

# ABAC NEWS

**MAY - JUNE  
2010**

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*The Official Newsletter of the Auto Body Association of Connecticut*



## A Message from the desk of Bob Skrip Skrip's Auto Body ABAC President

Having been elected to another year as president of the Auto Body Association of Connecticut I would like to reflect on the past few months of this year.

As we head towards the second half of 2010 you sometimes wonder, "Where has the time gone"? Well, with the first half of the year being such a busy one for your Auto Body Association of Connecticut I say, "Let's continue to grow and prosper!"

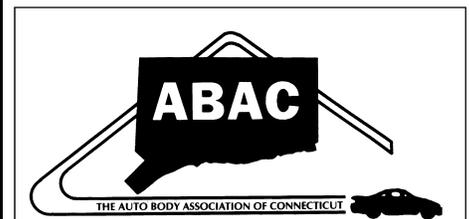
While we all may believe that the story of the year so far would be the Hartford Lawsuit verdict (and rightly so) I would like to think that the continuing education of our valuable members would rank right up there in its importance.

Every time you attend an ABAC meeting you allow yourself an opportunity to benefit your own business with the knowledge that our guest speakers and consultants have to offer. Each time a new member is added to the ABAC it only strengthens our voice in the automotive industry. We are all

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trying to achieve the same goal...profitability! Allow us the opportunity to help you get there. Join the ABAC. See what we are doing for you and what **YOU**, as a shop owner, can do to help protect your investment in your own shop.

As the summer months approach I would like to take this time to thank all of our meeting sponsors and the supporting advertisers in the ABAC News whose financial contributions allow us the ability to bring our message to everyone at all of our events as well as our guest speakers who donate their time to our meetings. I would like to thank my Board of Directors for their dedication and effort. Most of all I'd like to thank ALL of our valued members and future members of this association for the sacrifice they make when away from their businesses to attend our educational meetings. All of you should feel very proud to be part of one of the strongest associations in the nation and I, as your president, will make every effort to continue our endeavors into the future.

Thank you for another opportunity to serve as your president for another term and I hope that all of you have a safe summer and are able to enjoy some vacation time away from all of the challenges of today's world. You all certainly have earned it!

***Bob Skrip***

President

Auto Body Association of Connecticut

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## **ABAC Adds Solutions & Ideas while Continuing to Educate**

The Chowder Pot Restaurant in Hartford, CT on May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2010 was the latest venue for the ABAC's Educational Journey. ABAC President Bob Skrip kicked off the evening by reading the anti-trust guidelines. He then welcomed everyone for once again taking some of their valuable time to attend this key informational and educational meeting.

Bob then recognized the meeting Sponsors. They were:

### **Platinum Sponsor**

- ◆ PPG Industries

### **Gold Sponsors**

- ◆ Enterprise Rent-A-Car
- ◆ BMW of Bridgeport
- ◆ Bald Hill Dodge Chrysler Jeep Kia

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As our ABAC News Ad Directory continues to grow Bob acknowledged the most recent Supporting Advertisers:

- ◆ Balise Chevrolet (Saturn)
- ◆ Richard Chevrolet (Saturn)
- ◆ Vin-Mark Industries
- ◆ The Radiator Store
- ◆ AllStar Auto Lights

Stand-up signs listing all of the ABAC News Supporting Advertisers were placed at each table. Says Skrip, “These supporting vendors help the ABAC financially. I urge all of our members to use them to purchase their product or service. Support those who support you!”

Bob then introduced our first guest of the evening, Michael Fedele, Lt. Governor of Connecticut who is campaigning to become Governor of Connecticut. Mr. Fedele lives in Stamford and began his public service in 1983. The ABAC presented Mr. Fedele with 5 questions and then spent time listening to Fedele’s answers. You can learn more about Michael Fedele by visiting his website, [www.fedele2010.com](http://www.fedele2010.com)



CT Lt. Governor Michael Fedele

Next up were the nominations and Election of Officers for the ABAC. Ballots were placed on each table to nominate members for the Board of Directors. Past ABAC President Mike Wilkowski from Stanley’s Auto Body in Waterbury then read the nominations for election.

