

March 2014



Sign
Language

"The members of the Maryland Sign Association are dedicated to promoting professionalism, ethics, safety and education in the sign industry."

WHAT'S INSIDE

MSA General Meeting	Cover
President's Message	2
MSA Elections of the Board of Directors	3
Something to Consider	
URGENT— News regarding Senate Bill 877	4,5,6 &7
Membership News & Application	8
Officers and Board of Directors Calling all Members	9
Scholarship MSA Contact Information	10



MSA Spring General Meeting April 17, 2014

National Electronics Museum
1745 W. Nursery Road
Linthicum, MD 21090

410-765-0230

WWW.NATIONALELECTRONICSMUSEUM.ORG

(Dinner will be served in the Pioneer Hall)

(NEW PRICING)

\$35 Per Person (members)

\$50 Per Person (non members)

RSVP by Thursday, April 10, 2014

Sheryll.Strube@gmail.com

Or call 301-662-5760

(reservations made will be expected to be paid)

President's Message

I'm writing this on St. Patrick's Day and looking out my window at five inches of fresh snow on the ground. Has this been a winter or what? Looks like our former president Phil Hottinger left town at just the right time. However, I'll still take our "Bay Area" over his new one anytime. But I'm still optimistic that Spring will arrive soon. Traditionally this is a time for a surge in business, with both new and old customers. Let's get ready by staying up to date with all of the new technologies, sign codes (ugh!) and rules and regulations (ugh! again). Stay competitive and take advantage of the services and information your local and national sign associations offer (MSA, USSC and ISA), The Maryland Sign Association meetings, in particular, offer excellent opportunities to network with suppliers, service providers and area sign companies, both large and small.

Our next general meeting will be on April 17 at the National Electronics Museum in Linthicum. Plan to spend some time browsing their amazing displays and exhibits. We will be holding our biannual elections and we also will be inducting our newest Life Member. Please go to our website for the slate of nominations. Remember that this is your association and it is dependent on your participation and input.

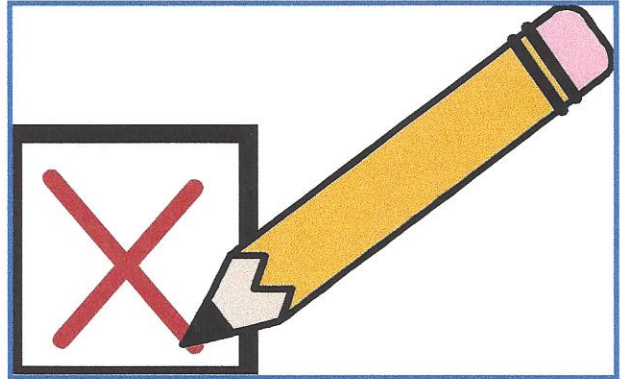
In addition, to our Association election, this is also a Maryland state election year. Remember that as business owners not all candidates have your best interests at heart. So study them and vote accordingly.

Looking forward to seeing you April 17.

Larry Strube
Acting President

Coming in April:

Elections for Board of Directors for the Maryland Sign Association.



Nominees must be willing to attend monthly board meetings and any functions held by MSA. If interested please send your nomination to any of the current board member or sheryll.strube@gmail.com

"Something to Consider"

ACA a/k/a Obamacare:

I know there are a lot of frustrations with the Website to enroll in the ACA. Unfortunately, many had their health policies cancel, because they didn't conform to the ACA rules. The site has not improved and is still crashing. Some have had success in enrolling, but for anyone who still needs to enroll, I will be glad to assist you. As you may know, the deadline for enrollment is March 31st. To avoid a tax penalty.

Mary Fineagan
Fineagan Insurance Agency



**A man stopped
his car opposite
a hotel and
immediately
knew that he
was bankrupt.
HOW?**

(answer on page 7)

URGENT

If passed this legislation could affect your company. Please read this letter from the MELG regarding the Senate Bill 877. A copy of this bill will be attached to the email containing this newsletter.

Maryland Electrical Legislative Group (MELG)

February 11, 2014

Senator Katherine A. Klausmeier
James Senate Office Building, Room 103
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Senate Bill 877

To The Honorable Senator Klausmeier and Members of the Maryland State Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee:

We want to thank you for your hard work, also the work of the Task Force and your staff in presenting Senate Bill 877.

