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McGrath elected CATA chairman for board's 2015-2016 term

Mike McGrath's fellow directors of the Chicago Automobile Trade Association voted him chairman of the board for the next 12 months, when the directors met June 16 for their monthly meeting.

The new board chairman succeeds Colin Wickstrom, who becomes chairman of the 2016 Chicago Auto Show. McGrath will act as the show's co-chairman.

McGrath — who has in-

terests in Acura and Lexus dealerships in Chicago and Westmont, and Honda and Hyundai stores in Chicago — leads a board of 15 directors.

Other board officers include Vice Chairman John Hennessy (River View Ford, Oswego); Treasurer Ray Scarpelli Jr. (Ray Chevrolet in Fox Lake, and Raymond Chevrolet-Kia in Antioch); and Secretary Tony Guido (Arlington Heights Ford).



Mike McGrath Jr.



Colin Wickstrom

Dave Sloan is association president.

Two directors — Kurt Schiele and John Webb —

retired from the board after service since 2006. During their terms, both dealers ascended to board chairman.

Hundreds participate in annual meeting

2 newcomers among 5 dealers elected to CATA board of directors

A cloudless sky and mid-80s temperatures greeted hundreds of golfers on June 9 at Cog Hill Golf and Country Club in Lemont, where the players gathered as part of the CATA's 2015 annual meeting.

And the 38 CATA allied members that sponsored the event helped add festivity to the proceedings.

That night at the dinner, results of this month's balloting for the CATA board of directors showed three incumbents and two newcomers won election

to three-year terms.

John Alfirevich (Apple Chevrolet, Tinley Park) won a third and final term; and **Kevin Keefe** (Brilliance Honda, Crystal Lake, and Brilliance Subaru, Elgin) and **Thomas Shirey** (Shirey Cadillac, Oak Lawn) won second terms.

Jay Hopkins (Hopkins Ford of Elgin) and **JC Phelan** (Jack Phelan Chevrolet, Lyons and Jack Phelan Chrysler-Dodge-Jeep-Ram, Countryside) joined the board of directors in their first attempts.



Brian Brown, of Bradley Bourbonnais Chevrolet, lines up a 50-foot putt attempt at this month's CATA outing for the chance to win \$10,000. His shot stopped short of the cup.

Chicago's minimum wage to increase to \$10 an hour on July 1

Chicago on July 1 joins a growing list of cities and states to raise the hourly minimum wage for workers, to \$10 an hour. The increase was backed by Mayor Rahm Emanuel and passed last December with a City Council vote of 44-5.

Additional wage hikes will be phased in gradually. After it reaches \$13 an hour in 2019, the city's minimum wage will be pegged to inflation.

Franczek Radelet P.C., the CATA's labor relations counsel, canvassed the city's

unionized technicians at franchised dealerships in Chicago and found just 16 workers who would not see a raise to the new hourly minimum under the collective bargaining agreement. The firm intends to meet with those workers' employers to

find ways to meet the new \$10 hourly minimum.

Meanwhile, Illinois lawmakers are considering a boost to the minimum wage at the state level. Voters backed a hike to \$10 on Election Day last November, but that vote was nonbinding.

Time's a-wastin' to sign up to host a July 18 USO barbecue fundraiser

For dealerships considering whether to participate in the upcoming USO fundraiser, consider this: It is vital to register right away in order to be included in the various promotions planned by the Chicago Automobile Trade Association.

The CATA has arranged for radio advertising and is working with many radio, print, television and social media partners to develop an aggressive promotional campaign leading up to July 18. All CATA messaging will direct individuals to www.DriveChicago.com to find participating dealers nearby. Host dealers will be highlighted on DriveChicago, with links to information on specific events.

After the print ads are developed, it might not be possible to add registration latecomers.

The registration process can be completed in two simple steps: First, visit www.BBQForTheTroops.org, and click on the "Register Here" button. Second, email your dealership name and contact information to Tim McBride, the CATA's marketing director, at tmcbride@drivechicago.com. McBride also can be reached at (630) 424-6085.