Nominated and elected to office were:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ◆ <b>President</b>                     | <b>Bob Skrip – Skrip’s Auto Body - Prospect</b>              |
| ◆ <b>1<sup>st</sup> Vice President</b> | <b>Mike Walsh – T&amp;J Auto Body – East Hartford</b>        |
| ◆ <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President</b> | <b>Tom Bivona – My Way Auto Body - Greenwich</b>             |
| ◆ <b>Secretary</b>                     | <b>Mark Wilkowski – Stanley’s Auto Body - Waterbury</b>      |
| ◆ <b>Treasurer</b>                     | <b>Tony Ferraiolo – A&amp;R Body Specialty – Wallingford</b> |



Ron Perretta

Back to the podium Board member Bill Romaniello said, “I commend all of you for taking time away from your businesses and your families to be here tonight. When we stay in our shops we don’t learn. We’re inside that box and nothing really changes. We complain about it and once in a while we might complain to someone else but we don’t really do much to change it. So, as an association, we said ‘what can we bring to our membership to change that?’ It really comes down to educating you about everything that we do, what your board does for you, what your association does for you and what YOU could potentially be doing for your own shop. About 7 years ago I had the opportunity, through PPG, to train under our next guest speaker. He has some very dynamic ways of looking at things. So let’s see if we can educate people to maybe start to ask the questions to change things.” With that, Romaniello introduced Ron Perretta who is an MVP Training Instructor for PPG and a

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multi-collision shop owner/operator with over 30 years experience. Ron gave us a very in-depth presentation of some of the processes to effectively develop additional sales while rebuilding customer loyalty and future referrals. The success of any business starts with the customer! It was a great presentation and everyone wished they had more time to listen and enjoy more interaction with Mr. Perretta.



Vin DiLauro

Joining us on this evening was Vin DiLauro, owner of Columbus Auto Body in New Haven and a past president of the ABAC. Vin is one of the “founding fathers” of the Auto Body Association of Connecticut. Mr. DiLauro gave us a wonderful past history of the ABAC. “Back on May 19<sup>th</sup>, 1970 this organization (ABAC) was started and founded,” says DiLauro. He then read the names of some of the original association officers. He continued, “We have a little bit of history, we (the ABAC) are now 40 years old and I am really pleased and happy to be part of this but also to see that this is continuing as a great association helping its members, helping our industry and making its mark (for the future). Thank you very much for the opportunity to express my thoughts and happy birthday to the Auto Body Association of Connecticut!”

Skrip then recognized local area technical schools for all that they do in conjunction with the automotive industry. In closing, Bob Skrip thanked everyone again for attending and thanked all of the evening’s guests and sponsors for their support.

Another informative, educational and “bottom line” meeting brought to you by one of the strongest associations in the nation, YOUR Auto Body Association of Connecticut!



# Three Massachusetts Repair Associations Unite

On May 24, three Massachusetts collision repair and automotive service associations became united in a historic undertaking. During a special industry dinner meeting held in Marlborough, Ma., the three associations - the Alliance of Automotive Service Providers of Massachusetts (AASP/MA), the Massachusetts Auto Body Association (MABA) and the Central Massachusetts Auto Rebuilders Association (CMARA) - joined forces as one statewide industry association.

Under the new agreement, the merged associations will carry on under the AASP/MA banner and will be open to both collision and mechanical members. The new interim AASP MA Board of Directors, which will be in place until elections this November, will be led by former CMARA President Tom Ricci. Former AASP/MA President Rick Starbard and former MABA Chairman Paul Hendricks will jointly serve as vice presidents.

