountimports.com](http://www.discountimports.com)

**Key Bank** (Associate Member) - Key Bank has teamed up with NATA to offer all NATA members free account servicing and maintenance for any HSA (Health Savings Accounts) for their employees. 10888 SE Main St, Milwaukie, OR 97222  
503-353-2303  
[www.keybank.com](http://www.keybank.com)

(If you are interested in more information about HSA health plans and opening up HSA accounts for your employees, call the NATA office at 503-253-9898 and ask for Cathi. HSA health plans lower your premiums while allowing you to invest in your employee's health.)

**Steelhead Insurance Services** (Associate Member) – Independent insurance company specializing in low- cost insurance for life insurance, long- term care, disability insurance, and maximizing returns on investments for fixed annuity-type products. 405 N. Hayden Bay Dr., Portland, OR 97217  
541-716-6001  
[www.steelheadinsurance.com](http://www.steelheadinsurance.com)

# NATA New Health Plan Options

Northwest Automotive Trades Association is now able to help all group members of all group sizes with their health insurance designs and plans. Also, we have developed a program utilizing HSA (Health Savings Accounts) and supplementary insurance plans for employees.

One of our strategies for HSA involves lowering your group's total premium, investing the savings into your employees for first dollar benefits, and adding supplementary plans that protect your employees with major health incidents. To



find out how this program may fit your needs, send NATA an employee census, and within a week we can provide you with a detailed Excel spreadsheet that will show you exactly how the HSA program works. Personal meetings are available and advisable, as well as one-on-one enrollment for each of your employees entering the program.

Also we now have an answer for one-person groups that need medical coverage at a reasonable rate without the risk of denial.

Finally, NATA can quote your health plan with any carrier on any plan. Then, your health premium would benefit our Association that benefits you!

If you haven't checked with your NATA office lately about group health coverage, call Cathi Webb at 503-253-9898 or 800 730-7282 to take advantage of the many new options for health plan coverage.

**aed** Automotive Electric Distributors Inc. Office: (503) 735-294  
Watts: 1-800-666-2660  
Fax: (503) 735-3158  
4990 NORTH BASIN AVENUE, PORTLAND, OREGON 97217



The Federated Car Care Program provides all the tools for the professional repair shop.

- 12 months 12,000 mile Nation Wide Warranty
- Consumer Credit Card Program
- Federated Car Care Identity items.
- Professional Image, Signage & Identification
- ASE Certification Reimbursement and Discounts
- Technician Training / Tech Line
- Preferred Federated Financing
- Car Care Locator Service (Phone and Web)



**SERVING PORTLAND AREA TECHNICIANS** Since 2001

Locations in Portland, Hillsboro, Vancouver, Tigard, and Gresham

**AXD Offers installers/technicians:**

- Competitive Prices on the best national brands.
  - Fast, Friendly delivery.
  - Skilled, knowledgeable counter techs.
  - Training and marketing programs.
  - Huge Inventory.
- Phone: 503-735-2940  
Fax: 503-735-2907

## Beecher Carlson

### The Difference Between Acceptable & Exceptional.



There's a real difference with the Beecher Carlson approach to insurance. It starts with an immediate and effective response to your needs, followed by rare expertise and an unwavering commitment to your satisfaction. Our partnership approach goes well beyond any traditional insurance company/client relationship. We help you anticipate exposure and liability, we provide the tools and training you'll need to avoid legal and risk pitfalls, we're your advocate and most importantly . . . we deliver! Why pay for acceptable when you have "exceptional" — every day at Beecher Carlson.



Portland 503.222.1831 | Bend 541.382.1611 | Eugene 541.485.6633  
Medford 541.772.1111 | Longview 360.703.0101

[beechercarlson.com](http://beechercarlson.com)

- Property Casualty
- Employee Benefits
- Public Sector
- Nonprofit
- Risk Management
- Construction
- Claims Advocacy
- Human Resources

## Car Care Month Participants

NATA is planning for their April Car Care Month 2012 with another workshop in January. Here are the participants in October Car Care Month:

