

VEHICLES

Layland Museum to host The Car Guys

SPECIAL TO THE TIMES-REVIEW

A red light blinks on; your car splutters to a stop; you turn the key and nothing happens. Who you gonna call? The Car Guys.

The Layland Museum will bring The Car Guys right into the heart of Springfest on Saturday. They will answer any and all questions about cars at Mill Street Coffee House by Market Square from 2-3 p.m. The event is free.

Because the automobile is a necessity to go anywhere in Texas, and even seems like an extension of our identities, it is important to know how to keep your vehicle running along the road of life. The Car Guys are two Cleburne natives and long-time mechanics — Jerry Meek of

Meek Garage and John Long of John Long Sr.'s Auto Service.

Meek grew up in his father's mechanics shop. Grady Meek, in the business for 50 years, comes into his son's shop to work on carburetors. He started Jerry working on a lawnmower, then a go-cart and then a car. The advice he gave his son stays with him today: "Always do the right thing. It doesn't cost anything to say thank you."

Whenever people cheated him, he always said they must need the money more.

Jerry Meek learned some of the trade through industrial crafts and trades at Cleburne High School and went right to work after his 1976 graduation. Cars were more people-friendly then, and the shop was a

gathering place for friends and conversation, as it is today. He said he likes people as much as working as a mechanic.

About 1980 cars became computerized, and they continued to change every year, so garage equipment must be updated. Today diagnosing car trouble is the biggest part of the business. Because so many cars are on the road with fewer mechanics today, people often have to wait a week or so for cars to be repaired. Meek believes the future may be in the electric car, which can be charged from its gasoline engine and get 99 miles per gallon. He said even a regular car can last 300,000 miles with proper care.

Unfortunately, many people do not bring their cars in until a whole



John Long Sr., owner of John's Auto Service, is one of The Car Guys.

Courtesy photo

shopping list of things is wrong. The No. 1 problem is neglect, he said. Both he and friend John Long say their No. 1 tip is to maintain the vehicle properly from day one. Other tips are to read the owner's manual,

don't buy gas when the tanker truck is there, and be more conscious of driving out of necessity.

Long learned his trade by working in other shops from 1981 until he opened his own. He said the biggest

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