"This is truly a memorable event for our industry," Starbard said in his opening comments. "This [merger] wasn't thrown together off the cuff. This was about determination, fence-mending, friendship rekindling and a lot of hard work on behalf of all three associations' officers. The Boards of MABA, AASP/MA and CMARA should all be congratulated for their foresight in making this happen here tonight."

The reconfigured association retains longtime AASP/MA Executive Director Peter Abdelmaseh and lobbyist Martin Corry and gains former MABA Administrator Nancy Russell, while the interim Board of Directors includes members from all three former groups. James Castleman, Esq. will provide legal counsel to the new group, while Thomas Greco Publishing, Inc. will continue to produce AASP/MA's monthly publication, New England Automotive Report.

The unification of the three Massachusetts groups comes after an extensive 18-month negotiation process that ended decades of division.

"From the Board of Directors' perspective, there is a great deal of excitement in the air because we now have one unified voice," remarks Ricci. "Instead of having three associations, there now exists one united front and the excitement of opportunities to come."

"We're very fortunate that we can do it at this time in the industry's history," adds Hendricks. "We have so many issues with insurance companies and regulations not being enforced that the only way to get anything done is with a large group. Right now, I feel that we have the best leaders in the industry all joined together. We can only move forward from here." For Starbard, who also serves as president of AASP National, the restructured MA affiliate reflects a welcome spirit of unity and cooperation throughout the Commonwealth.

"This is the first time in 20 years that the collision industry in Massachusetts will be united," Starbard says. "It's time to be on one page, set one course and start winning on behalf of the industry."



**Pictured left to right: Tom Ricci (CMARA), Paul Hendricks (MABA) and Rick Starbard (AASP/MA)**

For more information on AASP/MA, please contact Executive Director Peter Abdelmaseh at [pabdelmaseh@yahoo.com](mailto:pabdelmaseh@yahoo.com).

# Looking Stupid in a Court of Law

By Ed Kovalchick

NetProfit Inc.

I assisted a dealer's lawyer on a case where a several-year-old vehicle rolled over, killing the driver and injuring a passenger. The worst happened after the crash - one person burned up, stuck in a seatbelt. It was a sad tale indeed, and something I will not forget.

As a result, the manufacturer, dealer, and a multitude of suppliers were included in an aggressive lawsuit, which demanded compensation because it was alleged that the vehicle was not manufactured properly and/or not maintained properly by the servicing dealer.

This occurrence is when repair order documentation can make or break a dealer's defense. Frankly, the dealer can end up looking like an idiot who hires idiots. I have personally witnessed it.

## **Thoroughness Is Not An Option!**

Fortunately, in this case the dealer's service writers did a reasonably good job of documenting each visit; but the technician notes were sorely lacking in definition. Time and time again the writer made up descriptions to cover the various undocumented technician tracks, which developed the obvious question of what was and what was not actually performed. Were servicing activities being made up lawyers asked?

We request that all of our service managers perform a weekly Repair Order Audit (we supply one) to ensure, among a number of things, that RO documentation is appropriate, thorough, and competent.

Frankly, most managers act like I have asked them to wade through three feet of sticky mud at this request. I get upset after they have chosen to ignore the audit, citing normally weak excuses. As you can imagine, when I re-audit what these managers have claimed to perform, I find numerous problems they gleaned as OK. Most have low documentation standards until they look stupid in a court of law - then the need for improvement finally clicks. However, that unfortunate court experience is unforgettable.

## **Who's Responsible?**

The responsibility for ensuring correct repair order documentation is wide reaching within a dealer organization, beginning with the dealer/general manager. And thank goodness for warranty documentation standards. From my viewpoint, the manufacturer field manager's haranguing about this sore subject is the best thing most dealers have in the realm of promoting acceptable documentation.

### **1. The Dealer/General Manager**

**Legal Responsibilities** - Clearly this person must be a student of ever-changing legal requirements and the related ramifications for all departments. There is no one else to do this, so don't go there.

