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# BHS auto shop is a cheap fix

By TIM RAVEN  
Hey, pssst! Don't tell anybody, but I know of this place in Bryan where they fix cars for just the price of parts and they have some of the most sophisticated equipment in the area.

But there's only one hitch — their waiting line is months long. Know the place?

It's Bryan High School. Surprised? Maybe not.

One of the worst-kept secrets in the Brazos Valley is that of Jerry Moody's automotive repair shop at Bryan High School where a car can get anything from a tune-up to a major engine overhaul for just the price of parts.

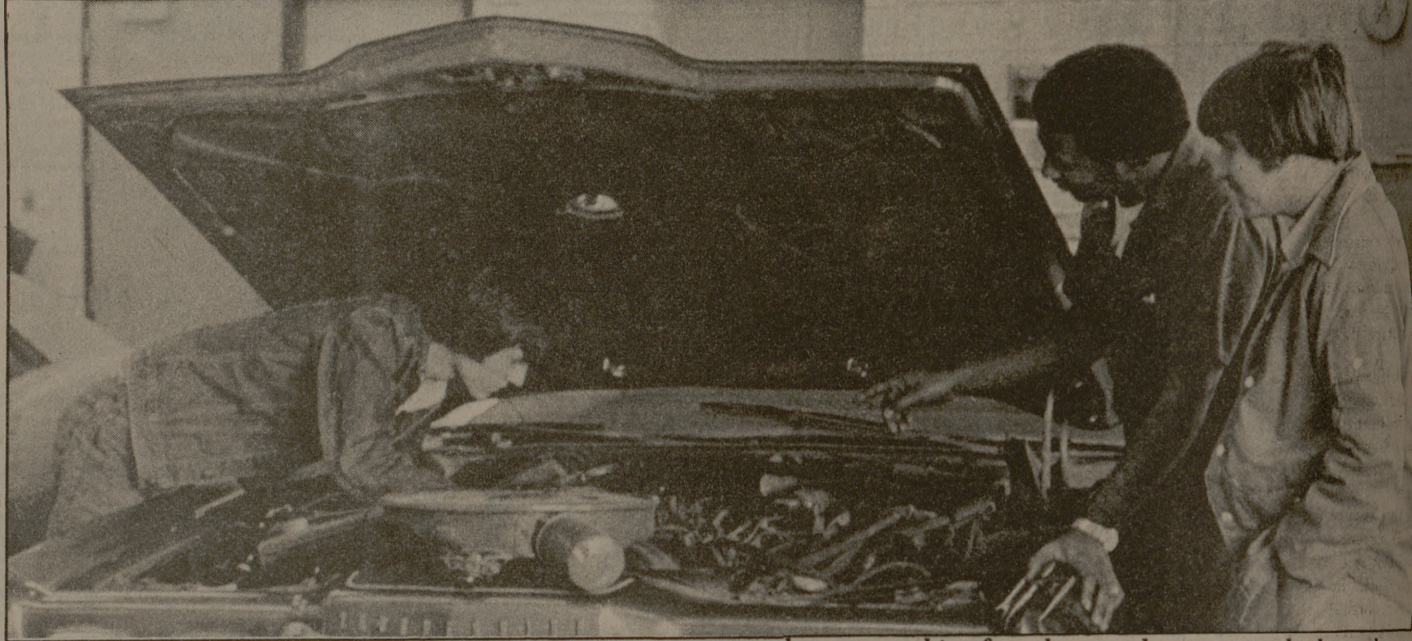
The only bad part is the slow service time. Moody said the students who work at the shop probably will not be able to take care of the customers on their waiting list by the end of this school year.

Moody's students said they fix cars for their parents, teachers, just plain ol' folks, and even Aggies.

Moody, a 1970 industrial engineering graduate from Texas A&M, said he doesn't know exactly how all those people found out about the shop.

"I don't know, man, somehow they know about it," he said. "Word gets around."