Our group applauds the idea of establishing a uniform Electrical Code to be used state-wide.

We also like the idea of rearranging the membership of the State Board to have a person familiar with electrical codes and enforcement background (an electrical inspector) to become a member.

Also for the past 5 years, our group has pushed to institute a state-wide journeyman's license (to help professionalize the trade) and we think it would be a good idea to also license apprentices on a state-wide basis as well at reasonable cost to all persons involved.

The effort to have specific and unified continuing education requirements for both Masters and Journeymen is certainly supported.

We support new Section 6-606 that will require Master electricians to display their state license number conspicuously in their principle place of business and on vehicles used at the job site.

HOWEVER, we ask that you please withdraw this legislation since the Bill was filed late in this legislation session and early drafts were not available for review by all interested industry members. We know a lot of hard work went into trying to get a consensus of opinion, but the Bill presented is not representative of what has been discussed in the trade for the past 5 years. We feel that many issues must be clarified and resolved and there would be too many amendments to be made, therefore, we will be opposed to the Bill if you will not withdraw it.

We thought that representation on the Task Force would have properly explained most of the points of opposition, but apparently they were not made clear or may not even have been raised as concerns. Please let me outline what we feel are the major issues.

- The concept to phase out Restricted/Limited licenses would put many individuals, firms, or companies out of business at the end of the 5-year period. Ninety-eight percent (98%) of those persons so licensed cannot qualify to become Master electricians (if that's the intent) as they have not worked under the control and supervision of a licensed Master electrician for a period of 7

Continued next page

The Honorable Senator Klausmeier and Members of the Maryland State Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

Re: Senate Bill 877

February 11, 2014

Page 2

years. They will not be able to pass a Master exam, will not qualify by allotted time, and Master electricians who have served their time and educated themselves to all facets of the electrical industry will be vehemently opposed to just issuing them a Master's license in order that they not go out of business.

- Part B of Section 6-501 Reciprocal License that excludes issuing a similar license issued by another local jurisdiction could create chaos as a lot of time and effort went in to developing accredited examinations for these particular classes of license and jurisdictions depend on each other's expertise to extend licensing privileges in order not to hold up major projects (example: low voltage signaling in a large building installed by unlicensed, out-of-state contractors holding up the whole construction process because of lack of permits or license). They may hold a similar license in another subdivision of the State and would need this reciprocity in order to secure permits in that other jurisdiction.
- This new section would do away with reciprocity and could cause a major catastrophe.
- Electrical Administrative Boards have worked hard to design these Restrictive/Limited license classes. It was done to accommodate special categories in the construction process and those particular specialties must be inspected and controlled for public safety. These special classes of licensed individuals are only trained and tested on a particular specialty, such as: signs, elevators, low voltage signaling (telephones, computers, fiber optics, etc.), appliance repairs, heating/air conditioning, etc. and are not qualified, equipped, or trained in the other disciplines of the electrical trade, and most certainly not for the complex work related licensing of a Master electrician of the trade.
- We also know that there would be a problem if local licensing procedures were phased out in the various local jurisdictions. Senate Bill 877 will eliminate local licensing after October 1, 2019. In essence, it eliminates all Local Electrical Licensing Boards. Most local laws and ordinances would have to be changed as now the Local Electrical Administrative Boards have control and enforcement over the electrical work force and can settle violations, interpretations of rules, or complaints from the public in a speedy or reasonable time-frame through hearings in the locality of the violation or complaint. If local jurisdictions would only have a registrant or permit holder to provide electrical services in that jurisdiction, it would only be for that particular permit and not for many different jobs held by different licensees for the same company creating various and sundry complaints, whereas now this can be handled by the local licensing process.
- Without that local administrative authority and if the State Board would take complete control of the licensing process, it would be a disservice to the public because complaints or violations may take months or a couple of years to make it through the State's legal process and can cause John Q. Public to travel long distances, appear at Maryland State Electrical Board hearings, and hire legal representations at great expense.
- Senate Bill 877 would discriminate against a large segment of the industry when trying to grandfather certain people into the new journeyman category. Unless a person is licensed as a journeyman in the 5 mentioned categories of the Bill (Queen Anne's County was never investigated