Advance planning for the event included a May 19 meeting at the CATA to help dealerships think of ways to enhance their barbecues and potentially raise more money. All proceeds collected will be donated to USO programs that support deployed troops, military families, wounded, ill and injured troops and their caregivers, and families of the fallen.

Some of the planned fundraising activities from past years include:

- Car Wash, with dealers asking for donations
- Lunch special for employees and their families and friends. They can leave the brown bag at home and eat in, to support the troops
- Cornhole/Bags Games. No American barbecue is com-

plete without a cornhole/bags tourney!

- On Demand DJ, with donations made for song requests

- Social Media Donations. Enlist employees to promote the dealership's USO Barbecue for the Troops through their Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn

and similar accounts, to collect additional donations through an event page.

Jessica Dolan, vice president of development for USO of Illinois, said the \$90,000 raised by participating dealers last year enabled the USO to operate the state's five USO centers for about four months and serve 28,000 service members and their families.

The USO, a nonprofit, non-political organization, has for 72 years provided Americans with a tangible way to express appreciation and gratitude for the dedication and sacrifice of the nation's troops and their families.



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The CATA Bulletin is distributed via blast email every other Friday except during the Chicago Auto Show, when it is not produced.

Listings of items for sale are subject to the approval of the CATA. Candidates for employment must submit a full resume to the Editor.

Review past editions dating to 1998 or search by subject at www.cata.info/publication/bulletins.

David E. Sloan
Erik K. Higgins

President, Publisher
Editor, Director of Dealer Affairs

Tune in ...

... to "Drive Chicago," the CATA's automotive radio show, 8-9 a.m. Saturdays on WLS-AM 890.

NADA responds to inaccurate, irresponsible NYT editorial

Peter Welsh, president of the National Automobile Dealers Association sent the following letter to the editor of The New York Times in response to a June 14 editorial, "Putting an End to Abusive Car Loans." The editorial contained false statements and discredited rhetoric about auto finance.

Honesty Matters at the Dealership. It Should Matter to The New York Times

Consumers have a number of rights when it comes to buying a car. They have the right to negotiate, they have the right to look for a better deal wherever it exists, and

they have the right to choose the financing that is best for them. These are real financial advantages that save Americans billions of dollars.

Washington, however, wants to take those rights away. Washington wants to limit consumer choice and deny Americans the ability to benefit from the discounted financing rates that are often available at their local dealerships. It doesn't take a study or an expert to see how wrong that is.

Consumers also have the right to something just as important - the truth. But they were denied that on Sunday, when a Times editorial, "Put-

ting an End to Abusive Car Loans," chose to ignore the truth about a now-thoroughly debunked statistic claiming that Americans lose - rather than save - money when they finance vehicle purchases through their local dealerships.

Even the Center for Responsible Lending — the original source of the figure used by the Times — has acknowledged that this number is flawed. And numerous sources have explained in detail how CRL's claims about auto financing are patently false.

For reasons they did not explain, the editorial board

of the Times chose to gloss over this reality.

Consumers deserve to know why. They deserve to know that when they're getting information about how Washington wants to involve itself in auto financing, they're getting facts. They deserve to know that they're being told the truth.

Americans take the process of buying a car very, very seriously - and rightly so. In this instance, The New York Times could stand to learn a thing or two from many of its readers.

*Peter Welsh, president,
National Automobile
Dealers Association*

Many consumers nonplussed, confused with latest tech, survey finds

Are automakers spinning their wheels when it comes to infotainment technology? A recent survey of some 14,000 automobile owners seems to suggest they are.

The study, conducted jointly by the polling firm Nielsen and automotive consultants SBD, found in general that manufacturers are jamming features into cars

that most owners don't use and often are not even aware of.

"It's sort of an arms race — who can have the most technology in the vehicle — and consumers are confused," said Nielsen Vice President Mike Chadsey.

The study, conducted via online questionnaires in April and May, found that 43

percent of participants said automakers are adding too much infotainment technology to new vehicles, and that infotainment features available now typically score low in owner satisfaction.

Of 42 vehicles features — from hybrid engines to electronic suspensions to back up cameras — the 10 that scored lowest were all

infotainment-related.

