EDITORIAL

The Thrill of Competition and Collaboration

During the recent WEMCO Annual Meeting, we watched and chatted about the Sochi Winter Olympics while having a drink in the evening. Everyone was commenting on how important the interplay is between rooting for our native countries, the love of our favorite sports, our personal interest in seeing the athletes we recognize do well, and the thrill of watching close times and scores between contestants. It was just great to feel the excitement of the games, and the passion of the outstanding athletes. It was fun to allow ourselves to get caught up in the physical exertion of such highly trained men and women. At times, you felt your heart rate increase, and your fist clench at those successful, momentous jumps, the incredible times, and you could almost feel the unfortunate slips and falls on the slopes and ice. Really, if you allowed yourself to get caught up in the moment, it was enthralling. The Olympics are an incredible and exuberant mixture of youth, excellence, struggle, failure, and triumph.

Now you might think it a bit of a reach, but, in fact, WEMCO has many of these same characteristics and opportunities. If you’re unfamiliar with WEMCO, it is an association of welding manufacturers and a standing committee of the American Welding Society. For more than 15 years, I have been coming to WEMCO Annual Meetings, and in that time, I have seen interest in different welding technologies wax, wane, then rise yet again, phoenix-like. I have seen young companies grow and prosper, and great, elder companies disappear. And all the while, various products and processes have changed and evolved. Those who have attended the WEMCO meetings over those years have seen individuals bravely leading small companies, new leaders take over the helm of larger companies, and, at the same time, made new friends and affirmed old acquaintances. Frankly, there is nothing better than to sit down with colleagues to share memories and make plans for the future.

Who is your typical WEMCO member? Companies, like individuals, are all different; with aspects we are both familiar and unfamiliar with, and possessing characteristics we like and dislike. Some participate; some are quiet observers. All have different motives for attending. What is noticeable, though, has been the impressive people I have met from these companies. Over the years, I have met not only outstanding teachers, and other great guys and gals, enjoyed good times and listened to impressive speakers, but I have also had the opportunity to learn from the best about the best technologies and processes. WEMCO’s technologies traverse the full range of welding, from the fully automatic to the most manual processes, fascinating our members. Where else can you get this exposure? Where else could you find this knowledge?

Perhaps best of all have been the speakers WEMCO draws in. At the Annual Meeting this past February, we had excellent presentations on where distribution is headed and how to respond to rising challenges and demands from sources such as end users. We were offered potential solutions on how to respond and who will be there to deliver to them. The fact is, membership in WEMCO allows you to experience the passion, ambition, and the interest in excelling with the best in the welding industry. As a member of WEMCO, you can gauge for yourself where the industry is headed, and plan accordingly.

And just like as at the Olympics, you have the camaraderie and good times of the contestants and the spectators. You can exert yourself or relax among kindred spirits with the same interests, or just watch the proceedings in calmness and quietude. What WEMCO really offers is the best window you can get to the welding and cutting industry. Missing the Annual Meeting is like missing your favorite sport and all of the Olympics. Make sure you are a member. Welding, after all, is that unique process where we cut and join materials to supply the world with innumerable products, limited only by our imaginations. Come join the leaders!

Nigel Scotchmer
Chair, WEMCO

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Nigel Scotchmer