

Longtime Voorheesville Auto Repair Business Welcomes New Owner and Looks to the Future

Advanced Auto Repair Service has found a new owner and changed its name to Carl's Advanced Automotive & Truck Repair Center. "Who's Carl?" you may ask. That would be Victoria Carl, who with her mother Katy have become co-owners of the business located at 14 Drywall Lane. Victoria grew up with a passion for automobiles owing to her family's history in the auto business. Her great-grandfather Dewitt Carl started the New Salem Saab dealership in 1961, and seven years later his son Frederick bought the business. Frederick Carl moved the dealership in 1992, building a larger showroom on New Scotland Avenue in Slingerlands. The family continued the dealership until its close in 2011. It was a second home to Victoria, and she remembers "spending many days playing in the new car showroom, entertaining customers and 'organizing' the parts room," all under the watchful eyes of her parents, Andy and Katy.

Andy Carl guided Victoria's interest and by the age of ten she was racing go-carts. In high school she began studying diesel technology, and her academic successes led to scholarships and further education at the University of Northwestern Ohio. Upon graduation, with dual Associate Degrees in diesel technologies and agricultural diesel technologies, she returned home to Voorheesville and joined the staff of Albany Truck Sales.

Meanwhile....

Timm Baldauf and Kerby Zimmerman, owners of Advanced Auto, knew Victoria and her family and their history in the auto business. They had a history as fascinating as that of the Carl family. Timm and Kerby began working together at Ryan's Getty (now the Lukoil gas station) in Guilderland Center in 1975. Two years later Timm took over the business and reopened it as Timm's Getty. In the fall of 1982 the two started Advanced Auto at its current location. The original structure at Drywall Lane was a pole barn owned by Robert Swasey. They started with two auto repair bays, but over the years as their business grew the building was expanded and improved and now it has seven bays, including one specifically for four-wheel electronic wheel alignment. As the business grew, Bob Swasey oversaw the exterior expansions and Timm and Kerby handled all the interior improvements.

As their business grew steadily—largely by word-of-mouth recommendations from a growing base of satisfied customers—Timm and Kerby maintained a position at the cutting-edge of improvements in auto technology. They introduced to their business computerized invoicing in 1988; diagnostics on disc in 1990; computerized four-wheel alignment in 1993. They were also at the forefront in using diagnostic scanners, which plug into automobile computer modules to access "trouble code" diagnostic data. In the early 1990s they settled on a company motto that stated succinctly their approach to auto repair : "Quality with A Conscience."

By 2019 the winds of change began to strengthen as Timm and Kerby looked toward releasing the reins on the business they built. Kerby approached the Carl family to sound out Victoria's plans and interest in owning an auto business.

That was, indeed, her goal in life, and in January 2020 she began working at Advanced Auto, learning from Timm and Kerby the ins and outs of the enterprise they had built, getting to know their devoted customers, and making plans to buy the business. In April Victoria and her mother Katy became the proud new co-owners of Advanced Auto.

Timm's plan is to retire from the business at the end of May 2020. Kerby has decided to stay on for at least a couple of years longer. Also remaining on the company's staff are longtime members of the Advanced team Bill MacGregor and Trevor Wagner. So, there is a degree of continuity amid the change. It has always been a family-owned and operated business, and now the family is changing and growing. Timm and Kerby want especially to express their deep appreciation to every one of their loyal customers and thank them for their many years of support for the business, which continues under Victoria's guidance.

Victoria plans to build on the foundation she's acquired from Timm and Kerby. She's especially interested in becoming involved with local high school work/study programs and providing internships to students interested in the auto repair and maintenance business. She also wants to host educational clinics for people who want to learn more about auto maintenance. She will continue the company's reach for the cutting edge; for example, the introduction of digital inspections, by which diagnostics are acquired at the shop and repair information can be sent directly to customers' smartphones or computers. While the long-standing tradition of "Quality with a Conscience" will continue to be an integral part of our future, the strong foundation of our family ties to the automotive industry, has prompted a new motto – "It's in our DNA".