**On-going Communication** - If this sometimes self-important executive has not communicated, then followed up on the conforming to important legalities within each department, then fire them or yourself as the case may be.

### **2. The Service Director/Manager**

**Hiring** - Stop hiring service writers and technicians who can't or won't read and write to the standards required on legal documents. Why are there service writers who can't type? Test everyone before they are hired, not afterwards.

**Software** - Where are the op codes? All repair order software makers supply provisions for development of proper repair order operation codes, to ensure managers have the opportunity to define labor operations for everyday use. Few create them properly and some just ignore them. As a consequence, I too often end up reviewing "baby stutter" for problem definitions, written in the heat of battle by weary service writers who can't type, and technicians who don't care, nor know the difference.

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**RO Auditing** - Documentation can either protect or crucify every even slightly related dealership employee in the event of a legal action. Poorly defined legal information (the repair order is the primary legal document of record) can easily cost the company more money than any of us will make in a lifetime.

### **3. The Service Writers**

**WWW** - What, When, Where, Who are fundamentals of problem definition. Substandard problem documentation drives technicians to drinking (so they say). Personally, when I was a technician I would have said "more drinking." How can problems be solved when they aren't defined, located, and confirmed? When vague generalities are presented, lawyers have a way of tying repair issues together. "Noise in vehicle. Ah, that's why the tire blew out and killed my client, and you sir were responsible." I'm not kidding.

**Spelling & Grammar** - It's pathetic that the big two dealer management systems are still requiring that repair orders be written without spell and grammar checkers...perhaps if they were paid a few more thousand a month? If you can't construct a reasonable English sentence, without spelling errors, get out now before it's too late. I had to explain a repair order definition during a legal case where the writer referred to the CD player's "dick" three times. Don't be a dick.

**Vehicle Recalls** - Never, never, never, never, generate a repair order without running a manufacturer update to determine if recalls are applicable to the assigned vehicle. If there is one, be darn sure it is completed now, not later.

**Passenger/Driver Sides** - Do not use right and left for obvious non-political reasons. Fore, aft, starboard, and port will do too if you can't figure out on which side the driver sits.

### **4. The Technician**

**NPF** - No Problem Found. This common acronym is sometimes used as NPF regrettably. Do not use these letters. Document exactly what procedures were used to attempt to rectify the already acknowledged problem. Spare no details. The best part of this program is that it pays more too.

**Specs/Measurements** - If you used one, document the before and the after if applicable. If you haven't created a measurement make sure it wasn't necessary. Eyeballing measurements is not acceptable and is treated as "not following protocol." An issue surfaced where clutch free-play was questioned. None was documented, and when I set the technician up for questioning I found that after he claimed it was "OK," he actually had no clue as to what the spec was, nor did he even know how to look it up. This is scary stuff in a legal scuffle.

**Road Testing** - This is not an option in legal cases. It is commonly expected by customers and lawyers that a vehicle was checked and "passed" in this manner by the "car doctor," even for an oil change. Document mileage in and out to always prove this important procedure took place. Even if something unrelated isn't acceptable concerning the vehicle's performance, document this fact and present it to the customer.

**Technical Service Bulletins** - It is imperative that any and all related technical bulletins be reviewed if even remotely connected to a customer concern. These will become fodder in the court room when TSBs have been ignored. TSBs are regularly updated with pertinent revisions, so looking at one does not cover the future. Always reference TSBs during RO documentation.

**Appropriate Documentation** - Poor spelling, missing information, sloppiness, garbage definitions, and/or unprofessional descriptions can make you liable. Don't take this lightly. Anyone related to vehicle servicing can be viewed as responsible for the safety of both drivers and occupants of vehicles, which means it can be construed that you could literally kill someone. Document details of procedures used. Too much is a good thing; too little can make you accountable.

By no means have I covered all details in the responsibilities of automotive professionals to the litigious world in which we do business. I should write a book on the intensive subject, and maybe I will. In the mean time, do an RO Audit today.

