

## Impromptu team creates welding solution for paralysed student

When Colin Fennery, a quadriplegic, arrived on the first day of Adam Medrek's Weld-A-Saurus Continuing Education course, Medrek thought "this is going to be interesting."

Fennery had limited movement in his arms and Medrek said the search was immediately on to find a way for the student to do the welding required to complete the project.

Ken Furdel and Ed Mooney from Manufacturing and Automation's Maintenance Team and Jim Keterer from Energy and two Electrical Engineering Technology students, Kevin Hardy and Derrick Mack, quickly began creating and testing systems to see what would work.

"He (Keterer) was involved in bringing his students together and coming up with an electric device where the student could actually initiate the welding sequence," said Medrek. "People jumped up to help. It was an amazing thing to see. Everybody had an idea. It was a very good cooperative spirit throughout the entire process."

Eventually the team came up with a device that would convert air pressure to an electric impulse to start the weld.

Fennery would suck on a tube to initiate the arc and then suck again to stop the arc.

"The manipulation and the actual welds were done by him," Medrek said, noting that his friends had to help with some other aspects of the process, such as picking up the pieces of the project. "He had different people helping



*SAIT Continuing Education student Colin Fennery with his completed Weld-A-Saurus.*

**Photo by Adam Medrek**

"He was overjoyed," Medrek said. "There was a challenge set in front of him and he came up with an awesome project. I wouldn't be a bit surprised to see him come back and do



in each class. Sometimes it was his buddy and another." sometimes it was his girlfriend."

Fennery had some prior welding experience, and with the help of his friends and the innovative work of the instructors and staff he was able to once again make a weld.

***By Russ Peters***