Earlier this year we asked you, our readers, to give us the opportunity to celebrate the best and brightest up-and-comers in Canada’s metalworking industry. While we couldn’t include every entry we received, we chose 20 individuals that we felt represented the varied skills required to make the metalworking industry in Canada not only survive but thrive in a market that continues to challenge the best around the world. This includes researchers, welders, marketing experts, financial professionals, fabricators, machinists, salespeople and educators. All of them do what they can to encourage participation in the trades, and do what they can to educate their customers and peers. All of them have a love for this industry that can’t help but express itself every time they speak.

Sharing their stories with you, our readers, is only the first step for MP&P. We will be sharing this issue of MP&P with as many other journalists and thought leaders as we possibly can, and sincerely hope you will do the same. Whenever anyone suggests that manufacturing isn’t an integral part of the fabric of our country, these leaders of today and tomorrow are proof positive that nothing could be further from the truth.

Congratulations to all of the individuals we honour here. Thanks for demonstrating to others the vibrancy of this industry. And a heartfelt thanks to our title sponsor, Sandvik Coromant, and program sponsors Mazak, SME and Mitutoyo for making this possible.
A word from our title sponsor, Sandvik Coromant

On behalf of Sandvik Coromant, I congratulate the twenty winners of Metalworking Production & Purchasing magazine’s inaugural “Top 20 under 40” program. We are proud to sponsor this recognition program, which honors talented young individuals making significant and unique contributions to the manufacturing industry.

Manufacturing has evolved into a high-tech, futuristic industry demanding higher levels of education, knowledge and skill. We must encourage the next generation of workers to choose a career in manufacturing if our industry is to continue to evolve. This is one reason Sandvik Coromant is proud to be a partner with schools and associations that offer manufacturing education, job training and apprenticeship programs.

The bright young talents recognized by the “Top 20 under 40” program are great examples of the type of leadership and vision we need to drive the manufacturing industry forward to a strong, sustainable future. Each of them possesses a strong work ethic, great initiative, skill and a real passion for working in manufacturing. I am truly inspired by these individuals and the contributions they are making.

We also thank the companies who nominated these individuals. Companies that can attract, recognize and develop young talent will continue to thrive in the ever-changing and challenging landscape of our industry. Through their openness to new ideas and methods, they will ensure our industry continues along a path of innovation and groundbreaking new technology.

To the recipients of the ‘Top 20 Under 40’ award, congratulations once again. We look forward to seeing more great things from each of you in the future.

Ross Carpino
General Manager, Sandvik Coromant Canada

Courtney Chard
Steamfitter and Pipeline Welder, Adelt Mechanical
Georgetown, Ontario

Courtney Chard grew up in the shadow of the welding industry, with her dad Art running a Caledon, Ont., welding shop. It wasn’t a plan of hers to follow in his footsteps.

Now in her thirties, the Georgetown resident has achieved distinction in her trade, but with her dad also a former pipeline welder, it was also a natural progression.

She is now a Red Seal qualified journeyman steamfitter and welder, level one inspector and pipeline welder in the industry, working for Adelt Mechanical.

Chard has been able to endure the challenges of this male-dominated field, and has worked on oil and gas pipelines all over Ontario. When she’s not on a pipeline project, she works in industrial welding, turning her talents to steam and gas pipelines running into buildings and factories.

Welding pipelines sees her joining pipelines ranging from 12 to 42 inches in diameter, all welded together by arc-welding as the welder welds the outside join and an automatic welder welds the inside seam. In the trade since 2003, she worked her first pipeline in 2006, in Stittsville.

The love of her trade has led Chard to lend support to welders coming up. She teaches night courses in TIG welding through the trades college at United Association Local 46 in Toronto (a union for plumbers, steamfitters and welders).

Beyond her success in her chosen trade, Chard has also become a vocal supporter of women in welding. Through Skills Canada, she attends many schools and events to discuss her work with like-minded girls, “I try to get everyone interested in the trade,” says Chard. “Often, it’s not that girls aren’t interested in pursuing a trade. Often they just aren’t made aware of the opportunities. I want them to see that they can have a career in welding, and at the same time they can have a family and babies.”

