

## CUSTOM-FITTED

### Machinists

discard as soon as they can those legal  
snub-nosed 35-lbs.-of-air-pressure air nozzles,  
and take up those illegal  
105 or 110-lbs.-of-air-pressure smuggled-through-the-shop  
air nozzles and fit them with 3-foot-long barrels  
and stick their trigger handles down into the slot-like ways  
at the edges of their machine tables  
so that their barrels stick up in the air like rifles.  
These air guns  
can blow razor-sharp chips twenty feet through the air  
or drive them into the flesh of the hands  
or face,  
and they can fire  
missiles made out of cardboard tubing 50 feet  
through the air THWACK  
into the tin wall of the building or the back  
of another machinist,  
whereas all the legal air guns can do  
is clean off machine tables.

Why have something merely functional  
when you can have something illegal and dangerous  
and fun?

## SOCIABLE

I was never able to really talk to my fellow machinists  
in the Goodstone Aircraft Company machine shop.  
I would notice groups of 3 or 4 or 5 machinists  
gathered at various machines  
shooting the shit a mile a minute for 10 or 15 minutes  
every day  
but whenever I tried to go over to a machinist's machine and talk to him  
or a group of machinists the conversation always seemed to die  
almost immediately.  
I tried talking about work and I tried not talking about work.  
I tried being humorous.  
I tried talking about politics.  
I tried complaining about work and Goodstone Aircraft Company.  
Nothing worked.

Until I finally tried  
badmouthing my fellow machinists.  
Immediately eyes lit up  
and lengthy enthusiastic conversations began  
that lasted 10 or 15 minutes or virtually as long as I wanted,  
all kinds of other machinists and even supervisors wandering over  
to join in and skewer and ridicule and character assassinate.

Being popular  
just requires a little effort.

—Fred Voss

Long Beach, CA

## SUGGESTIONS

On Monday I am told to punch out and go to conference room b. In there I sit down in air conditioned comfort with my boss, his boss, and a guy I don't know and I am told that the company is buying two brand new Pfauter PE 320 numerically controlled gear cutting machines, and do I have any suggestions for tooling them up? In the 15 years I have been employed here no one has ever asked me a question. I look at the invoice for the machines. \$642,348.15. I look at the color brochure with a picture of the machine. Then I look at the new floor plan for the gear department, and notice that someone has very neatly scratched off the old Gould & Eberhard gear cutting machine that I have been running for 15 years, the most accurate and the most reliable machine in there, and drawn in the two new machines. I stand up, look at these men, pick up a pencil and redraw the old G&E machine back into the floor plan, and put in the price, "paid for one hundred times, keep it," sign my name, turn and walk out of there and go back to say good-bye to the G&E.

—Gary Goude

Riverside, CA