District 02 Director Harland Thompson stepped on stage with AWS Philadelphia Section Marketing and Media Chair, Marinee Temme, at the FabTech 2013 exhibition in Chicago to accept their award for the scholarship program recently put into place in the Philadelphia Section. This long awaited program was initiated earlier this year by then-Chairman Ken Temme, unanimously approved by the Board, and subsequently received a dollar-for-dollar match by the AWS national headquarters. At the awards luncheon on Wednesday, November 20th, AWS presented the Philadelphia Section with a banner honoring its commitment to promoting education in the welding trades to members of the Section.

Throughout the week-long event at Chicago’s McCormick Place, a never ending stream of conference attendees mulled about the vast trade show floors and meeting rooms. Director Thompson and Chairwoman Temme worked the floor to promote the Philadelphia Section to businesses and companies in an effort to create future partnerships in areas of education, sponsorship, and speakers for the upcoming Section Nights in 2014. Salisbury MD students Ty Hagel and Daniel Filippeli represented their Student Chapter at the expo, and had an incredible opportunity to operate the latest equipment as well as learn from the reps at the booths.

The AWS Trailer was a very popular feature on the exhibit floor, as was a similar trailer from UA Local 557 out of Chicago. Large exhibits by Grainger, Lincoln, Miller, ESAB, Honeywell and more, drew record crowds with the latest in welding and fabrication equipment demonstrated. Many of the popular presentations were in the robotics and plasma cutting areas, with the latest technologies fascinating many who watched the equipment run start-to-finish by an initial program keyed in on the monitor. In some cases, the process could be viewed on the same monitor as the equipment was in operation.

While the trade show floor was open to the packed house, numerous presentations and classes were underway every day in the breakout rooms of McCormick Place, including a brazing symposium, lectures from international experts such as John N. DuPont and Professor Xiao-Ling Zhao of WTIA. Many code clinics and the latest in welding technologies seminars made the four-day event packed full of as much information as one could schedule their time. A cocktail reception was held in the Grand Ballroom of the Chicago Hilton on Tuesday evening, allowing invitees to meet and mingle with present and past officers of the AWS national association.
With the room at maximum capacity, Section Chairman Bill Mowbray welcomed the large number of members in attendance for a firsthand presentation at one of the largest shipbuilding facilities in the world, Aker Philadelphia Shipyard. Section members were required to sign up well in advance of the meeting, as attendance was limited and security procedures to enter the facility had to be cleared. The response was so great that some went on a waiting list when the maximum attendees had been reached.

The first presenter of the evening was Jim Clarke, Manager of Training at Aker. Jim told the membership about the history of Aker and its presence at the old Philadelphia Navy Shipyard. He went on to explain that Aker is presently contracted to provide 18 flagships to customers transporting goods to and from US ports starting in the next few years. This represents a huge volume of work for the welding industry in the Philadelphia region for many years to come.

Jim also detailed how Aker has been providing notices to prospective welder apprentices they wish to hire for the thirty+ positions available for the ships being built over the next few years. Alban Guertan, Aker’s Welding Engineer, then gave a presentation where he described the various oxy-fuel and plasma cutting processes used by the shipyard, as well as the numerous other processes necessary to the operation such as SMAW, FCAW, GTAW, and EGAW.

Later in the meeting, Bill Mowbray presented Jim Clark with a Certificate of Appreciation from the Section for hosting this long awaited Section Night, as well as providing food and beverages for all attendees. It was a packed house, and an evening enjoyed by all who attended.

Starting in January 2014, The Philadelphia Section will be looking to attract more members to their Section Nights by hosting more exciting and informative presentations and giving away a substantial basket full of welding items. As an introduction to the new ‘Giving Back to Our Members’ program, a preview drawing was held at the Aker Section Night. A huge basket containing a large assortment of items from a welding helmet, an assortment of gear and supplies, and even some AWS goodies was raffled off at the end of the night, and won by long-time section member Russ Diefenback. Many thanks to our Section businesses who have signed on to support and contribute to the future drawings for our members.

The upcoming year is anticipated to be one of substantial growth and activity based on changes implemented by the Board during this past year. In addition to satellite meetings and outreach campaigns, student nights and the newly added scholarship program, the Section is offering businesses a major upgrade in advertising and business promotion through the 2014 advertising campaign. A three-tier structure was developed to accommodate the needs and budget of all levels of business, at rates that are the best value for the exposure anywhere around. The Section’s very popular social media campaign and new virtual presence provides a local, national, and even global reach, with advertising done on a continuous basis on the Section website, monthly through the new eNewsletter, and through special Facebook and Twitter campaigns custom designed for the business at the Silver and Gold levels of advertising. There is no cost for ad design, and the rates are unbeatable – because our Section supports its businesses as well.

The new scholarship program also allows for two levels of participation – as a Scholarship Partner or Contributor. Companies who support education in the welding trades can join with the Philadelphia Section on either level, and receive advertising and other perks for their support of our students. For details on these great new programs please email marineetemme@gmail.com.

Times change, and if you don’t keep current you fall behind. That’s not the course Board Members of Section 001 wanted to take for the years ahead. In fall of 2012, the Board committed to take a new approach to fully engage its current members, and attract as many new members as possible. Since that time the Section has established regular and satellite Section Nights at locations all around the four-state region, and developed a host of new programs and ways to do business that are attracting a lot of interest and attention! With the Section’s new virtual campaign, we reach an audience that extends far beyond our local area and into 19 other countries around the world. Through the use of email blasts, new meeting reminder postcards, contests and giveaways, student nights, and the first-ever Section Scholarship Program, membership has been on a steady rise even prior to the upcoming campaign slated for 2014. Lots of good things ahead are planned, including development of new student chapters.

When the effort began in 2012, AWS Philadelphia was ranked 9th in the country. As a result of the efforts to make this one of the most vibrant and current Sections in the country, membership increased and the Section moved up 3 spots to 6th place. The goal for 2014 is to secure the #4 spot, as the fourth largest section in the country. Stay tuned for our upcoming membership campaign!
Like us on Facebook and Twitter, and you might just get more than the latest news, job postings, and great videos! In October, the Philadelphia Section joined in supporting Breast Cancer Awareness month by giving away a prize package on Facebook that included an AWS pink ballcap, water bottle, and an assortment of pink BCA items donated by the Philadelphia VA Regional Medical Center.

Our lovely winner was Ms. Quetsy Flakiis Pacheco of Philadelphia. A recent graduate, Quetsy fell in love with welding in school and plans to make it her career. According to Quetsy, “I studied welding in high school for 3 years… I really liked it and put all my effort into the class.” Quetsy says she is good at both GMAW and SMAW, but her favorite? She loves and is best at TIG. She’s been looking for the perfect job or apprenticeship with a company in the Philadelphia area she can call ‘home’ for many years to come. We wish her all the best in her future welding career, and congratulate her on her win!

If you’re not already a fan on our Facebook page, look us up and give our page a ‘Like”. There will be another contest coming soon — just in time for the Christmas holiday season. So besides keeping up to date on all the Section happenings, who knows? You just might be our next winner! (Search us on Facebook under American Welding Society Philadelphia Section)

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You may also see more photos from Fabtech and our Section’s other activities on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/AmericanWeldingSocietyPhiladelphiaSection?ref=hl

Don’t forget to ‘Like’ our page while you’re there!