**Bernard's Garage** and John Sciara in Milwaukie  
**Everest Brothers** and David Everist in Portland  
**Olson Brothers Tire Factory** and Dan Baldwin in Milwaukie  
**Crabtree Auto Repair** and Paula Connaghan in Albany  
**Sherwood Auto Repair** and Felix LaPlante in Tualatin  
**JM Mechanical** and John Meyerhofer in Canby  
**Brooks Automotive** and Sam Blower in Brooks  
**DuFresne's Auto Service** and Nancy Scheewe in Portland  
**AJ's Auto Repair** and Bob Anderson in Salem  
**Old Dominion Collision Center** and Patty McConnell in Eugene  
**Miller Auto Car Center** and Gary Miller in Medford  
**Star Automotive** and Jim Lefeber in Grants Pass  
**Star Oil Company** and Mark Fitz in Portland  
**Wally and Son Auto Service and Repair** and Katie Freeman in Portland  
**Esquire Motors** and Kathy Garbe in Portland  
**David's Automotive** in Scappoose  
**Warren Automotive**

**Oregon's only**  
**AUDI**  
**FACTORY-AUTHORIZED**  
*The Science of Collision Repair  
.... Re-Defined*  
Call today 641-5634  
CELETTE® UNI-BODY MEASURING SYSTEM  
CLEAN-AIR DUST-FREE ENVIRONMENT  
FACTORY TRAINED TECHNICIANS  
A-8 R-8 TT  
**ALUMINUM**  
**REPAIR FACILITY**  
PRECISION BODY & PAINT  
14145 SW Canyon Rd, Beaverton, OR  
©2010 Precision Body & Paint, Inc.

## Auto Industry May Help Keep U.S. from Falling Back into Recession

The Los Angeles Times is reporting that the industry that once needed a bailout could be the one that helps the U.S. economy stave off another recession. From two years ago, Ford Motor Co., General Motors Co., Chrysler Group and other auto companies have added almost 90,000 manufacturing jobs, a 14% increase, according to federal employment data.

Nissan, VW and other foreign-based firms are expanding in the United States, putting billions of dollars into building and refurbishing plants. Dealers are having a banner year, making more money per sale than they have in years and hiring back some workers shed during the recession.

The Commerce Department said that orders for autos and auto parts jumped 11.5 percent in July, the most in eight years. That followed an earlier government report on industrial production that showed the auto industry was the strongest segment of the manufacturing economy in July.

And as the average age of vehicles on the road rose to 11 years, repair shops in the U.S. reported \$36 billion in sales last year, up 10.5 percent from 2007, according to estimates from the Automotive Aftermarket Industry Association. This year, the association estimates sales for shops to jump nearly 5 percent from last year.

## Alliance for State Automotive Aftermarket Associations

At their annual meeting in Las Vegas, NV, in early November, the Alliance for State Automotive Aftermarket Associations elected Barbara Crest as President for 2011-12. Crest has been executive director of Northwest Automotive Trades Association for the past eight years, and is excited about the opportunities for closer collaboration and communication with state associations throughout the U.S. Vice-President this year is Tom Janssen, president, Washington Automotive Wholesalers Association located in Lynnwood, WA. And Secretary-Treasurer is Debbie Cook, president, Michigan Automotive Parts Association. ASAAA will implement their "Legislator Awareness and Education (web-based) Program" this year, work in support of Right to Repair state legislation, and continue to provide excellent benefits, services and communication to their state aftermarket associations.



## Alternative Powertrains Under Development

Two companies in September were touting technologies that they say could power future vehicles. Michigan-based Advantron Technologies says its new eletro-magnetic engine has more horsepower than traditional combustion engines, and that the company's simulation and testing show the engine could have a range of 700 to 1,000 miles before recharging. The company is currently working on a prototype.

And a GE-sponsored digital magazine featured a story on a turbine/electric generator system powered by a thorium-based laser that gives off heat and energy rather than light. An abundant but mildly radioactive element, thorium could effectively power a car forever, with no emissions or need for recharging. The article says just 8 grams of thorium within a 500-pound, 335-horsepower unit, could power an average car for 5,000 hours or about 300,000 miles of normal driving.

# What Keeps You Awake at Night?

Where do most of your difficult management problems come from? You know, the ones that keep you up at night, that give you gray hair? The problems that you seem to have to deal with over and over, but that just won't go away?

Is it:

- a) Suppliers
- b) Customers
- c) Government & taxes
- d) The economy
- e) Keeping your business profitable
- f) None of the above

The correct answer is f) None of the above.

Most managers know that most of the most difficult problems that they face punch a time clock every day: They are on your own payroll. That's right, it's your own employees that will cause your hair to turn gray - or to fall out.

