AWS District 1 Member Profile

Barb LeGeyt

Enjoying an idyllic upbringing on a 180-acre farm in Connecticut, Barb LeGeyt envisioned a career working with horses. She was introduced to welding through competitions held by the Future Farmers of America (FFA), wherein she served as her high school’s chapter officer.

“I tried welding for the first time in my sophomore year,” she recalled. “At first I thought I was going to set the shop on fire, but I fell in love with it.”

Not getting her mother’s approval to pursue a career as a barn manager or a horse trainer, LeGeyt set her sights on welding.

“I chose welding because it seemed interesting, and it was deemed a career where I could make a lot of money and be able to travel,” she said. “I want to break down stereotypes of welders and women in welding.”

Combining her interests, LeGeyt welds custom horseshoe art as a hobby. She also sees plenty of opportunities for welding within agriculture.

To sharpen her skills, LeGeyt is currently working toward a bachelor’s degree in welding fabrication engineering technology at the Pennsylvania College of Technology.

“With this degree, I am learning both the hands-on shop part and the science on how welding works,” she explained. “Being a well-rounded engineer is a great asset to companies.”

In addition to being a student, LeGeyt is an officer in her college’s AWS student chapter. She is proud of a Halloween-themed welding lab the chapter created to attract interest.

“We’re trying to get people to come to meetings, keep coming, and get involved,” she said. “It’s about building relationships and job connections. These are the people you’re going to be out in the field with.”

LeGeyt is also a recipient of the AWS Elizabeth Fray Women in Welding Scholarship, Dist. 1 Scholarship, and Foundation Scholarship.

“It gives me a sense of pride to have them recognize me,” she said. “Even though I didn’t come from a life of welding, receiving these scholarships shows me that I have a track record that can stand up with the rest.”

LeGeyt’s dreams for after graduation highlight her pure love of the craft.

“I just want to be in a fabrication shop environment and be able to weld,” she affirmed. “I want to see what I can make and see how it impacts industry.”

LeGeyt also included teaching in her future plans. Selected to be an instructor at her college’s makerspace, she will be teaching different welding processes and techniques in the spring.

AWS District 2 Member Profile

Daniel Filippelli

A fast learner, Daniel Filippelli picked up welding at 14 with the help of his friend’s older brother.

“We built four wheelers and trucks, and played around with custom suspension and bumpers,” he recalled.

Filippelli honed his talents in his high school’s vocational technical program, where he also helped start an AWS student chapter.

“We would have the Philadelphia Section come down every other month for a meeting,” he said. “It was really cool because we got to talk to guys who had been welding for 20–30 years, and even hear about jobs.”

Living on the Maryland coast, Filippelli turned his hobby into a small marine fabrication and repair business with his friend.

“We started off by making fishing rod holders, and after a few we got pretty good at it. People would ask where we got it, and we would build them one. After a while, we got busier and busier,” he said. “It wasn’t a true business, but it turned into good side money for someone as young as us.”

Not wanting to work in an office, Filippelli embraced welding as a career and enrolled in the Pennsylvania College of Technology’s two-year program, but then switched to a bachelor’s in welding, fabrication, and engineering.

“At the time, I didn’t see myself sitting at a computer,” he explained. “The more my instructors spoke to me about being 50 and laying on my back in a ditch somewhere, I realized that even if I don’t use an engineering degree now, I can move up and give myself more options when I’m older.”

Continuing his relationship with AWS, Filippelli is a member of his college’s AWS chapter, and has received two AWS scholarships, including one from the Philadelphia Section.

“When people see that you’ve received a scholarship, it shows them you put a little effort forward and you have people who back you up,” he said. “It gets your name out there.”

Slated to graduate this year, Filippelli hopes to secure a job in off-road fabrication.

“I want to push toward companies that mass produce off-road bumpers and lift kits,” he said. “It takes a little more thought to figure out not only how to make something, but how to make thousands of them.”

A car enthusiast, he lists his Jeep as his most prized welding project.

“Building an entire suspension and figuring out the body lines, roll cage, and bumper...making all those major things work together is difficult,” he affirmed. “But when you’re done, it’s cool to see that you can put something that big with that many moving parts together and have it actually move the way you want.”