# NCOIL to Introduce Revamped Anti-Steering Measure

**Chair of Property Casualty Committee offers comprehensive amendment to existing model legislation to curb steering.**

The Property Casualty Committee of the National Conference of Insurance Legislators (NCOIL) will consider all new language in an anti-steering model bill at its upcoming summer meeting in Boston, Massachusetts.

Committee Chair Sen. Ruth Teichman (KS) has offered a substitute amendment based on Rhode Island and Virginia requirements for review at the July meeting. The new language is far more comprehensive than the original three-sentence proposal and includes sections on insurer prohibitions, consumer disclosure and penalties for violation.

NCOIL representative Susan Nolan explained in an email that the amendment is in response to discussions on the current anti-steering model that took place at the NCOIL Spring Meeting. "We are asking interested parties to submit specific markups of any proposed revisions-rather than general comments-on the substitute amendment. The Committee will give priority consideration to comments submitted in markup form," Nolan said.

Under the substitute amendment, insurers cannot require use of a certain body shop but may recommend a certain shop. However, once a consumer chooses a shop, the insurer may not "interfere with" that decision once it is made.

The substitute amendment would entirely replace the originally proposed anti-steering language, which would have banned requiring and, in most cases, recommending use of a specific facility.

The deadline for submitting suggested revisions is Monday, June 7, in advance of the Summer Meeting 30-day cut-off.

The main section of the Proposed Substitute Amendment reads as follows:

## Selection of Repair Facility, Insurer Prohibitions

An insurer authorized to do business in [insert state] shall not:

**A.** require an insured or claimant to utilize preferred repair facilities as a prerequisite to settling or paying any claim arising under a policy or policies of insurance. An insurer may recommend a repair facility prior to an insured or claimant choosing one

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- B.** engage in any act of coercion or intimidation causing or intended to cause an insured or claimant to utilize a preferred repair facility
- C.** recommend a repair facility once an insured or claimant has advised the insurer that one has been selected, or interfere with the insured or claimant's selection once it has been made
- D.** pay a non-preferred repair facility selected by an insured or claimant less to complete a repair than the insurer would have paid a preferred repair facility for the same work

### **Disclosure**

An insurer authorized to do business in this state shall disclose to an insured or claimant, at such time as the insurer or its third-party representative recommends use of a preferred repair facility, that:

- A.** the insured or claimant is under no obligation to use the preferred repair facility
- B.** the insurer or its third-party representative has a financial interest in such facility, if such an interest exists

### **Violations and Penalties**

- A.** The [insert appropriate state agency] shall investigate, with the written authorization of the insured or claimant, any written complaints received pursuant to this Act, regardless of whether such written complaints are submitted by an individual or a repair facility. For the purpose of this section, any insurer utilizing a third-party representative shall be held accountable for any violation of this section by such third-party representative.
- B.** Violations of this Act shall constitute [insert state] unfair claims settlement practices and shall be subject to applicable state fines and penalties.

The original proposal, as discussed at the NCOIL spring meeting follows:

- A.** Whenever a motor vehicle collision or comprehensive loss shall have been suffered by an insured, no insurer providing collision or comprehensive coverage therefore shall require that repairs be made to such vehicle in a particular place or by a particular concern.
- B.** In processing any such claim, the insurer shall not, unless expressly requested by the insured, recommend or suggest repairs be made to such vehicle in a particular place or shop or by a particular concern.
- C.** Insurers who engage in a pattern of violations of Section 2(A) and (B) will be subject to penalties under [insert state] Unfair Trade Practices law.

*Source: [www.collisionweek.com](http://www.collisionweek.com)*

## SCRS Adds New Member Benefit

The Society of Collision Repair Specialists (SCRS) announced a new member benefit for shops looking to establish a presence on social media Web sites. The member benefit offers a preferred rate on social media management services offered through an agreement with Admin Concepts, Inc.

