

NWRA Fall Conference 2006 Successful; Inaugural Windshield Repair Olympics Held in Honor of Walt Gorman

The National Windshield Repair Association (NWRA) met for a successful 2006 Fall Conference at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center in Las Vegas in early November. The event was in conjunction with NACE show and other Auto Glass Week events.

Opening with a keynote address NWRA president Paul Syfko of Glass Medic America, the program officially opened with Rob Rust of Quest Software, who made a presentation on how electronic technology can empower a business. He discussed the nuts and bolts of EDI.

"The most important point I can make is that if you're not using electronic technology, you're throwing away money because of what you save in efficiency and costs," he told attendees.

Matt Larson with Delta Kits followed with a presentation designed to reinforce Rust's point about looking professional.

"Professionalism concerns how you look and how you present yourself to others," he explained. He agreed that electronic technology gives a business professionalism.

"The first impression you make on the consumer is important," Lawson said. He introduced Jeff Olive of Glasspro as an example of how to dress to make a good first impression. Olive said that he thinks about the first impression because he knows that the consumer is going to judge him and his ability to do a good job by that first look.

"You have to set the customer's expectations," Larson said. "Let them know what they can expect from the repair." He also advised doing a walk around with the consumer to point out any damage, which is already present. "It all lends to the experience," he concluded.

Fahmy Mechael discussed how to work with LYNX Services. He discussed the range of insurance programs that LYNX handles and the similarities and differences between them. It manages three programs:



The first annual Walt Gorman Windshield Repair Olympics winners from left to right: Andy Larimore (third), Tee Thompson (first) and Jeff Olive (second).

for State Farm, for Allstate and for LYNX Insurance Clients for all the other insurance companies.

There are differences in deductible waiving, damage qualification and payment amounts. In terms of the damage qualification, some clients feel more strongly about what is repairable, he explained.

In terms of similarities, he pointed out that there is enrollment in the METRYX registry, the company's service profile and invoice and payment methods.

"METRYX gives a repair company the opportunity to register for the 40 insurance clients that LYNX manages with only one registration," he explained. "The efficiency is that you register once for all the programs that LYNX manages. This streamlines your business practices."

One point he made to the group is that in the last year LYNX has developed a system in which it monitors the amount of conversions from repair to replacement by a shop. If this seems out of line, the system picks up on that.

"Also, for repair we try to favor repair-only companies for this work," he stated. He also said that the company is working on setting up a program for on-line invoicing for repair-only. It expects for it to be active by the middle of next year.

The final presentation of the day was by Rory Most of Glass Technology and Chris Boyle of GlasWeld Systems, who spoke about innovations in windshield repair. Most discussed the evolution of repair from the traditional method to the dry vacuum method. Boyle talked about the work his company is doing on developing a method to keep the windshield at the optimum temperature for repair by either cooling it or maintaining a high temperature to avoid causing stress. The company expects it to be available within six months.

"It will allow you to make repairs at cold temperatures that you were not able to before," he stated.

The education program on the final day

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of the NWRA Fall Conference included a discussion of the technical aspects of a repair, an update on the Repair of Laminated Auto Glass (ROLAGS) and Auto Glass Replacement Safety (AGRSS) Standards work and customer service.

Following the conference, NWRA board member Paul Gross, president of Harmon Solutions Group, and Jay Bickford of Novus put on their VIP badges and took to the center ring, judging the first-ever Walt Gorman Memorial Windshield Repair Olympics.

Seven contestants from across the country signed up for the inaugural event, sponsored in large part by GlasWeld of Bend, Ore.

When the last repair was finished, Thomas "Tee" Thompson of Star/Superglass in Albuquerque, N.M., picked up the first-place gold medal and trophy as well as \$1,000. Second place and \$500 went to Jeff Olive of Glasspro Inc. in Mt. Pleasant, S.C., and the bronze medal and \$250 went to Andy Larimore of Windshield Repair Specialists in Boise, Idaho.

Also competing in the first Walt Gorman Windshield Repair Olympics were Michael Curl (Glass Pro Systems), Rich DiMassa (Dents Out Plus), Kelly Ditto (Cindy Rowe Auto Glass) and Jeff Wurst (Crackmaster), each of whom came with lengthy resumes and impressive repair skills.

"I was thoroughly impressed with the



Thomas "Tee" Thompson won of the Windshield Repair Olympics in November 2006. Thompson has been a member of the NWRA for a long time.

quality of all the candidates that participated in the event. It was really difficult to select only one champion, as the competition was so close. Each of the candidates did an outstanding job representing our industry," said Gross.

Judging for the Windshield Repair Olympics covered six major areas, including customer interaction and technician comportment, as well as safe and proper repair procedures. The judging is based on the NWRA recommended practices and the

current draft of the Repair of Laminated Auto Glass Standard (ROLAGS).

