

December 2015



Sign  
Language

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

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# MSA Winter General Meeting January 21, 2016



## NATIONAL ELECTRONICS MUSEUM

P.O. BOX 1693,  
BALTIMORE, MD 21203  
410-765-0230 FAX 410-765-0240  
[www.NATIONALELECTRONICSMUSEUM.ORG](http://www.NATIONALELECTRONICSMUSEUM.ORG)  
[NEMUSEUM.ADM@GMAIL.COM](mailto:NEMUSEUM.ADM@GMAIL.COM)  
LOCATION: 1745 W. NURSERY ROAD,  
LINTHICUM, MD

Museum open at 6 pm to tour. Dinner serving at 7 pm

\$35 Per Person (members)

\$50 Per Person (non members)

**RSVP by Friday, January 15, 2016**

[Sheryll.Strube@gmail.com](mailto:Sheryll.Strube@gmail.com)

Or call 301-662-5760





## The President's Corner

Greetings, MSA Members:

Recently, I have spent a great deal of time contemplating the state of our industry as it relates to the future of our workforce.

Society has shifted and we are more technical. The appeal lies more in careers sitting in front of a computer instead of building something with your hands. Today's mindset is that without a college degree, there is little hope to make a living. As the next generation comes of age in this digital revolution, the interest in learning a trade is waning. I would like to believe that there are qualified and creative candidates out there who see a potential career path in our industry and who will make up the workforce that our busy shops across the state desperately need.

### **We have a perceptions to overcome.**

Let's look at some basic facts. If we, as manufacturers, want to keep our sign shops producing signs and keep our clients happy, we need great people. As the economy gains more sustained footing, sign shops are clamoring for skilled workers. The typical starting hourly rate for skilled workers is generally competitive with entry level college graduate jobs, with plenty of room for growth. When you add benefits to that, you're ahead of many recent college graduates searching for professional jobs in their chosen fields. How many young people know where signs come from or what career paths are available to them through the sign industry? Very few I suspect. I never gave a second thought to where signs came from until I fell into the sign business.

Where innovation and intellectual stimulation are concerned, the sign manufacturing industry is where most of the action is! Sign shops are the proving grounds for creativity and craftsmanship. When sign shops fail to continue innovating with both equipment and staff, they tend to stagnate and eventually fade away. That's the last thing sign owners and executives want. Therefore, career growth and advancement opportunities must be abound for creative, ambitious young people who choose manufacturing as their vocation.

The major problem for most talented sign shops is not getting enough business. It is finding and retaining skilled, reliable and professional craftsmen to solve complex precision fabrication challenges and optimize production efficiency. When we find a conscientious and ambitious employee, we do our best to keep that person on board for the long haul. That means providing benefits, good working conditions, and paying them well within the economic boundaries of our industry.

In terms of career advancement, there is plenty of opportunity for those truly talented individuals who have ambition. Promotion from within makes a lot of sense for us, alas, we cannot teach ambition. An ambitious person with intimate knowledge of internal operations can move more readily into sales, management and hit the ground running. We see this happen all the time and it is rewarding to watch people grow and thrive within your own company.

Continued on Page 3

Our message today should be this. We need to do a better job getting the word out to those who find satisfaction in building something with their hands, designing something from their mind, or installing something that will be in place for many years that a fulfilling career in the sign industry may be their best option.

I would like the Maryland Sign Association to pioneer this effort. While our resources may be limited, there are steps that we can take to present the sign industry to the youth of Maryland and show them a bright future.

Food for thought as we enter the New Year. I hope you all have a healthy and prosperous 2016.



Max Aronow, MSA President  
max@smisigns.com  
www.mdsignassn.org



## **In the sign industry kerning is everything**



**Examples of a couple of don'ts.**



# Calling all Sign Makers

## We Need Your Pictures To Promote The



We're currently seeking pictures  
that you may have  
from the early days of your shop.

