

MECA
March 2010



The next MECA Annual Meeting and Tradeshow will be held on November 18, 2010 at Lombardo's in Randolph from 2:00-7:00pm— Tradeshow 7:00PM—Dinner Please note our new location!

The Board of State Examiners of Electricians/Department of Professional Licensure is scheduled to move their offices to 1000 Washington Street, Boston, MA in April 2010.

Don't forget to complete your 21 Hours of Education by July 31, 2010 to renew your Electrical License. MECA is offering a full schedule of courses through July.

MECA will begin its Pre-Sale for the 2011 National Electrical Code Book with MA Amendments this Spring. Check out the MECA Website at www.mecanews.com for updates.

MECA
105 Eastern Avenue, Suite 208
Dedham, MA 02026
781-320-9811

Massachusetts Electrical Contractors Association

NEWS



Meet the New MECA Board!

On November 19, 2009, the members of MECA voted a new Executive Committee into office at the Annual Meeting. The Committee consists of newer members and former Presidents of MECA.

Michael DeMeo is the new President of the MECA State Board. Mike is the Vice-President of Stellos Electric in Nashua, NH. Mike has been a member of MECA for six years and also serves as the President of the Essex Chapter.

The 1st Vice-President voted into office is Paul Coleman from Allied Systems Technologies in Hyannis. Paul has been a member of MECA for ten years and currently serves as President of the Cape Cod Chapter.

Treasurer, Charles Wood, is the President of Wood Electric Company in Scituate. Charlie currently serves on the Old Colony Chapter Board as Treasurer.

Joseph "Jay" Gebhardt is serving his third term as Secretary. Jay is the President of J.G. Electric in Cochrasset and has been a member of MECA since 1981. Jay has served in the capacity of President of the MECA State Board and President of the South Middlesex Chapter.

Our Past President, John "Jack" Rich and his family are the owners

of Atlas Alarm in Weymouth and have been members of MECA for many years. Jack has served on the MECA State Board for the past six years and also sits on the Old Colony Chapter Board.



MECA's Current Board of Directors

William Snow, President
Boston Chapter

Michael Pillarella, President
Bristol Chapter

Paul Coleman, President
Cape Cod Chapter

Michael DeMeo, President
Essex Chapter Member

John Keady, President
North Middlesex Chapter

Dave Gillen, President
Old Colony Chapter

Paul McDonald, President
Pioneer Valley Chapter

Mike Mancini, President
South Middlesex Chapter

Ken Page, President
Worcester Chapter

www.mecanews.com

From the Executive Director

Marcus W. Muirhead



“You have to do your own growing, no matter how tall your grandfather was.” -Abraham Lincoln

In an effort to have a deeper, clearer understanding of MECA - it's legacy and it's mission- I have talked to more than a few long-time members, reviewed old newsletters and meeting minutes, and poured over old photographs. The association has a long proud history of protecting, educating, and advocating for the membership and promoting the industry as a whole. In the last 75 years, we have hob-knobbed with governors, senators, and other political luminaries. We have sponsored trade shows, kept track of state educational requirements, supported or opposed legislation and regulation as the situation demanded, and we have a long record of presenting new tools and technologies whenever they come along. No issue affecting the industry or the members has ever been too large or small to tackle.

Through this informal investigation, I have learned some important things. In no particular order:

- MECA's passion to promote the industry in general, and the members in particular, has never wavered or flagged.
- The work has never been easy or simple.
- Every generation of leadership address new problems.
- Every generation of leadership re-addresses some old problems.
- Finding and keeping new members has been a mission-critical issue since MECA was formed.

So when I bumped into the quotation by Abraham Lincoln, (see above), it came to me that our long, proud legacy was accomplished by a series of dedicated men and women who, over the course of many decades, continued -and sometimes improved upon- the work of those who came

before them. Surely, some were more successful than others, but every generation of MECA had to make its own success. And now, we, the current generation, must make our success so that we can pass this rich heritage to those who come after.

Not everyone has the time to work on the legislative agenda or the educational needs, but every member can be an ambassador for the association. Every member can and should take the opportunity, whenever it presents itself, to encourage colleagues, suppliers, and rep firms to join MECA. Tell your accountant, your attorney, and your janitorial service that they can have access to hundreds of other businesses like yours by joining.

Remember: we have to do our own growing, no matter how tall our “grandfather” was!

MECA Executive Board of Directors 2010

Mike DeMeo , President	Stellos Electric	603-882-3126	mdemeo@stelloselectric.com
Jack Rich, Past President	Atlas Alarm	781-337-8866	jack.rich@atlasalarm.com
Paul Coleman, 1st V-President	Allied Systems	508-771-6744	pcoleman@alliedsystemstech.com
Charles Wood, Treasurer	Wood Electric	781-545-6938	welectric@comcast.net
Jay Gebhardt, Secretary	J.G Electric	508-653-3042	jgelectric@yahoo.com

Granite City, Columbia Electric Merge

By: John Chestro, Patriot Ledger



Columbia Electric Supply of Brockton merged with a larger rival, Quincy-based Granite City Electric Supply Co., on Monday as the two companies pool their resources to weather the construction industry's downturn.