Continued from previous page

The Honorable Senator Klausmeier and Members of the Maryland State Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

Re: Senate Bill 877

February 11, 2014

Page 3

as to the certification of their present journeyman's license?) and have graduated from an apprentice training program, everyone will be required to take a test. The provisions to allow for 10 years of time for persons presently working in that particular category was not mentioned. Two counties of western Maryland (Allegany and Garrett) do not have electrical boards, but many people in that area are conducting complex electrical installations, as are Caroline and Somerset Counties who have enabling legislation but do not have journeyman licenses, as well as many other counties who do not license journeymen.

- Senate Bill 877 seems to only establish 3 classes of electricians: Masters, Journeymen, and Apprentices. We have discussed at great lengths how to supervise and regulate other electrical workers (Electrical Assistants) as there is a dire need for incidental labor and part-time help in our industry, as found in Section 6-607, Part (2).
- Also, to do away with the 7-years experience as qualifications to take the test for a Master's exam and to require that you must have a journeyman's license before you can take the test does away with the challenge of becoming a Master in the electrical industry by diligent study and hard work. There are some persons who do not have the money themselves or work for a company that will not finance the cost to enroll in an apprenticeship program; there must be some consideration for these people.
- There is also no mention of the definition of an accredited examination and it seems the State Board will be developing their own examination which will do away with the work of the Maryland Uniform Electrical Licensing Examination Committee (MUELEC) organization. The part of this Section to require 2 meetings per year with Local Administrative Boards has been deleted and the form of the new examination will become too open-ended. MUELEC has fought for years not to dumb-down the electrical examination just to achieve higher pass rates. The exam is predicated on education, knowledge, and time in the trade (practical experience) in order to protect the public, not just to pass persons that take the test.
- There was no mention in adopting the State Electrical Code that it should be the latest edition of the National Electrical Code (NEC) published by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). A date also should be mentioned as to its implementation so that it coincides with the State Fire Prevention and the State Fire Marshal's Life Safety Codes.
- Maryland Electrical Legislative Group (MELG) had suggested the qualifications of the electrical inspectors as outlined in Section 6-313, but the Bill should show it as bolded print, as it is a new concept and everyone should be able to review it. We also discussed how to incorporate inspectors who are certified by the State Fire Marshal's office to conduct inspections in areas that do not have authorized jurisdictional inspectors which was not addressed.
- A lot of work went into statistics and fiscal studies to show that the reasonable fees outlined in MELG's proposed bill (for Masters, Journeymen, and Apprentices) would take care of the operating cost (staff and computer updating) and which would establish a guideline for industry support. With open-ended fees, there is concern on the industry's part that funds may be used elsewhere in the

Continued from previous page

The Honorable Senator Klausmeier and Members of the Maryland State Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

Re: Senate Bill 877

February 11, 2014

Page 4

State budget and could become excessive. We need set fees to start and maybe use the 12½% increase when necessary after initial operation.

- In the new Section 6-610 for the penalty of an "Officer", there has been some mention that the penalty could be too severe; a person could face 6 months of imprisonment or up to 2 years. The original intent was to just suspend the license and have a \$1,000.00 fine and it would only be a civil penalty. This has to be discussed.

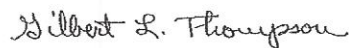
Already many of our associates such as representatives from major county Electrical Administrative Boards (Baltimore, Harford, Montgomery), electrical contractor's associations (Baltimore County, Harford County), and inspectors (IAEI - International Electrical Inspector's Association, MEIA - Maryland Electrical Inspector's Association, ELM - Electric League of Maryland) have already expressed their concerns and opposition. Prior commitments will not allow me to come personally to the hearing on February 20, 2014, but I have written this letter to express our concerns.

Many of these issues had been discussed with Mr. Eric Backes of your staff, but we understand he is no longer there, and until the industry can be properly notified and have a chance to review major changes to their industry, we respectfully ask that you withdraw this legislation at this time.