Chard gave birth to a girl a short six months ago. Her pregnancy ended up also being part of her support of other women in the trades. She has been involved in a study through the University of Alberta called WHAT-ME (Women’s Health in Apprenticeship Trades - Metalworkers and Electricians) - a study of the possible effects of working in metalworking and electrical trades on the health of women. It is being carried out by researchers at the University of Alberta in collaboration with provincial apprenticeship agencies across Canada, including the Canadian Welding Bureau (CWB).

“I was obviously very careful during my pregnancy to wear my respirator while welding, and taking every necessary precaution - if you are welding certain materials like galvanized metal or chrome, you always take the necessary precautions,” says Chard. “The only thing the study has found in me was a high level of manganese, which you find in welding flux. Now that I have been on maternity leave for about half a year, the study is doing follow-up tests to see if that has remained in my system. This is just another example of how I want to give other women a helping hand. No study has been done like this before, so it is impossible to know for sure what the risks are. I was very concerned.”

Chard fully intends to return to Adelt after her maternity leave. “There is only a short window during which you can become a mom,” says Chard. “I can weld for the rest of my life. And I feel confident that I will always have work to do.”

Stuart Guest
PhD Candidate, Canadian Centre for Welding & Joining
Edmonton, Alberta

Stuart Guest joined the Canadian Centre for Welding and Joining under Dr. Patricio Mendez as a Master’s student in 2010. His Master’s project has since evolved into a PhD
focusing on using hot-wire assist technology to deposit Ni-WC wear resistant overlays for oil sands and mining operations as a lower cost alternative to the welding processes currently used.

“This approach has never been used for putting on wear-resistant coatings for oilsands equipment,” says Guest. “It is a completely different process from what people are used to, so most people aren’t familiar with it, and of course when something’s not familiar people shy away from it.”

The value of Guest’s research, and the possible opportunities it will create, has garnered him praise and a number of speaking engagements. Stuart has also received the AWS Leadership Symposium Award and is twice the recipient of the CWA Welding Engineering Scholarship.

The technique does have its challenges. The hot-wire process is typically used with solid wires whereas Guest is using very specialized tubular wires. The tubular hardfacing wires used have only recently been developed, and are expensive - made up of a pure nickel sheath wrapped around tungsten carbide particles. The nickel is pricey, and the tungsten carbides are like “a sugar cube in hot coffee,” says Guest, which makes welding challenging. The expensive tungsten carbides dissolve very fast in the hot weld pool, requiring the weld pool or “coffee” to freeze very fast. The hot-wire process can deliver the required freezing rates for a high quality product.

“One of the main things is that it has to be somewhat mechanized,” he explains. “So it doesn’t require robotics, but it can be on a mechanical movement system.”

The hot-wire process is popular in Japan for welding pressure vessels and automotive parts, says Guest. You can travel fast and get ultra-high-quality welds with a high deposition rate. Hot-wire is also successful at applying corrosion protective overlays. Current industry standard processes in Canada utilize PTA or laser processes with powders instead of hardfacing wires. Both industry standard processes have capital costs that can exceed $500,000.

“The process I am working on will cost less than $100,000. The capital costs and the operating costs are lower, so it really would allow small and medium-sized companies to start producing these high value-added overlays without the capital costs of a laser or PTA.”

Guest is currently working on the mathematical models to predict the optimal welding parameters for the process. “It should be a relatively turnkey process once I finish calibrating my model,” he explains.

He hopes to continue his work promoting this welding process so that more companies will want to use the method and more welding equipment suppliers will produce the necessary technology to make that possible.

Congratulations to the ‘Top 20 Under 40’ honorees

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Congratulations to this year’s winners, and best wishes for a bright and successful future!
On January 4, 1999, at the age of 21, Peter Rivers started working at MicroMetric. It was immediately obvious that he was a young man who was focused on what he wanted to do in the future and that he had the work ethic needed to make those plans succeed. After working with the company for a year, MicroMetric enrolled Peter in a day release program with Durham College as an apprentice Tool & Die Maker. Over the years in school he would always work later during the weekdays and on Saturdays, when overtime was available. As time progressed and his hours were completed, he was able to write his exam and passed first time out. As technology changed and the company purchased its first CNC machine, Peter was first in line to take night courses to learn how to run these machines efficiently.