Preferrably from the 50's - 70's

Please forward pictures of  
Early Signs, Staff, Trucks  
and a small tidbit

about the picture to:

[andy@graphicillusions.com](mailto:andy@graphicillusions.com)  
or [sheryll.strube@gmail.com](mailto:sheryll.strube@gmail.com)



## Biography – Neil Brami

Neil Brami has served as President of Gelberg Signs since he and his brother purchased the company in 1989. The company has been incorporated in Washington DC since 1941 His role in the company is to oversee the manufacturing of the plant and general business management. He also acts as principal executive for the production, estimating and project management departments.

Prior to purchasing the company from 1984-1989 he was the Top Sales representative for Gelberg signs. His duties involved the management of accounts and attracting new customers to Gelberg Signs.

Mr. Brami received a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of MD in 1985.

A few notable Gelberg Signs DC Contracts: The Nationals Ballpark, DCUSA, St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Benning Road Metro Garage, Childrens Hospital, Conversion of TD Bank locations.

Member of DC Chamber of commerce, Washington Board of Trade, International signs Association, Board member of the Washington DC Economic partnership, and founding member of the Washington Development Industry council.

## Funny Sign Gallery



# Membership News

Members as of 07/01/15	45
New members	5
Non Renewing	(4)
Current membership	46

## New Members

Nippon Carbide Industries, Inc.  
732-670-5298  
William H. Thomas  
Wthomas@nikkalite.com

Gelberg Signs  
202-882-7733  
Neil Brami  
Neil@gelbergsigns.com

## Sunshine

*Update on Vicki Myers.  
She is doing very well and will keep us  
up to date. Prayers and Best Wishes.*

## THREE QUESTIONS - Get to know our members.

This article will appear in future newsletters. We will be asking members to answer these three questions.

### *What got you into the business?*

I started in the sign industry when my girlfriend's father (at the time) thought that I should be doing something other than working at a gas station and restaurant, so he introduced me to Ed Deaton, one of the owners at Century Sign Co. Ed hired me immediately. I worked at Century Sign for three years as an installer and some fabrication. While working part time (while employed at Century Sign Co.) at a local bait store, I met John Gardiner, who worked at Triangle Sign Co. John was able to persuade Jim Bavis (the shop foreman at Triangle) to hire me. After seven years of working at Triangle as an installer, I was offered a management position from Jon Nusbaum, who owned Patrick Signs in Rockville, MD. After giving my departure notice to Triangle, Bob Altshuler offered me a management position to prevent me from leaving Triangle. For the next six years, I was able to work for, with and be mentored by Bob Altshuler and Bob Kaye at Triangle Sign.

After 13-years employed at Triangle Sign, I decided to team up with Keith Hohlbein, a long time friend, to create H & M Signs in March of 1995.

### *What is the biggest challenge you face?*

Our biggest challenges are keeping in compliance with the everyday changes of rules and regulations pertaining to: Trucks (D.O.T.), Cranes, O.S.H.A., Electrical and sign codes in all of Maryland, Delaware, Southern PA and Northern VA. I think that this is where The Maryland Sign Association plays an important role in trying to keep all of us up to date to the best of their knowledge.

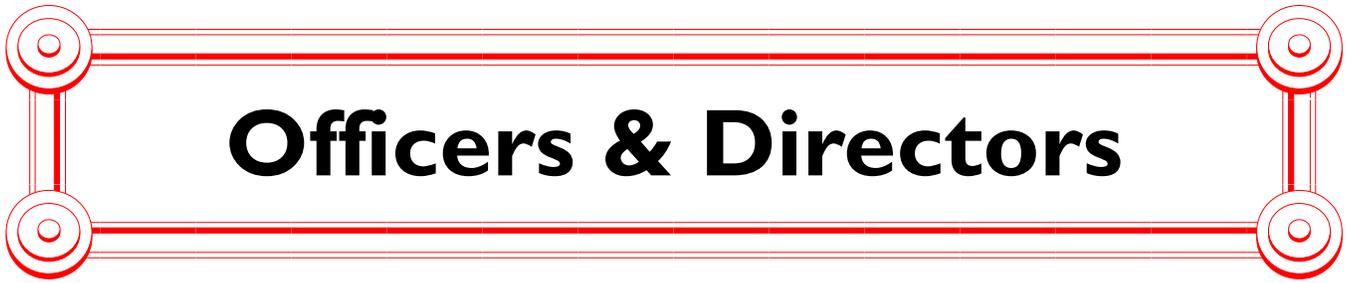
### *Would you do it again?*

Yes.

