



Ross Piazza, left, and Jerry Hoepfner stood behind the prototype for a Bugatti pedal car. Besides restoring prize-winning show cars,

their company restores antique pedal cars, and hopes to bring out a line of new one.

POST PHOTO/IRON BARTIZEK

Cars

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own business restoring show cars. Together with Mark Costello and Jerry Hoepfner, Piazza started up Coventry Restorations, a classic car restoration business. They specialize in rebuilding show cars, those cars that are trucked from show to show and judged on their appearance and closeness to perfection. For example, a new, off-the-line Jaguar may rate an 89 to a show judge, while a competitive show Jaguar will earn a 98. Or even higher.

"We just had a Jaguar scoring a 99.9," says Piazza. Meticulous research and restoration work is essential to high scores from show judges. "Everything has to be better than new," Piazza says. "It requires a lot of research." Each component must match precise specifications, and the finished car must be immaculate. The shop itself is remarkably clean. The shells of Porsches and Mustangs await painting — they mix their own colors on site — while a creamy brown Jaguar airs out its 12 cylinders. Cars are swathed in protective plastic, and exposed engines are marred only by a light coating of dust, not dirt. A typical restoration takes over 1000 hours. "Unless a problem turns up," quickly adds partner Mark Costello.

Piazza and his partners are also

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Ross Piazza
Shavertown

developing another side to the business. They are restoring collectible "pedal cars," those metal toys that children used to ride down neighborhood sidewalks. An old car can be found at an antique sale for \$350; fully restored, the same car could sell for \$1500. "We restore them for people who are collectors," says Piazza.

In addition, the partners are creating their own collectible pedal cars. The first prototype, which is almost complete, is a French blue Bugatti with a leather interior. They hope to complete a full line modeled on famous sports cars.

The most valuable car in Piazza's shop is a 1938 Jaguar SS100, owned by a postal worker. Only 100 or so were made, and when it is completely restored, it will be worth \$350,000 to \$500,000. That day is many long hours away, but for Ross Piazza, it will be labor doing something he loves.

ServiStar is Toys for Tots dropoff

Back Mt. ServiStar is an official drop-off point for the Marine Corps Toys For Tots program. Anyone wanting to participate in the program can drop off a new, unwrapped toy at the store until December 15.

Trucksville children's Christmas party Dec. 19

The Trucksville Volunteer Fire Dept. will hold its annual Christmas Party from 12 - 2 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 19. Door prizes include one girl and one boys bicycle, and three savings bonds for \$50, \$75 and \$100. Food and refreshments will be available.

Technology

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buildings and a T-1 high speed phone line for Internet access.

Ragnacci was surprised the district received such a large discount. The discount is determined by the amount of free lunches received in the district, she said. The district's Internet services are provided by Commonwealth Telephone's EPIX unit.

In 1996 Lake-Lehman entered into the consortium with other districts including Central Susquehanna, Pittston Area, Greater Nanticoke Area and Hanover Area.

"Our hope was the larger the number was with the consortium, the better (our chances) would be," said Ragnacci.

Link-to-Learn, the three-year state initiative that helped hook Lake-Lehman schools to the Internet and each other, is in its last year. Link-to-Learn jump started the district's access to the information superhighway.

Another consortium helped Lake-Lehman become a recipient of the Educate America Act. Lake-Lehman will share a \$368,000 grant with Dallas, Wyoming Valley West, Pittston Area and Wyoming Area. The districts will work

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Rose Ragnacci

Lake-Lehman technology coordinator

with College Misericordia and the Aster Group, Inc. to make use of the money.

Each district receives about \$80,000, for teacher training, hardware and software acquisition and curriculum development.

Lake-Lehman will develop reading and math curricula that will be used by the other schools in the program. Other schools will create math and science curricula to be used by Lake-Lehman.

Teachers in the middle level building will rewrite curriculum for K-12, said Bob Roberts, middle school principal and team leader of the project. Molly Malpass, Helen Frank, Mary Slaby and Drena Gorgone are the teachers who will form the curriculum. Sue Wysocki is the parent advisor to the project.

Roberts said the goal of the act is to "develop the best practices for enhancing student achievement. (With a focus on) improving teaching and learning with resultant increase in achievement."

The districts plan to integrate and align curriculum with the latest technology.

"We're trying to get all of the districts to work together by putting curriculum together with a technology base and improve student achievement on the PA State System of Assessment," Roberts explained.

And they're not done yet. Lake-Lehman recently applied for a Technology Literacy Challenge grant in hopes of getting a chunk of the state's \$18.6 million for technology in schools.

Even with all these grants and future monies, Ragnacci said it's never enough. "The community clamors for state-of-the-art, but how do we stay with it?" she asked.

"We upgrade as we go along," said Ragnacci. Lake-Lehman has many different computers, including many new PC's and old Apple II's that are in use at the elementary level. These early Apples made their debut approximately 15 years ago.

"It's difficult. Our technology plan is to work to replace the old machines. It has to be done. It is not easy being in a rural district."

Ragnacci thinks tax reform would help the district immensely. "We can't keep going to taxpayers and have them still like education," she said. She said the goal is to do as much for the students as possible.

"We want to give our students as many tools as we can when they leave here. We look at what can make them viable when they leave," she said.

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