

# Women in our Industry



## Dolly Grech

**Apprentice, Automotive Service Technician  
Roy Rump & Sons Tire and Auto Centre  
Ottawa, ON**

very girlie girl.” she admits with a laugh, “I like make-up and getting dressed up, and so it does take some getting used to, getting your hands dirty on the job. It’s a totally different world, a long way from playing with Barbies as a little girl.” That different world has “made me a more confident, more able person in general. I don’t rely on other people to do things for me, and I can get myself out of a jam.”

### Where she came from

Dolly first discovered automotive technology as a Grade 10 elective, taught by Gerry Boyer at St. Matthews High School in Ottawa. After exploring the trade through various co-op placements, Dolly went on to take the Automotive Service Technician Apprenticeship certificate program at Algonquin College. The in-school portion of this apprenticeship program consists of 3 eight-week levels. During each level, students are offered instruction in subjects such as work practices, engine systems, electrical, electronics, emissions and fuels, drive train systems and suspension, as well as steering and brake systems.



According to Dolly, Algonquin students “were lucky compared to students at other facilities. Their shop is gorgeous. They have all the equipment there.” However, Dolly would like to see students, particularly those who are having a hard time, get more class time. While the Algonquin program manages to touch on all areas of theory that apprentice technicians need to know about, there isn’t the time to explore older technologies in detail, or to practice skills like welding and torch cutting,

which is a skill Dolly finds herself using almost daily in her current job. College labs, she believes, are much better suited than the workplace to create an environment for targeted problem solving. Realistically, “in the workplace, you have to wait for a specific problem to come through the door.” And then, typically, if the problem



is related to drivability, or another equally complex issue, “it will be the licensed technician with 15 years of experience who will get to work on the problem, not the apprentice.”

### Getting her foot in the door

Since beginning her apprenticeship, Dolly has sought out placements in smaller garages, which have been “totally enthusiastic” about hiring a girl with credentials. The four placements she has had as an apprentice have given her the opportunity to “get to know the majority of work in a particular area, whether it be suspension, or mainly brakes, or radiators,” always leading to something new. As well as offering a wide variety of makes and models to gather experience on and learn about, the professionals Dolly has worked with at independent shops have taken the time to share their knowledge and mentor her.



# Women in our Industry

## Dolly Grech continued



### Where she is now

Since April 30th, 2007, Dolly has been working and learning at Roy Rump & Sons Tire and Auto Centre in Ottawa. In order to become a full fledged technician, she just has to write her licensing exam. It has been a year since she took her last apprenticeship level. Therefore, Dolly expects to take a prep course to refresh her strategy on how to approach the exam questions. Dolly is hoping for unambiguous questions, like

the ones typically posed in National Institute of Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) exams, "They're really good. There's nothing there to confuse you. You might come across four right answers, but it will be obvious which is the least or best choice." Her hunch is that electrical systems will make up as much as 80% of the licensing exam questions, since they were a major focus during her college courses.

While working at Rump & Sons, Dolly is soaking up as much knowledge as she can, taking courses as time and opportunity permit. Currently, she is learning how to read lab scopes.

### Where she is going

Dolly's eagerness to learn and can-do attitude are bound to take her far. Five to ten years from now, she sees herself as a licensed master technician with all her ASE exams written and passed.

"Of course, it's everybody's dream to have your own shop," she says, but, having spoken to various shop owners, she is fully aware of the many challenges that come with that dream, "the laws they have to keep up to date with, all the tools and equipment they have to get." She's come to realize that "offering something to outshine the competition is important".

At Rump & Sons, that something different includes the availability of a variety of scan tools and scopes, and that "we're capable of flash programming GM vehicles." Also, Rumps qualifies for the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) Blue Seal of Excellence, recognizing shops at which at least 75% of technicians performing diagnosis and repairs must be ASE certified, and at least one technician must be ASE certified in each area of service.



"I think I want to get into drivability," Dolly adds, "but before I narrow down to a specialty, I want to know everything, to keep a variety of options open." Until she is ready to make that choice, Dolly is so happy in her work, that her previously skeptical mother is delighted to admit that make-up and scan tools can be an excellent combination.



## Dolly Chooses Auto Tech:

### Why?

**"It's a totally different world"**

### How?

**High school electives, Co-op, College and Apprenticeship**

### What it's done for her?

**"It has made me a more confident, more able person in general. I don't rely on other people to do things for me."**