AWS Celebrates Its Past by Focusing on the Industry's Bright Future

The Welding Journal is celebrating its centennial by looking to the future and showcasing the welding industry’s young professionals. From January to December 2019, Society News will profile AWS members under the age of 40 from each AWS District. The following section profiles Adam Lynnes, Dist. 15, and Kassidy Kitzmiller, Dist. 16. To nominate an AWS member, contact Katie Pacheco at kpacheco@aws.org.

District 15 Member Profile

Adam Lynnes

With his father and grandfather as welders, Adam Lynnes has the craft running through his veins. He tried welding for the first time at the age of 12 when his father took him to a Pipefitters Apprenticeship class he was teaching at a technical college.

“I would sit and listen to his teachings and then go into an empty booth that wasn’t being used and try not to weld the piece of metal to the table,” he reminisced. “From that day forward, I went to every Saturday class he taught because I was determined to get better than the week before.”

And “get better” he did. While working toward his bachelor’s in business management, Lynnes joined his father’s business, Dave’s Welding & Metal Fabrication Inc., as a small parts welder for a local manufacturer.

Lynnes’ knowledge of welding symbols and blueprints expanded with the growth of the business and shop, allowing him to ascend to a fabricating/welding position, and later foreman. When his father’s business merged with a bulk tank and structural steel company, Lynnes became the production support/team lead.

The merger exposed Lynnes to new projects, such as one requiring 4-in.-thick, complete-penetration groove welds for joining columns to large, thick base plates. It took him five hours to finish two of the four welds.

“These welds were going to be tested by ultrasonic testing, so the quality of the welds were my top priority, and not knowing what was involved with that type of testing was nerve rattling,” he recalled. “By the end of the project, I found that I learned a lot about endurance and patience when producing high-level quality welds on thick material.”

Following several years in the company, and after a military deployment, Lynnes transitioned to a welding instructor position at his father’s welding school, Lynnes Welding Training, Fargo, N.Dak., where he has been for more than five years. Some of the subjects he teaches include gas tungsten, gas metal, flux cored, and shielded metal arc welding (plate); pipe welding; oxyacetylene cutting; plasma arc cutting and gouging; carbon arc gouging; safety; welding symbols; and blueprint reading. According to Lynnes, the classes give students the training they need to acquire a job in a short period of time.

“The most enjoyable thing about teaching the skill of welding is seeing my students’ progression of their skills from the first day of class to their graduation day, and showing them that with hard work and dedication they can achieve a lot in a small amount of time,” he affirmed. “I also love being able to pass my skills on to them, knowing they are going to be great welders in the industry and make a great career out of it, which will lead to countless opportunities to better themselves.”

Lynnes is also an American Welding Society (AWS) Certified Welding Inspector (CWI) and AWS Certified Welding Educator (CWE).

“The number one thing that motivated me to pursue and become a CWI and CWE is always wanting to challenge myself to continue to learn and contribute more to the welding industry,” he explained. “I’m also striving to obtain and grow my knowledge to develop into a better instructor.”

Lynnes’ dedication to teaching has been recognized with two AWS accolades—the Howard E. Adkins Memorial Instructor Membership Award and the Private Sector Instructor Membership Award.

“The hard work, drive, and dedication that I have so far put forth is being noticed, and it gives me motivation to continue to give back to the welding industry by sharing my skills and knowledge with others to better their lives,” he said.

On his off time, Lynnes enjoys hunting and fishing. He also volunteers with Cowboy Up, a nonprofit that raises money for the Sanford Roger Maris Cancer Center, Fargo, N.Dak. His time is further dedicated to the North Dakota Army National Guard, where he has served for nine years and specializes in electrical maintenance on a ground-to-air missile system. However, Lynnes is most fulfilled by the simple things in life: “With all of this, my greatest passion at this moment is my wife of almost a year, and the excitement of becoming a new dad this August.”
District 16 Member Profile

Kassidy Kitzmiller took to welding like a moth to a flame. Enrolling in a welding class at the age of 14, she completed all the welding courses offered at her high school by her junior year. Kitzmiller’s quick grasp of the material earned her a spot as her welding teacher’s aid, allowing her to teach younger students how to weld.

Kitzmiller’s passion for welding encouraged her to enroll as a metallurgical engineering student at the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology (SDSM&T), Rapid City, S.Dak., where she is slated to graduate in 2021.

Through her program, she has landed several internships with Newmont Goldcorp, a mining company. She is currently interning at the company’s Colorado mine, but has previously worked at its northern Nevada mines.

“These internships have taught me a lot about the mining industry and how metallurgical engineering plays such a big role,” she affirmed. “I have worked on a variety of projects from optimizing recovery in the refining process to conducting test work in a variety of areas to help each mine solve problems they have.”

During the school year, Kitzmiller dedicates time to SDSM&T’s American Welding Society (AWS) Student Chapter, which she helped establish. “I first got involved with AWS on my campus because I noticed we did not have an active organization, and I thought our students were missing a lot of opportunities. In my sophomore year, I talked with my advisor and set a plan in motion to reactivate our organization. This included updating our constitution, developing an officer team, recruiting members, presenting to our school to be reinstated, and a whole lot of paperwork,” she recalled. “Two years later, I can proudly say I am leading an officer team of six talented students who work hard to teach more students not only about welding but also how to be involved with the community and lead an organization.”

As the president of the Student Chapter, Kitzmiller helps spearhead several of the Section’s events, including the Rose Fundraiser, a school tradition involving steel roses made by blacksmithing students. This year, the fundraiser brought in more funds than ever, which will be used to pay for safety equipment, metals, and other materials.

“It was great to see the number of hours and effort my officer team put into the fundraiser, and we are incredibly proud of how it turned out. We were able to not only sell the roses on campus by word of mouth, but we also developed a website and were able to ship roses across the United States,” she said. “I am excited to see what we can accomplish this next year with a larger officer team and more members.”

Kitzmiller is also working with the Student Chapter to help launch a statewide high school outreach program she developed in her technical communications class. The program will involve members visiting high schools to inform students of SDSM&T’s welding-related majors.

“The program will bridge the gap between rural high schools and SDSM&T,” she explained. “I feel this is very important to jump start because when I was in high school I knew I loved welding, but I didn’t know there were any career opportunities outside of a tech school, and SDSM&T is right in my backyard.”

Kitzmiller wears a lot of other hats on campus: She is a member of the Honors program, which has allowed her to work with local tribes to help develop their towns; she is a student ambassador, which involves speaking to high school students about opportunities offered by SDSM&T; and she is a member of the Math Club. She is also an active member of SME and Material Advantage.

Kitzmiller spends her free time shooting archery and coaching archery for her local 4-H, an organization providing hands-on learning programs for kids. She also enjoys soaking up family time in the outdoors.

With her varied experience and interests, Kitzmiller is open to where her future may lie.

“I am not set in stone with what I want to do after college. While I love the mining industry and the company I work for, I am still extremely interested in the cold spraying industry as well as new advances in the welding industry,” she said. “I still have a couple years to do some research and see what the best fit for me will be.”

AWS Welding Handbook Committee Seeks Volunteers

The American Welding Society (AWS) Welding Handbook Committee is looking for volunteers to work on Volumes 2 and 3 of the 10th Edition of the Welding Handbook. Candidates should be recognized subject matter experts in various welding science and technology topics, or a closely related field, such as metallurgy, manufacturing technology, metal fabrication, or design. Ideally, candidates should have 10+ years of experience in their field and possess good technical writing skills. Previous work on AWS documents is desirable. Qualified candidates should send their résumé and contact information to Kathy Sinnes, ksinnes@aws.org.