The Admin Concepts program offers a range of services that include setting up and integrating the shop's current website with Facebook and Twitter and providing promotional items, marketing materials and consulting services to help maximize the impact of shop's Web presence.

"Many repairers want to market themselves through social media websites, but they just don't have the time or expertise to do so," explains Jordan Hendler, president of Admin Concepts, Inc. "That's okay-we do all the work for them so they can get started using these low-cost, individualized sales and marketing outlets right away. We walk them through the process so they are comfortable from the minute they sign up."

"This exciting service reflects the SCRS' ongoing commitment to providing members technology they can leverage to gain an edge in the marketplace," says SCRS Executive Director Aaron Schulenburg. "The comprehensiveness of the program coupled with the attractive rate at which it is being offered present a rare opportunity for our members to take advantage of 21st century sales and marketing tools. Admin Concepts brings to the table a unique combination of Internet and collision repair expertise, and we are happy to be aligned with them as a partner."

For more information contact the SCRS office by e-mailing [info@scrs.com](mailto:info@scrs.com) or calling (877) 841-0660. Visit Admin Concepts on the Web at [www.admin-concepts.net](http://www.admin-concepts.net).

## PPG Trains Over 10,000 Techs for Waterborne Transition

According to PPG Automotive Refinish, more than 10,000 technicians across the United States and Canada have attended the PPG "Convert with Confidence" training program to help their transition to waterborne basecoat. The development of the program was spurred in part by governmental mandates anticipated in a number of states and already in effect in California and Canada. To assist collision centers in the transition, PPG began the Convert with Confidence program in 2007 to provide shop owners, managers, and technicians with training and support before, during and after the conversions.

Low VOC basecoats will also be mandated for twelve northeastern states and the District of Columbia as early as 2012. With the focus on green processes and products, it appears it is only a matter of time until waterborne systems will be recommended throughout the country. PPG urges shop owners to use the Convert with Confidence program to help make their transition as easy as possible.

"We have found that shops that follow the PPG Convert with Confidence approach have been extremely successful in the conversion from solvent to PPG waterborne," said Bill Troyer, PPG Automotive Refinish manager of training. "The key to success is having a solid conversion process and PPG has created the plan that works."

For more information about the Convert with Confidence program, call 800/647-6050 or visit the PPG Automotive Refinish website at [www.ppgrefinish.com](http://www.ppgrefinish.com).

## Auto body repair shops targeted in fraud sting

SANTA ANA – County prosecutors have charged 53 auto body repair workers – including 24 repair shop owners — in a sting operation aimed at uncovering repair shops that engage in insurance fraud. "Operation Straight Body" consisted of 152 undercover operations at shops throughout the county from January to May, Orange County District Attorney Tony Rackauckas said Thursday.

Authorities arrested the individuals Wednesday and Thursday. Each has been charged with one felony count of insurance fraud, prosecutors said. Rackauckas, who held a news conference about the sting operation, said taxpayers end up footing the bill for such fraud through higher insurance rates. But several of those arrested – and some of their employers – questioned the tactics and legitimacy of the sting operation and insisted on their innocence.

Here's how prosecutors say the sting worked: District Attorney investigators, posing as customers, brought a damaged Ford Expedition or a damaged Mercedes-Benz to auto shops that had consumer complaints in the last three years.

Insurance claims can't be filed under new policies for damage incurred before the policy was issued, prosecutors said. But investigators asked the shop workers if they could repair what the investigators said was new damage to the cars – as well as damage sustained before the cars were supposedly purchased – under a single insurance estimate.

Most declined, stating that the damage required separate claims, prosecutors said. But 53 estimators agreed to include the damages under the same estimate, they added.

"This prosecution put dishonest operators and anybody thinking about committing fraud on notice," Rackauckas said. "I think consumers have the right to know which of the auto repair shops are conducting straight business and which are not."

