



Press Release

Society of Collision Repair Specialists • P.O. Box 909, Prosser, WA 99350 • (877) 841-0660 • Fax (877) 851-0660

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For Further Information

Contact Dan Risley, SCRS Executive Director

Phone: (708) 598-3384 or Email: drisley7@comcast.net

Quest for Industry Unity Characterized the Birth of SCRS

Unifying spirit remains alive and well as the Society prepares for its 25th Anniversary Celebration.

Prosser, Washington, February 6, 2007 — Today, the phrase “Working Together Is The Most Important Work We Do” is recognized as a hallmark of the Society of Collision Repair Specialists (SCRS, the Society). Truth be told, the theme of unification has infused the organization from the start.

The collision repair industry in the decade before the birth of SCRS - the 1970s - was different in many ways, notably its fragmentation. “Practically every shop was an independent,” recalls Iva Dehn, who along with her husband Fred, witnessed the birth of the Society. “That may sound good today, but in practice it wasn’t. Shops looked at each other with suspicion, each convinced their competition was out to take food off their family’s table.”

With communication next to non-existent, the trade consisted largely of strangers with each facility an island unto itself. Not a great model even in a stable market, and as the decade came to a close, signs began to surface indicating imminent industry upheaval. It wasn’t just advancements in technology, such as the introduction of the unibody vehicle. The new vehicle structures, together with advancements in refinish materials and a lack of industry-accepted training, caused perceptive shop owners to feel as if certain market dynamics were wresting away control of their businesses.

“There wasn’t a collective industry voice, and that left the industry vulnerable,” states Past SCRS Chairman Bill Eveland, also a participant in the formation of the Society. “In fact, when some of us in the Kansas City area began to throw around the idea with other like-minded individuals of forming a group that would help us improve as collision professionals, some repairers feared retaliation.”

Despite their apprehension, their conviction grew, and the feeling that the industry had to do something. Then it was only a matter of time until the right catalyst kick-started the movement toward a national, collision repair-only organization.

Dehn continues, “At the time Independent Automotive Service Association (IASA) out of Texas, the group that would evolve into Automotive Service Association (ASA), was making a push to attract body shop members, which at the time consisted almost completely of mechanical shops. Fred and I attended one of their meetings at the Gold Buffet in North Kansas City, and at that meeting a man stood up. This gentleman was neat, clean and he wore a suit. He spoke with knowledge, power, wit and

– *Continues* –

humor. He said that the person across the table was neither demon nor monster, that he or she was a body shop person just like us. Suddenly, it became obvious we had a better chance of solving some of our problems if we *worked together*. Later that evening with the meeting over, we all stood out in the parking lot even after it began to rain, and really talked to each other for the first time. That night's speaker was none other than John Loftus. He had already made a difference in our lives."

Rochelle Wicklund, who also attended that meeting with her husband Past SCRS Chairman Bill Wicklund, likewise recalls the dramatic effect Loftus had on the crowd. "My husband Bill and I—as well as Bill Eveland and the rest of those in attendance—felt that John was the man that could put a face on the type of group we had discussed. He talked about cleaning up our shops and having professional offices. It was evident that he knew what we were going through and what needed to be done to change our industry. It wasn't long before we had another meeting—at Gene Parks' Body Shop in Riverside, Missouri."

"I'm not certain of the precise sequence of events," adds Eveland, "but at some point in time we heard that John was probably going to leave IASA and go to work for someone more removed from the industry. That increased our urgency to get something done. By the time we met at Gene Parks', a group of us had talked a bit and a loose agenda had been put together."

That night at Gene Parks' was a fateful one. Cars were moved back in the stalls and the floor was swept clean. Folding chairs were brought in to form a semi-circle in the middle of the shop and the anxious owners and technicians milled together. A side door opened, and John Loftus stepped through. After a round of hand shakes, the group got down to business. Though the details had yet to be worked out, those in attendance knew they wanted to form a group and that John needed to lead it.

"We realized we needed numbers if we really wanted to effect change, explains Dehn, and to do that we had to reach out to at least every shop in the Kansas City area. We discussed it some more, and John informed us that there were others beyond our local horizon that had the same thirst to reach out and join with others. The fire really started to burn in us then, as we began to ponder the possibilities that might come with the creation of a true national body shop association. That was the beginning of shops coming together to help other shops—the beginning of 'Working Together Is The Most Important Work We Do'."

For the next installment in the continuing story of the birth of SCRS, watch for upcoming releases in anticipation of the SCRS 25th Anniversary Celebration at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Atlanta, Georgia on April 10, 2007. Additional information, including a registration form, can be found on our website at www.scrs.com. Pre-registration is required to attend this event. The deadline to register is April 5, 2007.

Through its direct members and 33 affiliate associations, SCRS is comprised of 6,000 collision repair businesses and 58,500 specialized professionals who work with consumers and insurance companies to repair collision-damaged vehicles. Additional information about SCRS including other news releases is available at the SCRS web site: www.scrs.com. You can e-mail SCRS at the following address: info@scrs.com.

###

E-mail address: info@scrs.com • Website: <http://www.scrs.com>