

## One-Off

### Pride And Appreciation

By [Derek Korn](#)

Something neat happened during my visit to the Charlotte-area shop that's profiled [here](#). One of Ameritech Die & Mold's young machinists brought a tricky mold component to the attention of the shop's president, as I stood nearby snapping photos of a 30,000-rpm VMC. The employee obviously was proud of the career he had embarked upon and the workpiece he had machined.

I thought that pride of workmanship was cool.

I've visited a number of shops during the three years I've written for this magazine. To be honest, the people I most readily identify with are those on the shop floor. I can envision myself working as a machine operator or programmer if I weren't already writing about how shops apply machining technologies in creative ways.

My upbringing may have something to do with it. My dad is a mechanic who has restored more cars than anyone I know. And as the apple doesn't fall far from the tree, I enjoy wrenching on my '55 Chevy when I have the time. Working with my hands to create something from what had become nothing after years of neglect is good therapy for me.

It was particularly easy for me to identify with the enthusiastic batch of employees at Ameritech. One quarter of them are products of a program called Apprenticeship 2000, which is made up of five area manufacturing companies and a community college. The program offers the member companies a proven, proactive method for finding high schoolers that possess the attitude, aptitude and willingness to work in advanced manufacturing environments. For young adults, it offers free college tuition and a paycheck (check out [www.apprenticeship2000.com](http://www.apprenticeship2000.com)).

Ameritech finds it easier to instill its machining-to-zero-stock mindset into a sharp young person who doesn't have conflicting, preconceived notions about how machining and mold building "should" be carried out. My writing career began in a similar fashion nearly a decade ago. A company needing a person to write about the application of manufacturing technologies hired an amateur gearhead with an engineering degree but no professional writing experience. I made up for initially limited storytelling skills with an appreciation of those technologies and the desire to learn more about them.

An inherent interest in metalworking led me to this magazine. I've found that my appreciation of machining technologies and admiration of the people who apply them in innovative ways have grown with each article I write.

My articles are my workpieces, and I'm proud to share them with you.

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