



HILLYARD TECH TALK

To prepare Hillyard Technical Center students for workforce success and continuous learning

MBCA Member Profile

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ARTICLE & IMAGES JEFF KLEPAC

CLUB NEWS

Learning the Trade

Benjamin Knapp knows how to make his own opportunities

Today, opportunities abound for careers within the auto industry, including technicians to service and repair vehicles. Following dealership closings in recent years, new- and used-vehicle dealers still employ more than 1 million workers. That's an average of 60 workers per dealership, according to the National Automobile Dealers Association. Still plenty of competitors aspire to the ranks.

This story is about one young man whose career aspiration was aimed solidly at the marque he loved: Mercedes-Benz. What started as a fascination with cars has now turned into a passion. Growing up in St. Joseph, Missouri, young Benjamin Knapp was only 14 when he began helping others work on their cars.

Then it happened. At age 17, he spotted a 1991 300E in much need of some TLC. Knapp recalled the car could barely run and the front end was completely smashed. He bought it for \$1,200, which included a donor car. The fun began as he accepted the challenge to make it his daily driver.

With 160,000 miles on the odometer, the M103 engine needed a new head gasket and other routine items. He liked the interior color from the donor car, so that change was added to the restoration list. Instrument panel, headliner, seats, door panels and full carpeting were transplanted. And, to correct the front-end damage, beginning at the radiator core support and working forward, Knapp made full use of the donor car, transferring the undamaged parts. Die-hard car guys will know that job, by itself, is quite a formidable task – even for an experienced body man.

The W124 began to take shape. During its transformation, Knapp noticed just how well the Mercedes-Benz was assembled. On a trip to Kansas City, he visited the long-established Mercedes-Benz Aristocrat dealership to see what was on its pre-owned lot. While talking with the salesman, Knapp mentioned his car, explaining how much he liked working on his project and his growing desire to know more about Mercedes-Benz vehicles. Recognizing his enthusiasm, the salesman encouraged Knapp to speak with the service manager and shop foreman; perhaps they could find a spot for him on their team.

That chance encounter led to a second interview and the rest, as they say, is history – albeit, Knapp has a lot of history to make. This enthusiastic young man, now 21 years old, began working full time at Aristocrat Motors in 2015. Now Knapp is gaining experience working as a lube tech and performing under-car inspections. He also pilots the Mercedes-Benz Roadside Assistance vehicle in the Kansas City area. So, when one of those fine M-B vehicles needs a jump-start, tire change or fuel delivery in that area, Ben's the man. He's on call 24/7, ready to help.

Knowing that learning is a lifetime journey, Knapp said he's considering a return to school to further his technical education and earn a business degree. In the long term, he'd like to open his own shop. Perhaps he'll own his own Mercedes-Benz dealership one day.

FROM THE TOP: Benjamin Knapp. Knapp's 1991 300E during restoration. The result of one young man's hard work: the beautiful 300E.

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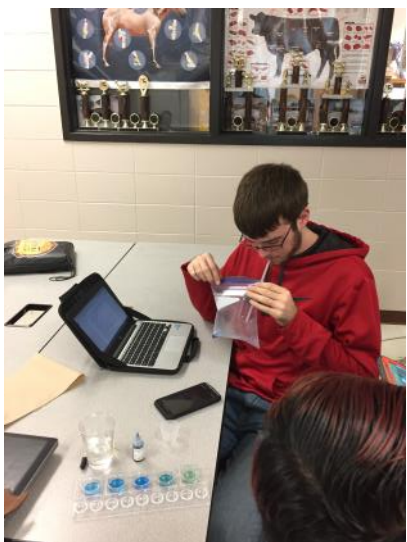
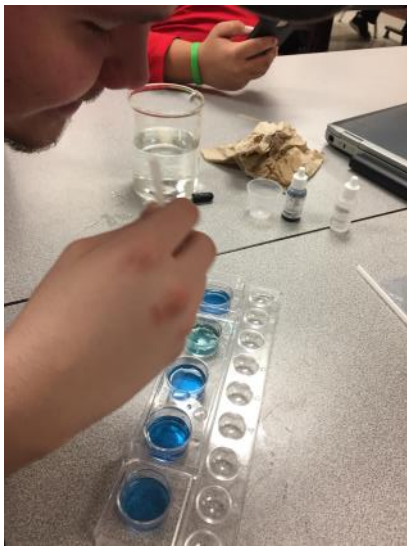
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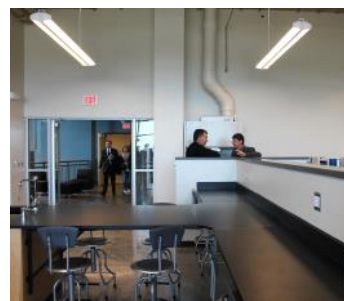
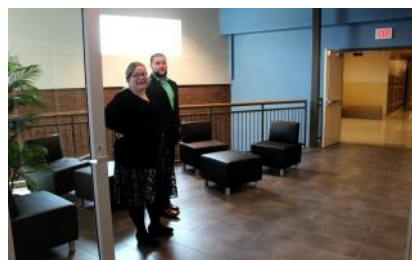
Benjamin Knapp is a former C.N.A. student at Hillyard Technical Center. This article is used with express written permission of the Mercedes-Benz Club of America. All rights reserved.

AG SCIENCE—VET TECH

AG students measure the Carbon Dioxide emitted by a typical animal at rest and taking qualitative and quantitative data about Co2 emitted.



ADVANCED SCIENCE RESEARCH CENTER is open!



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"Never let the fear of striking out get in your way."
 - Babe Ruth

MARCH

Mar 7 End of Third Quarter Grades
 Mar 17 No School
 Mar 20-24 No School (Spring Break)
 Mar 28 Progress Reports mailed

APRIL:

Apr 14 No School (Good Friday)
 Apr 18 Progress Reports Mailed