Several body shop owners and employees charged in the sting said they were not guilty, and questioned the techniques used by investigators. They said they agreed to give an estimate of the vehicles' total damage, but never discussed whether the cost would be covered by the customer or an insurance company.

One individual charged is Richard Todd Evans, a custom-car builder and owner of Huntington Beach Bodyworks who has appeared on automotive television programs, including "Chop Cut Rebuild." His defense attorney, Dyke Huish, said county prosecutors were criminalizing what is a common, and legal, practice.

Evans wrote up a \$5,700 estimate for the undercover investigator who brought the Expedition to his shop on May 4, according to Huish. "All he did was to give an estimate that the guy requested of him. Even the paperwork states not to submit a false claim to an insurance company," Huish said. "He didn't submit anything to the insurance company at all."

Will Hawes, owner of Southern Auto Body in Costa Mesa, called sting operation "100 percent entrapment." One of Hawes' employees, Robert Charles Gomez, was charged in the sting. "All we did is do what the customer asked us to do," Hawes said. Hawes said the investigator walked into his shop April 14 and asked to fix a Ford Expedition that had a bent rear frame which was supposedly sustained during a crash. The rear bumper was also missing from before

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**ABAC OFFICERS 2010****PRESIDENT****BOB SKRIP**

SKRIP'S AUTO BODY, PROSPECT

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**WILLIAM ROMANIELLO**

All Pro Collision Repair - Plantsville

**RICK RONDEAU**

P&amp;B Auto Body - Bristol

**THORTON J. SCOTT (Scotty)**

Family Garage - Bridgeport

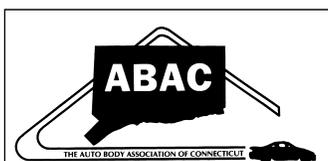
**JOANNE SERKEY**

A&amp;R AUTO BODY - TORRINGTON

**MICHAEL WILKOWSKI**

Stanley's Auto Body - Waterbury

*The goal of the ABAC News is to provide a forum for the free expression of ideas. The opinions and ideas appearing in this publication are not necessarily representations of the ABAC and should not be construed as legal advice.*

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the crash, and the investigator asked to include both in the estimate – roughly \$5,500-worth of damage.

"He was adamant we include the bumper," and the employee included it in the estimate because they were never shown a claim number or insurance card, Hawes said.

Sergio Perez, the owner of USA Auto Collision in La Habra, said he was not guilty of duping insurance companies. "I don't understand why they arrested me. We write estimates according to what the client tells us," said Perez, 44, who has owned the shop for eight years. "My record is clean and I do everything professional. This surprised me," he added.

Ronald Pierce, the longtime owner of Big Ron's Body and Paint in Garden Grove, said he was arrested around 9:15 a.m. Wednesday in front of his employees and sons. "I thought it was a prank. They brought four officers to arrest me because of my size," said Pierce, 53, who is 6 feet 5 inches tall and weighs 250 pounds. "They have not shown us no evidence or what we've done," Pierce said.

Yoon Kyu Choi, an estimator and body technician at Son's Auto Body in Fullerton, said he was arrested Wednesday morning at work. "It was scary," Choi said. "I'm confused about why I was arrested."

Felipe Gutierrez Gomez, owner of Easy Auto Body in Anaheim, said he likely wrote an estimate, but that he didn't file a claim with any insurance company.

Sergio Rene Gonzalez, who works for Superior Collision Center in Costa Mesa, said he also filled out an estimate. "I didn't do anything wrong," he said. "We write the estimates regardless whether if it's for insurance or ourselves, we write an estimate."

Gonzalez said he was not shown a claim number or given a name for an insurance company and wrote the estimate in one sheet at the request of the undercover investigator.

Arraignments began Thursday and will continue Friday, prosecutors said.

This is the second such sting operation aimed at insurance fraud this week. On Tuesday, county prosecutors said they charged four chiropractors, an attorney and two office employees in an insurance overbilling scheme.

**Source: The Orange County Register**