The worst, not surprisingly, was voice recognition. Others near the bottom included smart phone integration, built-in apps and customizable instrument panels.

SBD Director Andrew Hart said automakers add more features because new technology helps attract buyers and can boost revenue.

Many CATA dealerships to close for July 4 holiday

A quick survey of CATA dealers last week found that many will close their dealerships to commemorate the Independence Day holiday on July 4.

Of the respondents to a questionnaire, 75 percent said they will not be open for sales on July 4.

All service departments are presumed be closed July 4. The date is recognized as a holiday in all local union contracts.

Have a safe and enjoyable holiday!



Upcoming DealersEdge webinars

The Chicago Automobile Trade Association has established a partnership with DealersEdge to provide high-quality training and informational webinars that offer the content to CATA member dealers at a significantly discounted rate.

The rate for CATA members for the weekly presentations is \$149, half what is charged to users who do not subscribe to DealersEdge. Webinars premiere on a near-weekly basis.

Even for dealers who hold an annual membership with DealersEdge, the new relationship with the CATA represents a savings because DealersEdge offers its Webinars to its own members for \$198. Regular annual membership fees are \$397, and normal webinar fees are \$298 for non-DealersEdge members.

Once purchased, DealersEdge webinars and accompanying PDF files can be downloaded and viewed later—and repeatedly. No matter how many people watch at your location, each connection costs a CATA member just \$149. A telephone connection is not needed; and the fee includes both PowerPoint slides and audio.

To register for any of the DealersEdge webinars, go to www.cata.info. On the tan bar across the top of the screen, click on Education/Careers and follow the drop-down menu to CATA-DealersEdge webinars.

Premiering Thursday, June 25 at 12 p.m. CDT

“Text Marketing and Customer Communications for the Service Department: Selling More and Staying Legal!” Get the basics of an effective communications platform that is compliant with the Telephone Consumer Protection Act of 1991.

Learn how fellow dealerships are using the Power of Texting to build strong customer relationships and to market more services. Also learn of possible regulatory penalties for failing to comply with federal regulations.

Texting has become a dominant form of communication for many of your customers. Forward-thinking



dealers are quickly learning how to use this platform to enhance service-to-customer communications as well as to market additional services. But you need to be careful!

Watch this webinar to learn the basics of commercial text communications so that you use the platform effectively but also safely with regard to federal TCPA regulation and its potential penalties.

Learn how other dealerships are already using texting solutions to:

- communicate quickly and accurately with service customers;
- provide a documented permanent record of customer communications;
- enhance service selling by using the customer’s preferred means of communication;
- provide smooth and quick customer interactions from the dealership’s website; and
- steer clear of Federal enforcement and penalties for failure to comply

Also learn why undocumented use of texting may be worse than no texting at all!

Premiering Thursday, July 9 at 12 p.m. CDT

“The Auto Controller WOW Factor: 5 Sure-Fire Ways to Create Quick Store-Wide Improvements”

Counting the money is an important job. But Exceptional Controllers do so much more. Learn what you can implement today to bring quick bottom line improvement.

Christine Andrews and Rob Campbell of The Mironov Group will help you learn:

- the most useful tools to maintain profits
- how to help department managers improve their profit performance
- the importance of accruals to the bottom line
- where real profits are hiding on the balance sheet
- what measures controllers can take to drive improved store-wide performance
- and more

In Memoriam

Eileen C. Webb, the mother of two dealers who served as chairman of the CATA, died June 15 at age 90.

The beloved wife of the late Packey Webb, Mrs. Webb was a 50-year resident of Glen Ellyn and formerly of Joliet. The couple had 11 children, including Greg, the 2000-2001 CATA chairman, and John, the association’s 2013-2014 chairman.

Other children include sons Patrick, Thomas and J. Bradley; and daughters Carroll, Mary, Sarah, Lisbeth, Joyce, and the late Margaret “Meg.” She also is survived by 30 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren.

Memorials appreciated to the Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate Retirement Fund, (815) 725-8735; or to Joliet Area Community Hospice, (815) 740-4104; or to CNS Hospice, (630) 665-7000.