

Broadway Transmission and More includes a barn as part of the structure. Because it is a historic site, the barn cannot be torn down or have its exterior altered.



Broadway Transmission & More

A Great Shop —

But the Barn Stays the Same

Tired of working for a shop that sometimes had, what he calls “ethical gray areas,” veteran transmission rebuilder Brian Winograd went out on his own in 1996 and purchased an existing shop in Red Lion, in the agricultural area of York County, Penn. It was a tough climb for nearly two years but Brian says it is one of the best decisions he ever made, even though life has been a roller-coaster ride from time to time.

The shop structure, which incorporates an-even-older barn, goes back decades and was originally used as an Esso gas station and general-repair shop. Alvin Frey took over the shop from his father and turned the shop into a dedicated transmission-repair facility in 1951. Alvin and his wife, Mildred, ran a successful operation through 1996 when Brian began to talk with him about selling him the business.

“There was one big problem though,” Brian said. “I had no money as I had just built a house and was taking care of my mother who was dying from cancer. So I



(From left) The shop team includes Raymond Mohler, Jacob Winograd, Isaac Winograd, Brian Winograd, Jim Ison and Ann Grube.

walked into his shop and said, ‘My name is Brian Winograd and I’d like to buy your business, but I have no money.’”

Alvin was very motivated to sell, and he knew the reputation Brian had made in the industry during the previous five years. So he told Brian to put something down on paper and they would work it out.

Brian paid off the building within five years and then began making plans for a major renovation.

“I was happily going to tear the barn down and put up a modern pole building but I was told I couldn’t do it. If you go back to the original lambskin drawings of the town, the barn is shown. I did my due diligence because I knew it

continues page 6



Jacob Winograd pauses after checking a ball joint.

had been an Esso station so I had phase-one and a phase-two soil samples taken, but I didn't think to ask, 'Hey what can I do as far as remodeling or tearing it down.'

The barn is more than 200 years old and is registered as a historic site, so he is not allowed to change the outside appearance of the building.

'Now when I drive through the countryside and see barns, I say, 'Hey there's a future transmission shop,'" he joked.

Today, Broadway has two R&R technicians and one builder other than Brian. The shop has three bays with lifts and two additional bays for light repairs. Although Brian would like to stick to transmission work, he does offer other services.

'If the vehicle is on the lift and we see that it needs brakes or something that we will have to be near or touch, we will go after it,' he said.

When Brian worked at a transmission chain, he had increased business by calling on fleets. He does the same today.

At the time he bought the shop, he noted you had to be in the phone book to survive. Unfortunately, he opened at the worse time because the annual phone directory had already been published.

'I had to hit the bricks,' he said. His attorney advised him not to call on accounts that he had at the chain and Brian followed his suggestion.



Isaac Winograd smiles for the camera after removing an axle that was frozen into the spindle.

'But if they contacted me, it was fair game,' he said.

It took him about two years to develop a fair amount of fleet accounts. They include the Pennsylvania State Police Troop F, heating and air-conditioning companies and all of the local school-bus companies that have specially equipped 1-ton vans for handicapped children.

'One of those companies has a fleet of close to 600 of those vans,' he said. 'So they keep us busy.'

In addition, about 200 general-repair shops in a two-county area that have working relationships with a corporate leasing company, send transmission work to Brian.

'We do very little bench work with them,' he said. 'We want the whole job. They call and get an estimate, upsell it to their customer and then we do the whole job. They are pretty happy because they make money without bringing a car into their bays. About 40% of our business involves wholesale.'

Broadway offers a basic 3-year/50,000-mile warranty, and also offers a 3-year/100,000-mile warranty.

'I don't like selling a warranty just for warranty sake. If you want the longer warranty we are actually going to do a different job. We



Ray Mohler rebuilds a 4T60E.

are going to use an upgraded converter as opposed to a stock converter, as well as higher-end sun shells and other parts. We do something for the value.

