



TOOLMAN TIMES



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Passing Toolmanship to the Next Generation

Welcome to the latest edition of the Bendix Academy newsletter. In this issue, you will read several articles explaining who we are, why we exist, and why our mission matters today.

How Bendix Academy began

Founder Todd Trainor shares the history of Bendix Academy from its early beginnings mentoring youth in aircraft restoration,



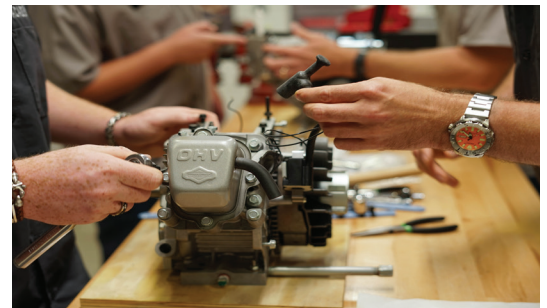
to becoming a growing organization focused on restoring hands-on toolmanship skills for the next generation. Pg 3

Practical learning for everyday life

You will also read reflections on the kind of practical learning many young people once received naturally through parents, grandparents, shop classes, and everyday life. Pg 3

What's in a mission statement? A Lifetime of Meaning

The feature article describes Bendix Academy's mission statement and what it means to equip young people with toolmanship, mechanical self-reliance, and career readiness through mentorship. Pg 2



Two critical tools

Another article highlights two of the most important tools we teach: patience and perseverance, plus an essential perspective. Pg 2
This print edition is just a snapshot of a growing Toolmanship Revival. The story continues online. Scan the QR codes to read the complete articles, explore expanded reflections, and see the deeper history behind Bendix Academy.



Explore BendixAcademy.org/newsletter/online for full-length articles with more photos and videos!

**BENDIX ACADEMY MISSION****MISSION: One Sentence,
A Lifetime of Meaning**

The Bendix Academy mission is expressed in a single sentence:

"Bendix Academy equips young people with toolmanship, mechanical self-reliance, and career readiness through intergenerational mentorship that builds confidence, maturity, and life-long skills."

But behind that sentence is far more than words.

We are responding to a slow-moving crisis, the loss of hands-on mechanical skills. Once passed down in families and reinforced through school shop classes, these skills have steadily disappeared, leaving many young people without the confidence to build, fix, or understand the physical world.

While skilled trades are an obvious benefactor of our Toolmanship Mentoring program, our mission is to provide a lifelong impact beyond the professional workshop.

- **Students:** Gain confidence, capability, and direction—toward trades, engineering, or lifelong self-reliance
- **Mentors:** Find purpose, connection, and a meaningful way to pass on decades of experience
- **Families:** Benefit from problem-solvers at home, reducing costs and increasing independence
- **Communities:** Grow stronger through shared skills, connection, and mutual support
- **Workforce:** Gains a stronger pipeline of capable, confident individuals prepared for technical careers

This mission is much more than a statement. It is a commitment to restore toolmanship, reconnect generations, and help build a more self-reliant future. We live by it every day.

**TOOLMAN TIPS:****The Most Important Tools:
Patience & Perseverance**

If toolmanship is the art of working with tools, then the toolman himself is the most important tool in the shop.

Not every tool hangs on a wall. Some live in your mind and shape every outcome long before a wrench ever touches a bolt.

Patience: Try again—differently.

Patience is the most important and often hardest tool to learn. Impatience has consequences in the shop. We've all felt it, a stubborn bolt, a little more force, a warning that something will break.



An experienced toolman knows when to stop, not quit, but pause. He steps back, studies the problem, changes the approach. Maybe it's heat, penetrating oil, or simply time to think. Patience is not passive, it's deliberate and disciplined.

Perseverance: Then try again—smarter.

Perseverance means not giving up when problems arise—but it also means adapting. When something doesn't work, more force isn't the answer. A better approach is.

**Patience and perseverance are invisible tools that reside in the toolman's mind.**

They are not learned from textbooks or videos, but through direct coaching from a seasoned toolman. At Bendix Academy, beside the wrenches and hammers, students find two small containers labeled Patience and Perseverance. Though empty, they represent the quiet transfer of wisdom in real time—our intergenerational mentoring. The true craft is knowing when to apply both, guided in the exact moment the lesson is needed.



Read more at
BendixAcademy.org/tips/

**TOOLMAN
TIPS**



Bendix Academy History

By Todd Trainor, Founder & Program Director



Bendix Academy didn't begin as a formal program. It started organically inside the Warbirds of Glory Museum. In the early days of aircraft restoration, teens would show up eager to help. At first, many came with some mechanical foundation. But over time, that changed. Young people still wanted to participate but increasingly lacked basic tool skills.



Alistair built his toolbox when Bendix Academy was still Kittyhawk.

So we adapted. What began as a simple solution—teaching a few foundational lessons so students could contribute—quickly became something more. With two mentors, a handful of tools, and lessons sketched out informally, we started building a repeatable approach to teaching toolmanship.

Interest grew. Students returned. More joined. It became clear we weren't just supporting a museum project—we were filling a gap. In 2019, that realization led to the creation of Bendix Academy as its own organization, focused entirely on toolmanship mentoring. Then came an unexpected pause. During the pandemic, instead of teaching at scale, we focused on building the foundation: refining lessons, developing curriculum, and creating a structure that could grow.

When we relaunched in 2022, it was modest—one student, two mentors, and a 20x20 garage. No funding. Just a commitment to do it right. From there, the program steadily grew—lesson by lesson, student by student—eventually moving into our current hangar space, where demand now far exceeds capacity.

Today, we have a growing mentor base and are able to provide more hands-on toolmanship lessons than we ever have before.

And now, we are preparing for the next step: expanding to meet the demand of the many students and communities seeking this kind of hands-on learning.

The work is just beginning.



Todd Trainor, Founder, 2020



The Way It Was

- A reflection by Todd Trainor



I often think back to growing up in the 1970s—a simpler time, with fewer distractions and more opportunities to learn by doing. I spent hours with my dad, learning to use tools, fix things, and understand how they worked. He encouraged me to try, fail, and try again. I “played” with tools—repairing my bike, tinkering with engines, building, and creating.

What I remember most are the moments: the smell of grease, the sound of tools at work, and the pride on my dad's face when I figured something out. Those experiences built confidence that lasted.

Today, fewer young people have access to that kind of learning. We must intentionally create spaces where generations come together—where mentors guide, and students learn by doing.

This is more than skill-building. It's about confidence, purpose, and connection. If we get it right, we build not just capable individuals, but stronger communities.



Todd with his dad, Tom, working on their plane



Todd repairing his bike



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Toolmanship Revival

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BENDIX
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PASSING THE GIFT OF TOOLMANSHIP FORWARD

 In this issue...

- Why toolmanship matters, and why it's coming back
- How we're passing toolmanship to the next generation
- Mission-Driven History... and Future!



Wrenching real change

Student Scholarship Fund

Your gift of any amount today brings mechanical self-reliance to future generations.

- A one-time contribution helps a student participate right now
- A monthly contribution helps ensure that opportunity is consistently available

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