Asked how it feels to be the first Windshield Repair Olympics champion, Thompson said, "It feels great. I'm glad it's over; it was a little stressful."

Thompson said that he had been preparing for this for the last 20 years. "Since the advent of the NWRA certification program, I've been following these steps every day."

"I want to thank all the unsung heroes, mainly the founders of the NWRA, for all of the time they've put into developing the first certification program and now ROLAGS, along with the family at SuperGlass," Thompson added.

Though Thompson would not go on record with future participation in the competition, others are already looking forward to the 2007 competition, including the judges.

"I look forward to the event growing each year as the word gets out and other technicians see what a great opportunity this is," said Gross.

The event, sponsored by AGRR magazine, and the NWRA conference were both co-located with the International Autobody Congress & Exposition (NACE), one of the largest car-repair trade shows in the world. (See related story, left.)

National Windshield Repair Association to Co-Sponsor 2007 Windshield Repair Olympics

The National Windshield Repair Association (NWRA) is proud to announce its sponsorship and support of the 2007 Walt Gorman Memorial Windshield Repair Olympics – the international competition for the repair industry. The inaugural Windshield Repair Olympics was held this past November 3-4, 2006, at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center in Las Vegas, Nev. It plans to return to Las Vegas in the fall of 2007 for the second annual event to continue the educational experience for those in and related to the repair industry. "We view this as a perfect opportunity to meld the association's goals of educating our members and potential members of the benefits repair offers to our customers," states Paul Syfko, president of NWRA. "The first year went very well and we certainly want those technicians to know how much we support their efforts and encourage an opportunity like this to arise for those in our industry," said Syfko.

Massachusetts Insurance Company Requires Photos of Damaged Glass

Massachusetts-based Safety Insurance has put into place a policy that requires all glass companies in the state to submit digital photographs of all damaged glass. According to the company, the program was developed to provide it with proof-of-loss on glass claims.

The directive, which took effect October 16, is designed to comply with the directive from the Insurance Commissioner's Opinion, Findings and Decision on 2006 Private Passenger Automobile Insurance, which urged insurance carriers to "exercise more stringent controls over glass claims to ensure compliance with the attended regulation mandating glass repair," and 211 CMR 133.04 (3).

The program requires a close-up photo of the VIN, a full vehicle photo including the license plate, and at least one photo of each damaged pane of glass with the damage clearly identifiable.

This is the excerpt from 211CMR 133.04 cited by the company:

- (3) Damage to motor vehicle glass shall be repaired rather than replaced if:
- (a) damage to the windshield is outside the critical viewing area, which is that area covered by the sweep of the wipers originally provided by the vehicle manufacturer, exclusive of the outer two inches within the perimeter of that sweep; and
 - (b) damage to the glass is minor, including, but not limited to, a crack less than six inches in length and stone breaks or bruises, bullseyes and star breaks less than one inch in diameter; and
 - (c) the repair will not impair the operational safety of the motor vehicle.

Insurers shall use reasonable efforts to ensure that, before any decision is made to replace glass, the damage is inspected to determine whether it is suitable for repair.

Full details of the program and the photo requirements are available at: www.radicalglass.com/glass_photos_help.pdf.

The company states that it is the second largest private passenger automobile carrier in the state, having approximately 11.3 percent of the Massachusetts private passenger automobile insurance market, and the fourth largest commercial automobile carrier, with a 9-percent share of the Massachusetts commercial automobile insurance market in 2005.



Need Repair Info? Even Martha Stewart Calls the NWRA

When producers of domestic diva Martha Stewart's show recently had a question about windshield repair, they picked up the phone and called the NWRA to get



Martha Stewart

accurate, credible information about windshield repair.

Martha's call was one of dozens that the NWRA receives each week. "Most of the questions we get come from consumers who need to have their windshields repaired," said NWRA director of operations Patrick Smith. "We refer them to the closest NWRA member and alert the member of the contact. We also receive a good number of requests from people who are looking to get into the business and want to deal with quality suppliers. We refer them only to NWRA supplier and multilevel members."

Smith said some calls sadden him. "We got a call two weeks ago from a newspaper in the South that was doing a big article on a repair company owner who was retiring. They wanted us to comment about him and his work and, because he wasn't a member, we could not provide such an endorsement. I was able to explain windshield repair to the reporter, but could not go further as the company was not a member. NWRA works to promote its membership and it's a shame this fellow missed out," said Smith.

The segment about windshields aired in December and Smith hopes to hear from the show again. "They said the next time they had a question, they'd be sure to call."

NWRA Institutes New Logo and Usage Policy

With the creation of the new association logos, the board of directors has implemented a logo usage policy. The policy governs how and where members can use the logos in marketing.