Always looking to the future, Peter approached the owners with the question of what their succession plans were. As company partner Rob Cattle says, “With me being the oldest partner, it was nice to know that there was someone interested in not only becoming even more involved in the company, but at some future day, would take control. I have seen it happen too often in this trade, where owners hold on to their companies to the very last moment and sometimes are left with no alternative but to auction off the machines and close the company down.”

MicroMetric feels that it is very important to having “new blood” into the company, for it is vital to the company’s growth. “A young 35 year old has a different mindset than a 55 year old, and this initiative is imperative for companies to succeed in the future,” says Cattle. With this in mind, Peter purchased a minority share in MicroMetric.

Scott Wilson is enthusiastic about training up young talent in the Nexus shop. “We don’t lose many guys, our turnover is extremely low. We have been very effective with the apprenticeship program. One of my biggest things is that I will hire someone with a good work ethic and who is smart because those are the things you can’t train. I can train the skills.”

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Nexus had started their business focused on the manufacture of artificial lift systems in the gas industry, but calls started coming in from other companies asking if they could manufacture these BOP and coil tubing products.

“We made a first prototype that was very well received by industry, and the business really snowballed quickly from there,” says Wilson. Wilson and the team are now expanding their business interests with a new facility in Houston, Texas. That facility will serve as a sales and service hub for its customers in the area.

Asked what has been at the heart of Nexus’ success, Wilson believes it’s been their commitment to service, and embracing new technologies such as multi-tasking machines to help drive quicker delivery of products.

“These machines have been really valuable,” he says. “When we first started up, I was always concerned about the cost-benefit of multi-task machines, but they have proven their worth. You don’t have parts moving around the floor half done. Scheduling is so much easier.”

Wilson works hard to simplify everything on the shop floor as much as possible.

“We have probably 5,000 different products we make,” he explains. “A lot of them are very similar but have different bore sizes so our cache of programs is quite substantial. You really want to keep your tooling relatively varied, in that it can do various different jobs, so your guys aren’t always tearing down a full turret full of tools to put in for another job. That’s something we’ve looked at. And of course with milling, your fixturing is very important. We are always looking at that!”

Jamie McMillan
Journeyman Ironworker, Hamilton Local 736
Hamilton, Ontario

Jamie McMillan has been a journeyman ironworker for 10 years, and has fought all the stereotypes that come with being a woman in what has been a male-dominated trade – the idea that a woman won’t be able to carry her weight on a job site, particularly.

“When I walk into the shacks, I always say, ‘please don’t treat me like a girl, treat me like an ironworker,’” McMillan says. McMillan more than proves herself on the job, and she is doing what she can to reach out to other women to let them know that the trades are a worthwhile and rewarding career path.

She herself didn’t know anything about the trades until late in her 20s.

“I am a small town Northern girl,” says the Timmins native. “I had no education, or knowledge that apprenticeships like this even existed. I worked as a bartender, a server, housekeeper and as a healthcare professional, but nothing felt fulfilling.”

But when she moved to Hamilton in 2002, McMillan heard about the city’s famed ironworkers, saw an opportunity and signed up. She hasn’t looked back since.

McMillan now advocates on behalf of women in the trades, and founded an online initiative called Journeyman to do so. The site - journeymaninc.ca is designed to mentor and motivate young women in the skilled trades.

“In January 2013, I joined forces with the Canadian Building Trades Unions, taking this initiative to promote careers for women in the skilled trades further,” McMillan says. “We are on a mission to raise awareness for women to consider a career in the skilled trades and showcase them in a positive light. We also want to support and encourage women who are currently working in the trades. We plan to promote careers in the trades through various events including trade shows, career fairs, mentorship dinners and local events nation wide.

