

Local Antique Car Club Awards Scholarships to Automotive Technology Students

by Craig Brown

The Tallahassee Region Antique Automobile Club of America (TRAACA) is pleased to announce it has awarded scholarships to two students attending Lively Technical College. Scott Griffith-Kunkel and Spiro Pappas are both enrolled in the Automotive Services Technology program at Lively, and are this year's recipients.

The national Antique Automobile Club of America (AACA) was established in 1935 and is dedicated to the history of the automobile as well as the preservation/restoration of vehicles 25 years old or older. This includes cars, trucks, commercial vehicles and motorcycles in original or restored condition.

Coincidentally, Lively Technical College began two short years later in 1937 when local businessman, Lewis Lively, recognized the need for a vocational school to provide individuals with the education and training needed to obtain gainful employment and earn a living as part of the recovery from the great depression.

Automotive technician training is a key program at Lively. Students learn in a state of the art training facility offering a National Automotive Technician Education Foundation (NATEF) master certified program taught by Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certified master technicians.

During their two years of training, students learn valuable skills that qualify them to work on automobiles and light trucks. Today's automotive technician needs to understand standard mechanical components such as engines and transmissions, but must also be competent with troubleshooting electronic control circuits and controller area networks. Lively students build the knowledge needed to pass ASE certification exams required to become (ASE) certified master technicians.



Automotive Services Technology instructors Gregory Hoover (far left) and Kenny Adams (far right) bookend TRAACA members Jack Hanbury, John Schanbacher and Craig Brown

The TRAACA members visited the school to award the scholarships and talk to students about the antique car hobby. Both of this year's recipients are in the second year of the Automotive Program.

Scott Griffith-Kunkel learned to use tools and work with his hands at age 7 doing carpentry with his dad. Later, he became interested in his dad's scooter and decided he needed one of his own. His wife encouraged him to take the plunge and enroll in the automotive technology program at Lively.



TRAACA scholarship coordinator Jack Hanbury presents a check and certificate to Scott Griffith-Kunkel

Spiro Pappas always had a passion for cars and began repairing them in his backyard while a freshman in high school. His brother was enrolled at Lively, so he knew about the program and began dual enrollment (mornings in high school and afternoons at Lively Technical College) as a high school junior and completed the first half the program by his senior year. Spiro is now on the fast track to be ASE certified and working in his chosen career field one year out of high school.



TRAACA President Don Romaine and scholarship coordinator Jack Hanbury present a check and certificate to Spiro Pappas

There is currently a shortage of qualified automotive technicians and Lively has a good track record placing graduating students. The demand is so high that many students are placed in jobs while they are completing the program. The dedication of the Lively instructors and administrators to the long-term success of students is exceptional.



First year students in Mr. Hoover's classroom



Jack Hanbury gets a closer look as Jager Wiard explains a brake job being done on a Chevrolet Tracker

Second year students may branch out into special projects after demonstrating mastery of the core curriculum competencies. The student's latest endeavor is building a race truck to practice engine tuning, suspension fabrication, fuel system and electrical skills.



Race truck powered by a modified Chevrolet 350 engine and using a four-link rear suspension to improve traction and handling

The Tallahassee Region AACA (TRAACA) recognized the importance of the Lively's automotive service technician program and wanted to do something to support the students and help promote automotive technology as a career path. The scholarship program began four years ago and is very popular with the students. The school welcomes the support of the antique car club and graciously provides space for monthly dinner meetings. Wonderful meals are provided by the Lively Culinary program to build catering skills and support another of the college's popular programs.



Lively culinary students and their instructor set up a catered lunch to honor the scholarship recipients

The mutually beneficial relationship between Lively Technical College and the TRAACA has resulted in young automotive enthusiasts becoming car club members. There are young people interested in antique vehicles and the automotive services technology program is a great place to find the next generation of stewards for this hobby. First year students Jager Wiard and Aaron Black both joined the TRAACA as a result of the club's outreach to the college. Mr. Wiard has a collection of antique Ford cars and trucks and Mr. Black is a parts specialist at Advance Auto Parts.



First year students Devin Harris, Jager Wiard, Aaron Black and Andrew "Montana" Kelly doing a brake job in the shop



Scholarship recipient Spiro Pappas works on his 1976 Stingray with assistance from Jaydon Figueroa.

For someone with an interest in entering the automotive field, the Lively Automotive Service Technology program is a fantastic opportunity. The education, hands-on experience and support for ASE certification provided by this program is a great place to launch an interesting career. The current classes include people from a multitude of backgrounds and the students range in age from 16 to 60. As my Grandmother always said, "An education is the only thing that can't be taken away from you!" Lively provides education that leads directly to an in-demand, well-paying career.