

Tallahassee Region (TRAACA) Hosts Lively Technical College Automotive Technology Students

By Craig Brown, Tallahassee Region AACA Webmaster

Tallahassee Region Antique Automobile Club of America (TRAACA) club member Neal Davis hosted an educational field trip for Lively Technical College's Automotive Service Technology students and instructors on April 1, 2021. The tour began with a caution from the owner:



“What you see here today didn’t happen and this place doesn’t exist. There is no sign out front, we don’t advertise, and we don’t take walk-in traffic. We are a full service machine and restoration shop that works on cars and trucks from 1900 to 1978. We aren’t conceited—just selective in the projects we take on.”



After entering the shop past a pristinely restored Ford F-100, students marveled at the cylinder head and drive train for the green Packard waiting patiently to be re-united with its rebuilt straight 8 engine.



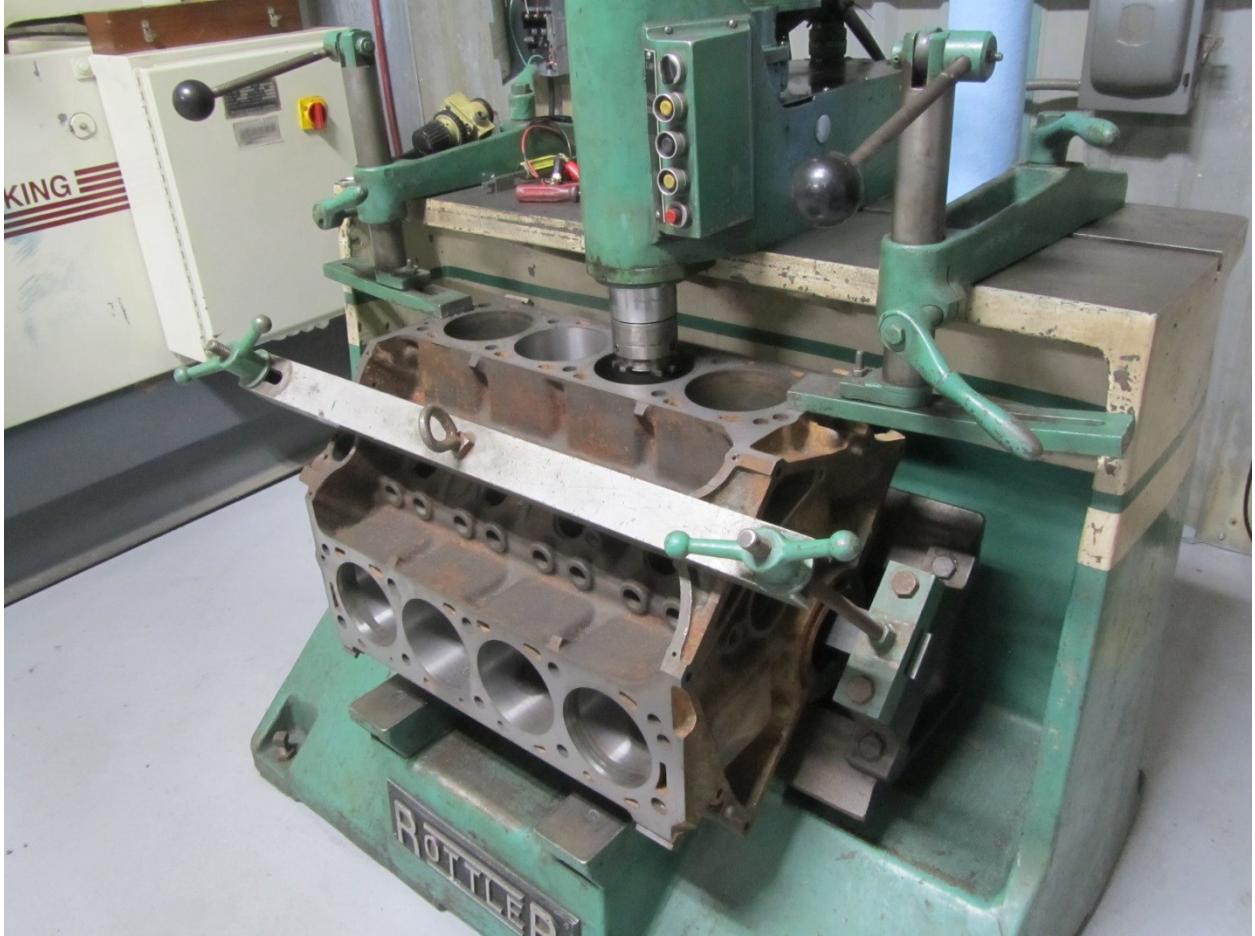
While unassuming on the outside, the building contains a machine shop, paint booth, lifts and plenty of work space to handle a multitude of projects. The C1 Corvette dressed in formal black was a draw for the automotive technology students.



Several pickup truck projects could be seen at various stages in the restoration process. This Ford was one of the examples close to completion.



In the machine shop, the students were able to see a boring machine at work on a Ford big-block engine.



Then it was on to the honing machine to demonstrate the next step in the cylinder bore reconditioning process.



The students enjoyed the demonstration and had a lot of questions about machining operations. The accuracy and tolerances (to .0005 ") achieved with manually setup machine tools was a testament to skill of the operators.



A short walk to out buildings used for preparation and storage yielded interesting artifacts like this Ford Thunderbird...





...and a 1969 Oldsmobile 442.



This Ford F-100 has a vintage air system that was installed in the shop. This is the perfect accessory for classic cruising in Florida!



TRAACA club members brought some of their cars out so the students could see the evolution of the automobile. The club boasts members with antique cars covering 100 years from an original 1894 Duryea to a 1994 Cobra Pace car. The cars on display were not all antiques, but that didn't dampen the enthusiasm of the group. This two-week-old 2021 Stingray generated more than its share of excitement.



Neal closed the tour by fielding remaining questions from the students and their instructors. He then offered some sage advice based on technician training he completed before the students were born and a lifetime of caring for a variety of machines:

“Tech. School is an important first step and current demand for automotive skills is high, but you must never stop learning. Detroit is at least five years ahead of us and we haven’t even seen what will soon be in the dealerships and in our shops. As you complete your training at Lively Technical College, you will prove to yourself that learning and putting skills to work is possible. Some of you will be driven to pursue advanced degrees and others will attend manufacturer training programs, seminars, and classes on evolving technology. Today the go-to tool in your tool box might be a digital meter or a scan tool instead of a wrench. Make sure to keep up with the changes in this industry and your career will be more rewarding because your skills will always be in high demand.”

Neal encouraged the students to study the cars and equipment in the shop before leaving in order to understand where we came from and how improvements in automotive design, efficiency, and safety evolved over time.

If you would like to hear more from Neal, don't bother trying to find the shop (a place that doesn't exist) to see a snapshot in time of automotive history and the effort required to maintain machinery from the past. Neal is the chairman of the 2023 AACA Spring National Show to be held in Tallahassee, Florida—so come on down for the event! I guarantee three things:

1. You will have a good time,
2. Neal will arrive in something interesting, and
3. If you ask the right question, Neal will tell you something important.