The logos are the property of the National Windshield Repair Association (NWRA) but may be used by NWRA members in good standing in accordance with certain terms and conditions.

The logos are provided to NWRA members in good standing in camera-ready, printed form in color and/or black [to modify accordingly for electronic media], but may not be revised or altered in any way.

Additionally, the logos must be displayed in the same form as produced by NWRA.

The logos can be used in black and white or in the two official colors, and must be printed in their official colors or in black.

They may be used in a professional manner on the user's business cards, stationery, literature, advertisements, storefront window, trucks, Web site, or in any other com-

parable manner to signify the user's membership in NWRA, but may never be used without the word "MEMBER."

Aside from those stipulations, the logos may not be used in any manner that the association deems would discredit NWRA or tarnishes its reputation and goodwill; is false or misleading; violates the rights of others; violates any law, regulation or other public policy; or mischaracterizes the relationship between NWRA and the user, including but not limited to any use of the logos that might be reasonably construed as an endorsement, approval, sponsorship, or certification by NWRA of the user, the user's business or organization, or the user's products or services, or that might be reasonably construed as support or encouragement to purchase or utilize the user's products or services.

Use of the logos shall create no rights for



users in or to the logos or their use beyond the terms and conditions of this limited and revocable license. The logos shall remain at all times the sole and exclusive intellectual property of NWRA. NWRA shall have the right, from time to time, to request samples of use of the logos from which it may determine compliance with these terms and conditions. Without further notice, NWRA reserves the right to prohibit use of the logos if it determines, in its sole discretion, that a user's logo usage, whether willful or negligent, is not in strict accordance with the terms and conditions of this license, otherwise could discredit NWRA or tarnish its reputation and goodwill, or the user is not an NWRA member in good standing.

Any questions concerning use of the logos or the terms and conditions of this license should be directed, in writing, to the NWRA executive director."

Smith Named Director of Operations



Patrick Smith became NWRA's director of operations in October.

The National Windshield Repair Association (NWRA) has named Patrick M. Smith as its new director of operations. He succeeds longtime employee Peg Stroka, who has moved on to work on standards development. She has been serving as a staff liaison to the Repair of Laminated Auto Glass Standard (ROLAGS), a joint effort between the NWRA and the National Glass Association (NGA). Stroka will continue to work on the standard as an employee of the NGA.

Smith is an employee of Key Communications Inc., which provides association management services for the NWRA. He has served as the marketing manager and member benefits manager for a large health membership organization before coming to Key more than a year ago.

"We are very excited about the future of NWRA," said association president Paul Syfko of Glass Medic. "We are inaugurating a number of new services for every

facet of the repair industry and look forward to providing even more value to our members over the next few months. Every company involved in any type of glass repair should be part of the NWRA," said Syfko.

Welcome, New Members

- A-CWR, Fort Collins, CO
- AEGIS Tools, Madison, WI**
- Benson Glass LLC, Benson, AZ
- Clarity Glass and Surface Restoration, Vancouver, WA
- Diamond Glass Co, Kingston, PA.
- Dr. B's Windshield Repair, Little Rock, AR.
- Eric's Windshield Repair, Queens, NY
- Glass Surgeons, Cedar Lake, IN
- LatiR BV, The Netherlands
- Sundance Glass, Clovis, CA.
- Windshield Doctor Repair Kit, Virginia Beach, VA**
- Windshield Repair Specialists, Boise, ID (Supplier members are in bold)

Membership and Dues Categories Changing

The options and dues associated with membership in the NWRA are changing for some members of the association.

While most shops are still considered regular members and will not see a change in the membership dues, larger companies that offer tools or supplies to the industry—no matter how frequently or on what scale—will be eligible for supplier membership, rather than “regular” membership.

The most significant change is the addition of the multi-level member. This category exists for larger companies that licensees or franchisees. The cost for multilevel membership is \$2,500 per year and it brings with it the right for any of its franchisees or licensees to join as full, regular members of the NWRA for \$25.

Membership Categories and Annual Dues

Regular Members\$150
Supplier Members\$500
Multilevel Members\$2,500
Associate Members\$2,500

Additionally, companies or groups that have an interest in the work of the NWRA, such as insurance companies or other trade associations, can join as associate members for \$2,500, though associate members do not carry voting powers.

NWRA Evolution: Mission Statement, Bylaws Changing

The NWRA board of directors has taken steps to continuously update the organization to meet the needs of its members. Of late, changes have been made to both the association mission statement and bylaws, to keep the organization current and viable in the ever-changing market. The mission statement, which can be found on the association website, is to:

- Promote and develop the legitimacy of windshield repair as the first option for glass;
- Provide and promote best practices for those engaged in windshield repair;
- Provide the public with benefits of repair;

- Provide education, resources and information about repair;
- Develop and promote qualified, ethical repair practices, and
- To serve as an advocate for the windshield repair industry before government, and other regulatory groups.