It is a privilege to have Senators and Delegates work on behalf of their constituents and that are aware that the government should serve the public, and not the public serve the government.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Gilbert L. Thompson
Facilitator, MELG

GLT/pab

Continued from previous page

Membership News:

Welcome to our new member:

Grimco

Michael Song

8260 Patuxent Range Ste E

Jessup, MD 20794

800-542-9941x5705

msong@Grimco.com

Total Members: 48 (this includes Vendors, Companies and Life Members)

Membership Application

Company Name _____

Owner/President/Contact Person _____

Address _____

Phones _____

Fax _____

Email _____

Website _____

Number of Employees _____

Type of Business / Service _____

Membership runs from July 1 to June 30

Sign Companies Yearly Membership Rates: (employees include office personnel)

1-4 employees \$85

5-7 employees \$120

8-10 employees \$150

11 + employees \$200

Suppliers and Distributors Membership Rate: \$200.00

Return your application and check to Association Office.

Officers & Directors

Acting President/Vice President - Larry Strube, Alpha Design Signs, 301-662-3363

Secretary/Treasurer - Mary Fineagan, Fineagan Insurance Agency, 410-879-1753

Wayne Belsinger, Belsinger Signs, 410-837-2700

Paul Gable, Gable Signs & Graphics, 410-255-6400

Tom Kelly, Martin Sign Supply, 410-366-1696

Frank Miles, H & M Signs, 410-789-1640

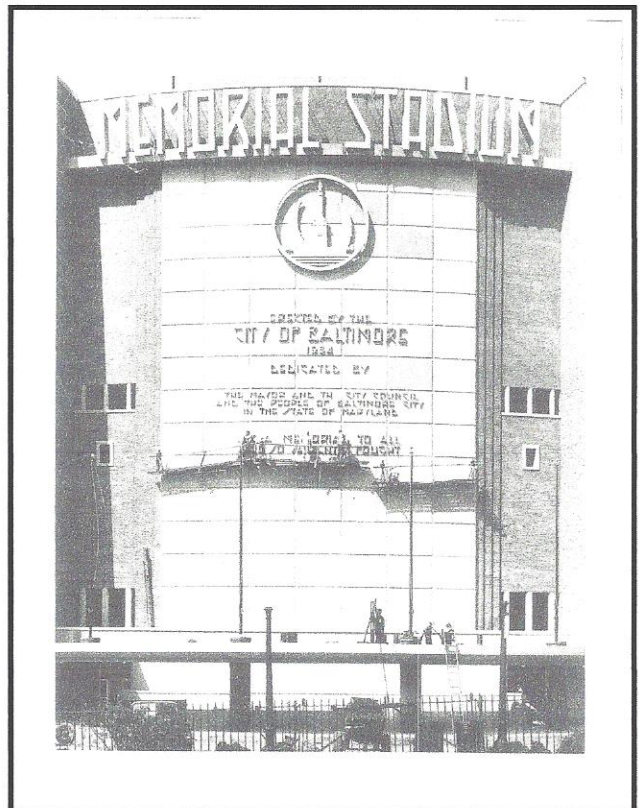
Harry Sommer, Triangle Signs, 410-247-5300

Executive Administrator - Sheryll Strube, 301-662-5760

CALLING ALL MEMBERS:

We are in search of any history of the sign industry and MSA and it's members. If you have any documents, pictures or articles that reflect this history, please send them to us. Larry Strube has agreed to gather any an all information so if you have submissions send them to strube2@comcast.net.

Photo of Memorial Stadium submitted by Wayne Belsinger of Belsinger Signs. This is a photo of our installation crews installing the letters on Memorial Stadium in 1954. At that time Harry Belsinger claimed that it was the largest stainless steel display in the country.



MSA Scholarship

There are funds available for the 2014-15 academic year.

Applications will be available January 2014.
You can request an application from Sheryll Strube.

All applications must be received by the MSA
1813 Meadowgrove Lane
Frederick, MD 21702
by April 30, 2014

ANSWER TO PUZZLE ON PAGE 3: He was playing Monopoly.



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Visit our website at
www.mdsignassn.org

Maryland Sign Association
Certified Sign Contractor
Logo



Download the logo at:
[Http://mdsignassn.org/logo-download-page](http://mdsignassn.org/logo-download-page)