“History proves that women can have a successful career in construction,” she continues. “During WWII they worked in factories building tanks, ships, and weapons. Today, conditions should give women the opportunity to work in these fields again if they choose to.

“We’re not trying to sugar coat it,” McMillan insists. “You get bumps and bruises. It’s dirty a lot

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Scott Wilson
Machine Shop Manager,
Nexus Engineering & Machine
Red Deer, Alberta

Scott Wilson is one of the three founders of Nexus Engineering & Machine, which opened in January 2007. The trio started with two CNC machines run by the three of them. They now run nine CNC machines, including two multi-axis machines and one that has a 12-station robot loader on it. The company has grown to include 45 employees. Wilson has 20 people in the machine shop and runs two shifts.

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of time and it’s not a girlie job, it’s very physically demanding,” she explains. “But there are so many opportunities. And we’d like to educate the young men that women can do this, and have done this, so they don’t grow up with the attitude that we can’t.

“It’s definitely not for everyone. But I love physical labour that keeps you strong. I wish I’d known about it right out of high school.”

Craig Pelletier
Marketing Manager, ALCO Inc. Energy Industries
 Edmonton, Alberta
Craig has been with ALCO for two years now in the manufacturing and recertification of rigging equipment and handling tools at the company’s head machine shop, ALCO Machine Works. Over these years Craig has shown a continuous commitment to meeting the goals of the organization while employing his talents in the exceptional execution of his job.

Pelletier was the kind of employee everyone at ALCO hoped to get when they developed a new department (Marketing). Not only is he professional but he works very well with his co-workers and through his example encourages them to be motivated in the company’s primary objectives. He has not only shown his ability to work under difficult, high-pressure situations but to attain exceptional results while doing so. Two years ago the ALCO group of companies looked to develop a Marketing Manager that would encompass its five Edmonton and one Red Deer locations. The result was the hiring of Pelletier due to his university education in General Management/Economics from the University of Lethbridge and his previous employment in industrial hospitality. Positive results were apparent instantly as he sacrificed his personal time and single-handedly developed a main showcase exhibit in the 2012 Global Petroleum Show – GPS2012. The showcased corporate unity at GPS only assisted in his vision of representing the company’s divisions on a unified level - ultimately changing the corporate ideology, toward establishing his corporate goals on upselling through cross division marketing and corporate unity.

Recently, Pelletier has been looking at innovative ways to make the customer purchasing process more efficient and effective. This has led him toward an online marketing campaign through website re-development and introducing a customer interface for ALCO’s corporate website. His vision in this campaign is to assist consumers with the information flow of product specifications, current stock counts, company contact info, order processing and quality assurance needs - ultimately making the consumers experience more gratifying.

SME is proud to host and congratulate the nominees and winners of the TOP 20 UNDER 40 at CMTS 2013.

For more information, visit cmts.ca

CONGRATULATIONS!
TO ALL TOP 20 UNDER 40 NOMINEES AND Awardees

Congratulations to all competitors in MPP’s inaugural TOP 20 UNDER 40 contest for your outstanding leadership and dedication. Mitutoyo Canada is a proud sponsor of this important recognition program and we wish you all a bright future with continued success!
Steve has assumed ownership in Bartel, and fills a role involving leadership, management, design and engineering. He graduated from University of Windsor with a mechanical engineering degree. During his short tenure at Bartel, he has assumed the role of “leader” for the various projects undertaken. Being the “boss’s son” has required him to earn his stripes with the team by building relationships and gaining respect. He leads all design review meetings with clients, and has earned respect with them as well. He is able to keep meetings focused and on track. In the area of design, Steve has taken the company to new levels of complexity and capacity. Due to his thrust, products produced by Bartel involve the latest CAD design, CNC manufacturing, and comprehensive supporting documentation. In the area of design, Steve brings valuable “out-of-the-box” ideas, but is not satisfied till appropriate testing is done to support the viability of the concept. He also pushes the company to use its CNC capacity to produce a higher-end product. A few of the products can be seen at bartelmachine.com. Steve has a young family, which fills much of his “home” time. The remainder is spent biking and running, including participation in triathlons.