Frank Miles  
H & M Signs







# Officers & Directors

President- Max Aronow, SMI Sign Systems, Inc., 301-468-1132

Vice President - Andy Langlois, Graphic Illusions, 410-789-9414

Secretary/Treasurer - Frank Miles, H & M Signs, 410-789-1640

Wayne Belsinger, Belsinger Signs, 410-837-2700

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

Harry Sommer, Triangle Signs, 410-247-5300

Harry Connolly, 410-591-3955

Larry Strube, Alpha Design Signs, 301-662-3363

Neil Brami, Gelberg Signs, 202882-7733

## Scholarship News

If anyone is interested in applying  
 for the 2016-17 scholarship, please  
 notify [Sheryll.Strube@gmail.com](mailto:Sheryll.Strube@gmail.com)  
 For a new application after  
 January 1, 2016

## Mind Bender

$$1+1+1+1+1+1+1+$$

$$1+1+1+1+1 \times 0 + 1 =$$

Answer on page 10

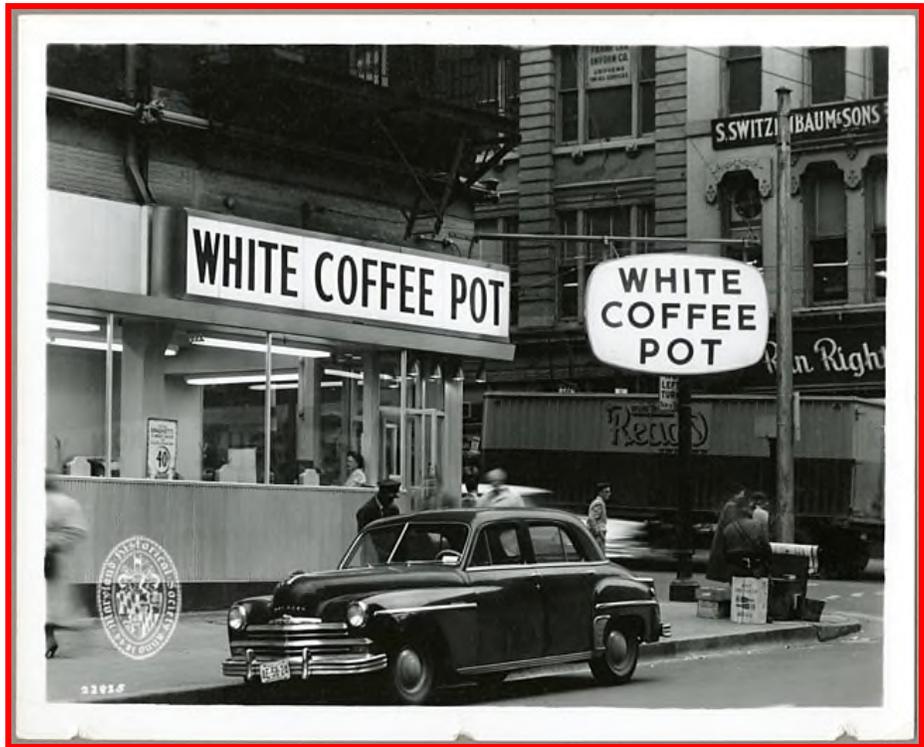
# BLAST FROM THE PAST

WHO CAN IDENTIFY THIS PICTURE?

WHEN WAS IT DONE?

WHO MANUFACTURED IT?

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU BUT I LOVE THE CAR.



Mind Bender Answer from Page 9  
Remember your order of operation  
The answer is 12.



Maryland Sign Association  
Certified Sign Contractor Logo

Sheryll Strube,  
Executive Administrator  
1813 Meadowgrove Lane  
Frederick, MD 21702

Phone: 301-662-5760  
Cell: 301-676-0934  
Fax: 301-662-8596  
Email: Sheryll.Strube@gmail.com



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