'In the past five years we've become comfortable using remans, especially when a customer lives outside of our area or if we tear one down and it is economically better for us to put a reman in. We don't look at the reman industry as our competitors or our replacement. A lot of shops don't agree with that. We are happy how they pay claims – and there are claims.'

Although the mix of rebuilds vs. *continues page 8*



A migraine headache, in addition to hitting his head on a trailer hitch, resulted in Brian finding an ice bag for relief.



The newer section of the shop includes three bays with lifts.

remains is unpredictable, Brian noted that over the years reman work has grown from about 5% to 30% per year.

"This is Dodge-, Chevy- and Ford-truck land with the lift kits," he said. "More than 50% of the vehicles in our bays are pickups."

The average vehicle age changes from time to time as well.

"When I first got into the industry I was working on vehicles with an average age of 11 years old. Then in the economic good times it fell to seven years. Now we are back to 11 years old again. We're back to working on 4L60-E, 4R70W and 48RE units."

Manual and clutch jobs only account for about 4% or 5% of his business.

"In conjunction with all of our repairs, we see a high failure rate with CV axles and mounts," he said. "We have mounts falling apart in our hands. We had one



Brian Winograd looks for codes on a Jaguar.

yesterday in a Chrysler Pacifica with an oil-filled motor mount that exploded as soon as we touched it. That was not typical years ago. I don't know if that is atypical for our area compared to others because we get the extreme heat. In the summer we can be like the West Coast or Florida."

Brian noted that he listens to his conscience when customers come to his shop. Just recently a regular customer requested a transmission fluid change. Even though business is slow this time of the year because of deer-hunting season, Brian checked his records and the vehicle's mileage before informing the motorist that the service wasn't necessary yet.

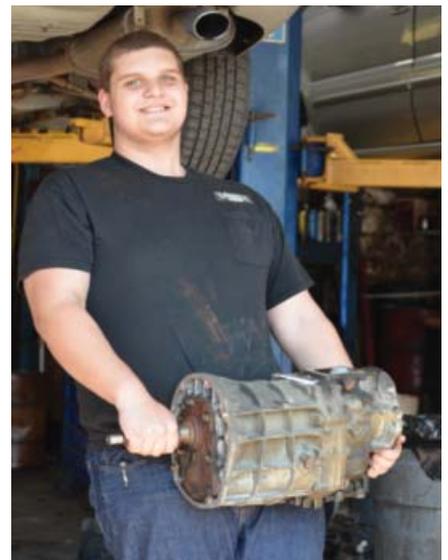
The past couple years have been pretty tough with Brian getting pulled in every direction.

"Sometimes I do everything and sometimes I'm like the guy in the movie Weekend at Bernie's," he joked.

On Sept. 23, 2013 his then-15-year-old son, Isaac, got hurt in a high-school football game and was paralyzed on his left side.

"He took a helmet hit to the arm and about a week later he had an embolism travel up his arm and he had a stroke," Brian said.

"Everything from his face to his toes on his left side was not working. I'm a single parent, so for 10½



Isaac hauls a stick shift from a Jeep.

months, plus 200 doctor and physical therapy visits – and you name it – we got him back on his feet. I'm home schooling him so he can get caught back up from the school he has missed, and he works four hours a day when he is not in school."

The transmission industry, along with friends and neighbors, all sent Isaac cards wishing him a speedy recovery. One parts manufacturer sent a card signed by every employee. A teacher in Florida, who Brian had gone to school with had all of her students send Isaac get-well cards.

"We received cards from suppliers and transmission shops from all of the country."

Two months after Isaac's stroke, Brian's father, Bernard, was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia and the shop owner now travels an hour and a half on a regular basis to be with him. During the time he was taking care of his father and his son, he was occupied for up to 18 hours a day and trusted the operation of the shop to his work team and his fiancé Ann Grube.

Brian, who calls Ann "Miss Wiggins," noted that her official title is "his boss." In reality her office-management duties at the shop are invaluable, he said. They are to be married Jan. 31. **TD**



Brian Winograd and his fiancé Ann Grube