Nelson Martins
President, Dipaolo Machine Tools
Mississauga, Ontario

Nelson Martins, while running Dipaolo, has grown the machine tool rebuilding company from a 10-man operation to over 50 people. He has built a brand with his team at Dipaolo that is known around the world. The customer list he has built is very impressive, to say the least, and lists some of the largest corporations in North America. He is aggressive and still rolls up his sleeves and gets out in the field everyday. According to the colleagues who nominated him, the success Dipaolo is experiencing stems from the fact that Martins realises that the world is a market and doesn’t function in distinct regions anymore, the way it used to and the way some still perceive it.

Steve Bartel
Co-Owner, Bartel Machine Tools
Leamington, ON

Tim (l) and Mike Rogers are not just excellent machinists, they are also both dedicated entrepreneurs. The two started up their own custom fabrication shop, TMR Customs, specializing in off-road accessories, while still working at another job shop. When both were laid off in 2008, it seemed only right that their hobby should become their full-time business. Since then, the two have grown their business by catering to the die-hard, DIY off-road enthusiasts - people who eat, breathe and sleep motor sports. About 70% of their business comes from customers in the U.S., but their parts ship as far as Sweden and Australia. The pair have built up a strong web presence over the years, and have become a go-to website for these parts. This market has proven to be lucrative for them. Last year, they hired their first employee in the shop, and just a month ago added a welder to their team to meet increased demands. Soon, they will be adding a mechanical engineer to the team, as well as a new CNC machine. Both moves will also likely see them expand their current facility. Watch for more from these two in the near future.

Tim and Mike Rogers
Co-owners, TMR Customs
Aurora, Ontario

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Mani and Junior Sehmbi
Millomat Stampings / Accuburners Corp.
Mississauga, Ontario

The Sehmbi brothers, Junior (l) and Mani (r), have carried the challenging task of building on the success of their father’s business, which was first launched in 1985. In 2004, due to their father Sam’s ill health, Mani left school to help run the business. Within four years, through several moves, the company had moved from a rented 2,200 square foot facility to a 30,000 square foot facility that the company owns. Despite many growing pains over the years, the company currently has 55 employees.

Mani’s brother, Junior, took charge of the company’s newest acquisition earlier this year, a CO2 laser, and within days of it being installed, he was pumping out parts. The laser system is a crucial part of the company’s business now, and the brothers have made it work to their advan-tage. They are excellent promoters of their own capabilities, energetic and driven. They use all of the social networking tools available to them to drive interest in what they are doing as well – valuable tools when they are promoting new investments on their shop floor. Mani says they will soon be ready to invest in a second laser for the shop floor. Both are still in their 20s and just beginning to make a significant mark in the industry. Expect more in the future!

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DJ Paulson
Co-owner, Straightline Precision
Victoria, B.C.

Straightline Precision is an advanced CNC man-facturing shop with a strong focus on aerospace and defence clientele. Brothers and co-owners DJ and Dennis Paulson found themselves a lucrative niche in making their own branded aftermarket mountain bike products, under the name Straitline Components. They create designs and sophisticated automated, lights out machining processes that have allowed them to boost production without having to hire many machinists. Only a year ago they had an eight-person team, but only three of them ever saw the shop floor. DJ and Dennis managed this through automated machining, but also invest-ments in 5-axis machine tools that can complete jobs in one set-up. Their most recent investment, a 5-axis machining center, was delivered earlier this year to facilitate the manufacture of com-plex, tight tolerance aerospace parts. To back up their processes they installed a new CMM in a temperature controlled QA lab.

The brothers together have created a busi-ness that works on the strength of their fore-sight and planning as much as the tools of the trade. Between their design and machining know-how, and their marketing expertise, they’ve become a worldwide success story that shows no sign of slowing down growth.

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Joe Poulin
Canadian Sales Manager, Hurco North America
Oshawa, Ontario

Joe Poulin graduated as a machining technician (Machinist) at the age of 18. After graduating, he made the decision to leave his home in Quebec and move to Ontario, where he worked as a machinist in various shops, performing cylindrical grinding,
At 24, he accepted a position as an automotive program (project) manager in a stamping die shop. He was there until he joined Hurco in 2006, where he took part in helping the company establish roots in Canada.