Employee performance problems can be classified in two broad categories, and the category will determine the appropriate management response:

The first category is the employee who is unable to perform to your standards. This can happen for a number of legitimate reasons, including unclear work instructions, lack of training or tools, or conflicting instructions. All of these call for your intercession. If the employee needs a new hose, buy the hose. If the air compressor is broken, fix it. If he doesn't know how to do the job, train him. If he's too slow, coach him. Or move him to another position. Eighty percent of being a good employee is attitude, anyway, isn't it? There is always a place in your company for an employee who has a good attitude and tries hard. You can find a place for such a person.

The second category is the employee who is unwilling to perform to your standards. Why would an employee choose to not perform to your standards? Your first answer might be "attitude" or "character." You generally can't change someone else's attitude or character, and you shouldn't try. You aren't their mommy or daddy, and you aren't a psychologist. It's not your place to diagnose a character flaw, much less to try to cure it. Instead, focus on the employee's performance. Always focus on performance.

There is a bigger issue here - how can an employee give you gray hair by consistently, repeatedly, and intentionally not performing to your standards? The answer is: Only if a manager lets him. And if a manager lets an employee do such a thing, it isn't the employee that is the problem - it's the manager. There is a technical term for this. It's called "bad management."

Here's one example. A senior manager came to me in April and asked permission to fire an employee because of an attendance problem. The employee would stroll in anywhere from ten to twenty five minutes late, punch in, change into her uniform on company time, and then stroll to her work place, as if there were no urgency, and as if she had done nothing wrong. About half the time she missed the morning lineup, where daily jobs were assigned, safety concerns were reviewed, etc. I asked the manager how long this had been happening, and he told me "Since last December, when I hired her." I asked why he hadn't written her a warning, and he replied "I tried - I gave her three warnings in two weeks right after I hired her, and it didn't do any good. Can I fire her?"

After three written warnings, the manager gave up on addressing the problem. For five months he watched her stroll in, on her own schedule, and apparently without a care in the world. During that time, he didn't even discuss attendance with her - he found it too stressful. By ignoring the problem, he allowed her to set her own standard for performance. Was she stressed? No, she hadn't a care in the world. How about the manager? He boiled over every morning when she came to work, and fumed. "Why can't she show up on time?" In this situation, the manager was the real problem. He had surrendered his authority on this issue by allowing the problem behavior to continue.

I told him that I wasn't prepared to fire her because of his poor performance. He hadn't managed her effectively. He didn't like that response. After all, he had given her three written warnings, hadn't he?

**Management Must Manage.** That's not a new concept, but we sometimes forget it. You must manage your employees. That's your job. If you supervise more than a couple of employees, supervision is almost certainly your most important job. And surrender isn't acceptable.

The manager must either a) manage the employee into compliance with company standards, or b) manage the employee out the door. If one tool - written warnings, in this case, doesn't work, try another tool.

I'm not suggesting that you force your employees to comply with unnecessarily rigid standards or that you become a tyrant over petty details. In this case, the manager clearly felt that the employee's performance was substandard. He was asking to fire her, wasn't he? Obviously, punctuality was important to him - and rightfully so, she was missing the morning lineup. But this manager had stopped managing this employee - at least on the issue of punctuality. And he was wasting money, too - the employee was punching in, and then putting on her uniform. This employee was also undermining the manager's authority in front of the other employees.

If one tool doesn't work, try another, and another. Either manage the employee into compliance with your standards, or manage the employee out the door. Surrender is not an option.

There is a management technique called creative stress transfer. As a manager, you have many tools at your disposal to correct poor performance. In difficult situations, choose the one that will effectively transfer your stress to the employee. Here are some things that the manager could have said:

- Is this employee primarily motivated by money? "Gee, I'm sorry, but you won't be eligible for any bonuses or spiffs in any pay period that you are more than five minutes late."
- Is the employee motivated by getting ahead? "I'm sorry, but we are suspending any training subsidies for you until you correct your attendance problem."
- In most states, vacation is not an entitlement. You have a great deal of discretion in granting - or not granting - paid time off. "Because you can't seem to arrive on time, I won't be approving any vacation requests for you for the next six months."
- How about a suspension? Or a transfer to another team, or to another shift? I told this manager to go manage his employee into his standards, or to manage her out the door, and that I wasn't going to fire her because he couldn't manage her properly.