With a \$6,000 electronic engine analyzer on one wall, specialized



Students here are not looking for a lost contact lens. They are part of an advanced automotive repair course taught at Bryan High School. Teaching the course is Jerry Moody, a 1970 graduate of Texas A&M University. Students in the course

learn everything from how to change a spark plug to how to do a major engine overhaul. From left to right are Bill Dillard, Moody and Tommy Pack.

Battalion photo by Tim Raven

machines like a valve grinder and a lathe for brake drums on another, and about anything else you could think of to work on a car in other places around the shop, it's no wonder the word spreads so fast.

"It's not your expensive equipment that constitutes a good mechanic," Moody said. "It's knowledge."

Moody said some 50 to 60 students apply each year for a position in one of his two shop classes.

Juniors and seniors at both Bryan High School and A&M Consolidated High School in College Station can take the course, but students of Consolidated must pay a tuition fee. All students must make a written application for admittance and then have a personal interview with Moody.

Moody said he looks for "desire" as well as mechanical ability in these students.

"If you don't have it then you get to steppin'." He pointed to the door.

Some 19 students started the advanced class this year, he said.

Senior Markus Patrenella, a student in the advanced class, said, "If you don't do something right, he doesn't jump on you too much. You're in here to learn."

Why do students make the extra effort to get into this class as opposed to taking other courses offered at the two high schools?

"That's where the money's at," Oscar De Jesus, another student in the advanced class said. He went on to describe when he once saw a professional mechanic adjust a screw on a carburetor for \$5. He said the mechanic took no more than 10 minutes to "fix" the problem.

De Jesus said that he didn't know it at the time, but he knows now

that the problem was just a dirty air filter. He said that didn't seem like good business to him — a knowledgeable mechanic wouldn't make that mistake and customers would keep returning for more business.

Moody keeps a professional atmosphere at the shop. Even though the students are not paid for their work, they still call people who bring their cars in for service "customers." Cars are lined-up in an amazingly clean automotive repair shop and the students wear mechanics jumpsuits whenever they are working.

The mood is serious. "You don't clown around in here," said Patrenella. "There's no horseplay."

"I've learned a lot," he added.

Moody said he recommends that his students attend a technical school such as Texas State Technical Institute after their graduation from high school.

"We set the foundation here," he said.

He said some of the students go into the field directly after graduation from high school and make good.

"We just don't have enough good mechanics," Moody said.

Several of the students just returned from a district-wide competition where the students matched their automotive repair work against

the work of students in similar programs throughout the surrounding area.

Moody said his students have back eight blue ribbons in competition. Ribbons were awarded for displays on such things as cylinders to entire engines.

Senior Bill Dillard won the Ford engine. He said he spent three hours a day for three weeks on his \$450 rebuilding the engine.

After a trip to the state competition next week with his engine, Dillard plans to rebuild a car from t put the engine in. He plans to put up for his investment by selling a fully rebuilt vehicle.

The students seemed to have one gripe about their chosen program. Dillard said it when he pointed to the late-model car that had just left the shop.

"You couldn't pour a cup of oil through the space between the engine and the fenderwell," he said. "With all the new pollution control devices now on cars, the space beneath the hood is getting more cramped as well as more complex these days."

Cars become more complex, more backyard mechanics turning to professionals for help. Moody and his shop seem to be doing everyone a favor.

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Any guard at the jail in Alamos, Mexico, must serve out the sentence of a prisoner who escapes while he is on duty.

**Wildlife films to be seen**

The Brazos Valley Museum of Natural Science and A&M Consolidated Community Education will present two wildlife films by Bernard Nathanson on Thursday at 7:30 p.m. at A&M Consolidated High School.

Nathanson will be on hand to present "Okavango" and "Arribada," two films which will take the viewer from a unique delta in Africa to a special beach in Costa Rica where Atlantic Ridley turtles lay 12 eggs each year. The film chronicles the fight for survival of the turtles as they run the gamut of the sea.

Nathanson, a native South African, is a graduate of the University of Cape Town. He is a professional actor as well as a photographer and film producer. He is presently working on a full-length film on the African lion.

Tickets available at the door are \$1.50 for adults and 75 cents for children under 12. For more information, call the Brazos Valley Museum of Natural Science.

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