Poulin continues to learn on the job. He received his CMTSE certification in 2010. Perhaps more importantly, he has a passion for manufacturing education and showing others that work as a machinist is exciting and rewarding. He is currently working on a video project to effectively portray machining as exciting, creative and rewarding. Poulin is making this effort on his own, in his spare time, because he believes so strongly in what manufacturing and technology careers can provide to young people.

**Nathan Neels**  
**Shop Manager, Harmonic Machine Inc.**

Chilliwack, BC  
At the age of 29, Nathan Neels has grown up in the family business at Harmonic Machine. The company started almost by accident. Neels’ father brought a couple of manual machines home when Nathan was a teenager so that he and his siblings could learn a little about the trade. “When someone asked my father if he could make something for them, he thought, sure,” Neels recalls.

Neels has taken over management of the shop floor and has helped grow the business from a 3,500 square foot facility, to a new 10,500 square foot facility that Harmonic has just occupied. The shop has just bought two new machines, which will put them at 11 CNC machines in all.

Neels is constantly working at upgrading his management skills to help the Harmonic Machine team, which includes his father, brother, sister and a tight team of machinists. “I read a lot of books on leadership and management, as well as attending seminars on business management and communication, really trying to take personal development seriously,” he explains. “Hopefully, I improve myself and the business as well.”

Harmonic has added five axis technology to the shop floor, as well as fixturing set-ups to speed up processing of other parts. “We have also invested in a quicker 30-taper drill tap machining center that really boosted productivity on some other work,” Neels explains.

Harmonic relatively recently completed its controlled goods application, so it is machining some military projects. “That was a huge investment of time getting that figured out,” Neels recalls. “We have also really developed our quality processes and are working towards our ISO 9001 right now, getting accredited.” Neels considers it a key role of his to facilitate the success of these efforts, although he insists that it is all a team effort.

Harmonic now has 13 people on the shop floor. “We tend to get young people at 17 or 18, give them their apprenticeships and then they work for us for a long time,” says Neels. “It really seems to be working for us. Right now we only have one shift going, so adding machines helps our productivity, but adding another shift is another goal for us.”

**Jessica Abrahamse**  
**VP of Sales, Surface Heat Treat and Coatings**  
Stoney Creek, Ontario

Jessica Abrahamse has been with Surface Heat Treat and Coatings for seven years and consistently searches out new ways for the company to compete in the global market. She takes initiative when it comes to searching out new customers, improves relationships with existing clients and consistently attends conventions to build connections within the industry. On her own volition she has signed up for a course in metallurgy in order to gain even more technical knowledge. In short, she has served as an excellent employee, at the same time being one of the few women working in the heat treating industry.
Elliot Biro
Manager of Technical Services, ArcelorMittal Dofasco
Hamilton, Ontario

Elliot Biro has worked at ArcelorMittal Dofasco for the past 11 years in the company's research department. He came to the job soon after graduating in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Waterloo, where he had taken the welding specialization.

Until recently, Biro had served as a welding engineer for the company. In that role, he supported all the on-site welding efforts, as well as supporting clients when they needed assistance with application challenges.

“We also ran a research program that looked at what questions we believed our customers were going to have about our new steels,” says Biro. “We wanted to anticipate potential questions, and ensure that any research we did in-house or with universities would address those questions.”

Today, Biro manages the mechanical testing and metallurgy labs in the Hamilton research department—overseeing the research aspect of mechanical testing and metallurgy. “This covers a lot of areas—investigating steel defects discovered in both the manufacturing stage or by our customers, as well as new development,” says Biro. He handles issues as varied as measuring mechanical properties of steels at low temperatures, to the effects of paint or stain thicknesses on the material.

Biro’s group of 12 examine both the scientific and practical nature of the steels being produced at ArcelorMittal Dofasco. “The engineers and project leaders in our department determine how we are going to choose the chemistry that matches our processes so we get the correct partitioning, segregation and cooling rates in the steel,” he explains.

