

# Editor's Report



Wade Hoyt

**The Mechanic's Educational Association** is a grass-roots self-help group that's started its own training school, tech hotline and more.

I got a great letter the other day from Robert J. Everett, Jr., of Bayville Auto Care in southern New Jersey. In it he said: "As the owner of an independent automotive repair shop, and a responsible automotive technician, I am very concerned with the future of the automotive aftermarket and the issues that affect repair shops like mine. Two of my greatest concerns are quality technical training and the environmental impact of my business. I would like to share with you my experiences with a nonprofit organization in New Jersey called Mechanic's Educational Association [MEA]...It represents the very best of the independent automotive repair industry and is a shining example of what can be accomplished when members of this industry work together toward a common goal...I'm

sure you will be impressed with MEA's tremendous accomplishments."

Enclosed with this letter was a pack of literature describing the most ambitious grass-roots, self-help effort I've ever seen for independent shops. MEA is not just a feel-good affinity group, nor is it a bunch of malcontents complaining about government regulations and carmakers' complications. Here's how it came about:

Bill Willix used to sell parts to shops. Unlike some salesmen, he learned enough about front-line auto repair to realize that technicians needed more and better training than they could get from the occasional manufacturer's clinic. So he recruited 66 shops, formed a nonprofit corporation and opened his own training school! Today, MEA runs classes four nights a week and Saturdays covering more than 40 subjects. It also issues its own certification tests and has a tech hotline for member garages and a hazardous waste disposal program.

The school has two full-time instructors, who also man the hotline and a mobile Techvan that, for a small additional fee, will come to your shop and personally assist in a repair that has you stumped. The best thing about the hotline, says Everett, is that the technicians and diagnosticians already know each other from school classes, so they communicate better.

"They go hand-in-hand," says Willix. "We discourage members from using the hotline until they've attended several classes for basics." A member's first few calls to the hotline tend to be long ones, but as they learn more in classes and interact with the diagnosticians, their calls become much shorter, "just to brush up on a point here and there." Willix views the whole package—school-hotline-Techvan—as "on-the-job training."

For a fixed fee of \$75 a month, MEA's licensed contractor—Loeffel Waste Oil—removes all hazardous fluids: motor oil, coolant, transmission fluid, brake fluid, cleaners, etc.

Amen

## MEA Classes

Classes followed by an asterisk (\*) are given in two sessions; those followed by the pound sign (#) cover three sessions. All others are one-session classes:

1. Engine Performance Fundamentals & Future Development
2. Using Automotive Test Equipment—includes scope and four-gas analysis\*
3. Automotive Electronics—operation, testing and application
4. GM C3—operation, testing and adjustments#
5. GM TBI—operation, testing and adjustments\*
6. Cadillac Digital Fuel Injection—operation, testing and adjustments
7. GM Port Fuel (All Systems)—operation, testing and adjustments#
8. Ford EEC-I, -II, -III + MCU—carbureted and fuel injected#
9. Ford EEC-IV—carbureted and fuel injected#
10. Chrysler Carbureted & Fuel Injection\*
11. Basic Air Conditioning
12. Using Automotive Scanners
13. Ignition Troubleshooting—domestic car lines
14. Charging System Troubleshooting
15. GM C3 Carburetor Rebuilding
16. Bosch K-Jetronic (CIS)
17. Basic Electricity
18. ABS Brake Systems: Ford
19. Bosch KE-Jetronic
20. ABS Brake Systems: GM
21. Using Digital Multimeters
22. Advanced GM Port Fuel Injection
23. Advanced Ford EEC-IV
24. Reading Wiring Diagrams—emphasizing a/c and cooling fan circuits
25. Nissan ECCS
26. Mitsubishi Fuel Injection
27. Bosch L & LH Systems
28. Ford & Chrysler DIS
29. Ignition Troubleshooting—import car lines
30. Toyota TCCS
31. Turbocharging
32. Lab Scopes & Signal Generators
33. Honda PGM Fuel Injection
34. Volvo Fuel Injection

### ASE Classes

1. Electrical & Engine Performance
2. Air Conditioning & Brakes