The bylaws now define the different membership types, the dues each pays and the voting privileges afforded to each member, as well as outlining the annual meeting and providing for special meetings of the association.

Additionally, the updated bylaws also detail the roles, duties, election and removal of members of officers and the board of directors.

NWRA Unveils New Website and New Look



www.nwrassn.org

The NWRA launched its new website recently, unveiling a new look and new home page.

The site, located at www.nwrassn.org, the site offers prospective members the option to request information or join the association online. The site still provides current news about the industry and the history of windshield repair the organization.

“Our new website marks a new dedication by the NWRA to our members and the industry. It’s a better tool for current and prospective members,” says Patrick Smith, new director of operations for NWRA.

The redesigned website will still include many of the features many expected from the old website, including a list of current NWRA members, as well as new options and the new NWRA logo, unveiled in September. The member list will include links to the company websites of any and all member companies that have sites available.

Contact the NWRA to have your company’s URL added to the website.

Supplier Member Profile: Windshield Doctor Repair Kit

New Member: Windshield Doctor Repair Kit

Owner Name: Steven Korman and Darin Blatner

Location: Virginia Beach, VA

The newest supplier member of the NWRA, Windshield Doctor Repair Kit, is no stranger to the windshield repair industry. Owners Steven Korman and Darin Blatner have been providing windshield repairs for almost 15 years.

Business partners from the beginning, the duo found much of the windshield repair equipment on the market at the time out of their price range and began making their own repair kits.

"We had to go to different suppliers to get all the stuff we used when we were repairing windshields," said Blatner.

As others in the industry began showing an interest in the kits they used, Korman and

Blatner began selling their kits and launched a company website.

"We started slow – just two kits – and we've grown to include a whole line of resins and windshield repair tools," said Korman.

Joining the NWRA as a supplier member was an easy decision for the Virginia Beach, Va.-based company owners. Already members through their windshield repair company, The Glass Shop, Korman and Blatner felt that becoming supplier members would give their company a boost of credibility among the industry.

"We just wanted to move our business to the next level and becoming a supplier member would help build our company ... Right now the only place you can find us is on the web and we'd like to get our product out there, at the trade shows, so people can see it," Blatner.

Still selling windshield repair kits and

resins more than 10 years on, little has changed about how Korman and Blatner do business.

"We're trying to keep our equipment as simple as we possibly can so anyone can get into the windshield repair business ... What we're doing is trying to make it as inexpensive as possible so people can get into the business and make money, and in turn so we can make money. Since day one, we haven't changed our equipment. The same kit we sold when we started selling [are the] same kits we sell today. What started out as plastic injectors, are now stainless steel, but essentially they are the same," Blatner explained.

They are not, however, out to take over the industry.

"Everyone out there, all the big guys, they all make excellent equipment. All their resin are good. We're just taking it from a different angle. We're all in the same business. We're just like every other windshield repair kit supply company. We're all manufacturing top-quality equipment our customers will enjoy. We manufacture windshield repair equipment. But we're a smaller company and we have a lot of customers who enjoy our smallness," Blatner said. "We're available by phone or email. We prefer talking to our customers than e-mailing with them. It's so impersonal by e-mail. We have an 800 number, we enjoy talking to them and we're there for them from the beginning. We're on the East Coast and we close at 5 but we transfer the phones to our cell phones and answer questions for people across the country."

"We've been in business 12 years. We're committed to providing them with very affordable equipment and resins as well as support after the sale. We're always available via telephone or e-mail and we're always here for them. That's our commitment to them. We want our customers to succeed in the windshield repair business," added Korman.

Website: www.windshielddoctor.com



Repair Industry Mourns Walt Gorman



Walt Gorman

Industry icon and NWRA board member Walt Gorman, owner of A-1 Windshield Doctor, in Seekonk, Mass., died on August 7, 2006 after a battle with pancreatic cancer. He was 77.

Gorman passed away at a Mississippi cancer center where he had gone to receive treatment for complications of the illness. According to his wife, Judy, he died before any treatment could begin.

Gorman served on the National Windshield Repair Association board of directors for ten years and was one of the association's founders. Gorman had been in the auto glass repair

industry for nearly 20 years. He was a columnist for Windshield and Glass Repair (WGR) magazine, the precursor to AGRR, throughout most of its publication, and went on to write the Ask the Doctor column in AGRR magazine.

In addition to his wife, Judy, Walt leaves behind six children: Walter Jr., David, Frederick, Elizabeth, Kathleen and Susan, and four grandchildren.

The Windshield Repair Olympics were renamed the Walt Gorman Memorial Windshield Repair Olympics in his honor. His widow and three of his children were on hand for the ribbon cutting and dedication of the event (right).