“Beyond the chemistry, they look at the practical issue of how to get a new type of steel through a process that really wasn’t designed for its properties. They look at how to improve the process to make this metal function properly. My group then measures the microstructure and mechanical properties of the final and in-process product, to show whether the engineers succeeded in their efforts.”

But Biro doesn’t just work in-house getting the company's steel right, he also does a lot of outreach to make sure clients understand how to work these new grades.

“Client education is very important,” says Biro. “We may sell our product directly to OEMs, but much of the material is being formed and welded in mom and pop shops that don’t have research or training facilities. So when I meet them at an event and explain how this steel might react differently to their processes than others they may be used to, they understand they can contact me directly with questions. The name of the game is keeping the steel moving through the system so that we can make effective, safe products.”

Remi Groulx
Co-Owner, Groulx Machining
Astorville, Ontario

Remi Groulx Jr. is a great example of a rural community success story. He grew up in the North Bay area and is now employed as a shop foreman/programmer at Lofthouse Brass in Burk's Falls, Ontario. At the same time, he serves as co-owner of Groulx Machining in Astorville with his father and brother. Groulx Machining runs three CNC machines and a couple of other manual machines.

Remi has experience in programming and operating mill/turn lathes up to 12 axes, 5-axis twin pallet machining centers, and all the typical mills and lathes.

Groulx has been part of the industry since the age of 14, when he worked in his father’s job shop. “A journeyman machinist himself, he taught me lots of the basic tips and tricks of the trade while working on manual mills and lathes,” Groulx explains.

Groulx has a passion for learning. After he had been at Lofthouse for five years, he asked to be switched from the CNC section of the business so that he could work in the tool and die shop and learn that part of the business. He spent the next five years building molds and trim dies and making custom tooling. “It was a great experience and an asset to my future,” he says.

At Groulx Machining, Remi’s own kids can often be seen hanging out with their dad after hours, learning about the environment he has made his own. As the colleague who nominated him put it, he serves as a great example to them.

Nicholas Solcz and Jason Brown
Valiant Machine & Tool Earn While You Learn Program
Windsor, Ontario

Valiant Machine & Tool has been actively working at training up new metalworking talent over the past few years with their Earn While You Learn (EWYL) program. Two graduates of that program, Jason Brown and Nicholas Solcz, have not only gained valuable insights in the program, but they are giving back by continuing to work in the program.

Jason Brown is a 27-year-old machinist. He entered the EWYL program after having spent five years in the motorcycle repair trade. He started in the EWYL’s welding program but became fascinated in machining. Brown has been in the industry for 3.5 years now, and has become a lathe specialist. He is now running a CNC lathe at Valiant, as well as serving as an assistant in the EWYL program.

“I have always had a good understanding of how things work and even at a young age loved to design and build things,” says Brown. No doubt this fascination will serve him well as he builds his career at Valiant.

Nicholas Solcz has been training in the machine trade since August of last year, and feels that he has found his true career.

“Before embarking in this trade, I had been a recognized chef in Windsor, Toronto & Halifax. Through this life experience I have learned how a hard work ethic can truly pay off and I have been able to apply this knowledge to my new trade,” he says.

Nicholas’ grandfather, Michael G. Solcz, is the founder of Valiant Machine and Tool and under his and his father’s guidance, he has been surrounded by the industry since a young age.

“I plan on mastering the lathes, mills and other machines and one day hope to follow in my father’s footsteps and be directly involved with my family’s company,” he says. “I greatly appreciate the perfection and creativity it takes to be a great machinist and these are qualities I've always driven myself with. I enjoy doing my best at helping my co-workers, working fast and efficiently and contributing to a positive work environment. I believe in working towards the goal of keeping our beloved trades alive and making sure we maintain our value in the future. I am excited to do whatever I can to help make this goal a reality.”

While Solcz has finished the initial EWYL program, he is staying on to help train others, and develop more detailed knowledge of all of the equipment in the shop.