My manager chose to give her one more written warning, in which he advised her that the next time that she was late she would be suspended for three days without pay. She signed the warning and promised to do better. The next day, she showed up twenty minutes late, and on her own began packing her tools. We didn't have to fire her - she quit. And my manager? He was smiling, free of stress, and he began to regain the respect of his other technicians.

We were willing to accept either alternative - an employee who showed up on time, in her uniform, ready to work, or a change in her status to "ex-employee." She chose to walk. Manage your employees into your standards, or manage them out the door. And remember, if you are stressed, be creative - transfer your stress to the employee.

*William Leslie is a freelance writer. His articles have been published in a broad range of magazines, including Auto Dealer Monthly, Ward's Auto Business, Auto Rental News, Family Chronicle and others. Reach him at bill@ocmusa.com.*



## Beware of Automatic Contract Renewals

A number of shops have recently reported feeling stung by automatic renewal clauses in contracts they've signed, most often involving software or information system subscriptions. Under such clauses, if you make even one payment beyond the term of the original contract, it automatically renews for another year or more.

"I discovered this at my anniversary month but had not given them the 30-days' notice to stop as required in the contract. So I was required to pay for an additional year and was not able to change their mind," one shop owner said.

His recommendation: First thing upon signing a new contract, take the low-tech approach to knowing when you are able to get out of it.

"I now have it on every calendar in the office to cancel the contract by sending them a letter 90 days, 60 days and 30 days before the end of this contract," he said.

A representative of a company that sells information systems to shops offers even another approach.

"What I suggest to customers all the time is from the very beginning (upon signing the agreement) to send in a non-renewal letter," he said. "There is nothing that states you have to wait until the very end to send it in. Send it in from Day 1, so it's taken out of the equation from the start."

## Making Social Media Work

Social media was a common topic at this year's Automotive Service and Repair Week, including a keynote address by Chris Brogan, a business marketing consultant, speaker and writer. Brogan said just prior to speaking at the event, he sent out a Tweet to the several hundred people who follow him on Twitter, asking what they'd like him to tell those who repair cars for a living.

"Just because I'm a woman doesn't mean I don't understand car talk. Please treat me with respect," Brogan read from the responses he received. "And personally, I'll tell you that just because I'm a man that doesn't mean I have a clue what you are saying to me."

Brogan said others recommended that shops build trust by educating the customer and by doing simple things like calling customers when promised.

"But the Number 1 word I saw over and over and over again in people's Tweets was 'honesty,'" Brogan said. "Be honest." Brogan drew lots of laughter from attendees as he shared a number of his own suggestions:

- Go digital in your shop waiting area, offering wireless internet service and maybe even an iPod for customers to use. "People aren't going to walk away with them; you have their car," Brogan joked.
- Think of social media in a similar way - as an extension of the customer's experience with your shop. Twitter and Facebook offer a way for a customer to maintain a relationship with you when their vehicle isn't in your shop, Brogan said. "You want people to think of you before they've had their accident or they need your service. Just sort of in the back of their head. You want to be top of mind and back of the head. It's a really weird spot. It's right about where people start going bald first.
- Keep it light and personable. Social media are about conversations, not just advertising, Brogan said. Comment and respond, don't just post your own content. Send your emails from a person's name at your shop, not just "info@" or "sales@". Use a photo rather than your logo as the icon on your Facebook or Twitter accounts. Keep your emails short - 250 words or less - and about only one or two topics. Try to categorize your customer email list in ways that let you send more relevant emails to different groups.
- Solicit feedback, positive or negative. Ask customers to review you on Yelp or other sites, he said. If you get negative reviews, consider them an opportunity to publicly show how you address such customer concerns.

Brogan said the biggest gripe he hears from small business owners he talks to about using social media is that they don't want to take the time to do so. But he said social media is not unlike the phone was 100 years ago - essentially a great new way to attract and retain customers if used effectively.

"This social media stuff does take time, but prospecting for customers and seeking referrals always takes time," Brogan said.

# The New RIGHT TO REPAIR: Forcing the Repair Industry into the 21<sup>ST</sup> Century

You likely have heard by now that we have collected 106,658 signatures from voters in Massachusetts to have our right to repair ballot question included on the November, 2012 ballot. Not only did we do this in 19 days, but we far exceeded the 69,911 signatures that are required by the state for ballot questions.

While the ballot question is gaining strong public support in Massachusetts, many independent shops around the country also are taking notice of the major change in the direction the right to repair debate is taking due to the ballot measure. The new approach in the measure seeks to address a key problem now facing independents, i.e. the cost and practicality of obtaining the tools and information needed to repair late model computer controlled vehicles.

In short, while the right tools and software are often difficult to obtain; in many cases too, it's also the expense of purchasing the latest hardware and software that really hurts a shop's bottom line. Further, once a shop goes out on a financial limb, often in the tens of thousands of dollars, to purchase a new car company tool, it becomes rapidly outdated, requiring either an expensive software update, or worse, an entirely new tool.

The ballot question would make it possible for independent shops to obtain access to the latest car company's diagnostic and repair software using a generic lap top which would be connected into a vehicle's onboard computer, using a universal interface system. Specifically, the ballot measure would require beginning in 2015 that car companies:

- Maintain a site (such as a cloud) that contains the same software and repair capabilities that they provide through the proprietary tools to dealer franchises. The site would be accessible to anyone for a daily, weekly, monthly or yearly fee.
- Provide access to the site through a generic lap top that would be connected to a vehicle through a universal interface that meets the Society of Automotive Engineers J2534 standard.

The bottom line is that if this measure is approved, independent shops, with a minimum investment in tools, will be able to affordably obtain the tools and software to work on most makes and models of vehicles that are on the road. It further ensures that the repair industry has access to the most up-to-date version of the diagnostic software and program updates made available by the car company to its franchised dealers.

Most importantly, the ballot measure will ensure that consumers will have the total freedom to find the shop that provides the most affordable, convenient and effective service for their motor vehicle and would not need to return to the dealer for certain types of service that are not affordable or in some cases accessible for many independent shops.

Clearly, the ballot question approach will require some changes in how many car companies make tools and information available to the repair industry. However, with the rapid technological changes that vehicles are currently experiencing, isn't it critical that the methods used by technicians to repair these systems also keeps pace with technology?

For more information and to stay up to date on the latest developments in Massachusetts, go to the state's right to repair web site at [www.massrighttorepair.com](http://www.massrighttorepair.com).

Kits - Gears - Parts  
Reman Transmissions  
Standard - Automatic

800-776-1191  
503-284-0768

**Transmission  
Exchange Co.**  
Portland, OR

THE TRANSMISSION  
SUPERSTORE

[www.txchange.com](http://www.txchange.com)

The advertisement features a central image of various automotive transmission components, including a large black transmission housing, a silver remanufactured transmission, a smaller silver transmission, a black pulley, and a silver housing. The background is a vibrant orange and yellow swirl pattern. A large white starburst graphic is positioned in the bottom left corner of the advertisement area.

# AWA Oktoberfest – A Success!



On October 1<sup>st</sup>, the Association of Women in Automotive held their 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Oktoberfest celebration and fundraiser. Once again The LaPlante Family – owners of Sherwood Auto Repair– were the generous hosts of this event. Sawtale Ridge a local folk/country band lead by Bill Erickson of Erickson’s Automotive donated a wonderful evening of music. This year the Association was especially grateful to Kurt Garbe of Esquire Motors for his generous donation of a brand new SnapOn toolbox which was raffled off to raise funds for the AWA automotive scholarship at Portland Community College. In addition to the toolbox raffle, many companies and individuals contributed items which were awarded as door prizes. Bridgeport Brewing donated beer which was served with bratwurst, salads, and a multitude of other tasty items. The winner of the toolbox was Kathleen Brindley of Corvallis. She is a hobbyist and is working on restoration of a TR3. She says she purchased her ticket for ‘the cause’ but admits her current Craftsmen toolbox is overflowing. Winning the box was a huge surprise. The event was a huge success. The Association raised \$4257.00 which goes directly to fund scholarships for our next generation of automotive technicians.

– Margaret Ragan





**NW Automotive Trades Assn.**

Administrative Office: 7931 NE Halsey St. Suite 212,  
Portland, OR 97213  
1.800.730.7282 Fax: 503-253-9890  
503.253.9898  
[www.aboutNATA.org](http://www.aboutNATA.org)

Prsrt Std  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Portland, OR  
Permit #11

## Customizing Health Plans to Fit Our Members Needs



### **NATA Health Plans Include Options**



**Call for details 503-253-9898  
or visit  
[www.aboutNATA.org](http://www.aboutNATA.org)**