Unlike most merger partners, these two companies were "sister companies" long before the merger took place. That's because Columbia co-owner Dorothy Palmer and Granite City Electric CEO and co-owner Phyllis Godwin both inherited their respective firms from their father Nicholas Papani.

The Italian immigrant founded Granite City Electric in 1923, and he founded Columbia about a decade later. His two daughters eventually inherited the two companies roughly 40 years ago.

Godwin's Granite City Electric grew to be the larger of the two businesses, with 21 locations. Columbia, meanwhile, has four locations in Brockton, Taunton, Fall River and South Boston.

The combined company is keeping the Granite City Electric name, which is more well-known in New England than Columbia Electric partly because of Granite City Electric's high-profile Red Sox sponsorship.

"With the economy the way it was, we thought we would be better and stronger working as one rather than two separate companies," Godwin said. "This is a decision that's good for business and good for family."

Godwin said the owners of Granite City Electric – Godwin and her two daughters, Valia Marsden and Sara "Gigi" Meehan – are buying out the equity in Columbia that had been owned by Palmer and her sons, Nicholas and Robert. The financial terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

Steven Helle will remain president of Granite City Electric, and Columbia president Geoffrey Murphy will become a regional vice president for Granite City Electric.

Godwin said she hopes to minimize any work force reductions that are a result of the merger.

Godwin said selling electric supplies amid a slowdown in construction projects has been tough, and the outlook is not particularly bright this year. Granite City's business is roughly split in half between residential and commercial projects, she said.

"It appears residential has bottomed out," Godwin said, "(but) I don't think commercial has bottomed out yet."

Lead Safety for Renovation, Repair and Painting

Marcus W. Muirhead



By April 22, 2010 firms and employees performing renovation work for compensation in pre-1978 homes or child-occupied facilities that will disturb more than 6 S.F. (interior) or 20 S.F. (exterior)

of lead paint, or who are removing or modifying painted surfaces in the course of their work, will need to be certified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The renovator certification is valid for five years. A Certified Renovator must take a four-hour refresher course after five years.

The Home Builders Association of Massachusetts (HBAM) has arranged for our members, as well as non-members, to attend EPA Certified Renovator classes. The classes will be taught by the EPA fully accredited Institute of Environmental Education (IEE). The training will qualify you and/or your employees for the necessary EPA certification. This course was created by the EPA with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on how to renovate safely in housing with lead-based paint and comply with regulations.

The 8 hour class consists of 6 hours of in-class training along with 2 hours of hands-on training at the state-of-the-art Institute of Environmental Education facility in Wilmington, Massachusetts. There are a number of days on which this 8 hour class is being offered—even on Saturdays!—so sign up early as class size is limited.

Who should take this class? Among others:

- Electricians and Alarm Installers, Home Improvement/Renovation Contractors
- Painters, Plumbers, Carpenters, Remodelers

- Anyone disturbing more than 6 sq. ft (Interior) & 20 sq. ft. (Exterior) of lead paint

What Activities are Subject to the Renovation, Repair, and Painting Program?

- Remodeling and Repair/Maintenance
- Electrical and Alarm Work
- Plumbing, Painting, Carpentry, Siding & Window Replacement

“Starting April 22, 2010, Electricians and Alarm Installers... Will need to be Certified by the Environmental Protection Agency. “

Dust from renovation, repairs, and surface preparation in pre-‘78 homes and child-occupied facilities creates potential lead hazards when lead-based paint is disturbed and lead-safe work practices are not used.

Lead dust from renovation work can cause lead poisoning in children, pregnant women, yourself, other workers, even pets.

The Gould Institute will be offering Lead Paint Certification Courses through out the month of March and April. Let them know you are a MECA Member and they will give you their Member Rate. Call 781-270-9990 to register.

Rexel Employee Saves Family from Burning House

Industrial Distribution Staff, Industrial Distribution

Electrical distributor Rexel is praising the heroism of one of its New England-based delivery drivers who risked his life to save three people from a burning house in late September.

Ramiro "Junior" Santiago is a midnight express driver for Rexel's Hartford, Conn. branch. On September 30, at 3 a.m., he had just finished making a delivery in Northampton, Mass., when he came upon a house engulfed in flames. He immediately pulled his truck over to the curb and directed another passerby, who had also stopped, to call 911.

Santiago reportedly leapt into action, kicking in the locked door of the house as flames and smoke shot out. Wrapping his sweatshirt around his head and face, he entered the house and immediately found a 12-year-old boy and helped him to safety. The boy told Santiago that his mother and disabled grandfather were still inside, so Santiago went back in, first bumping into the family dog and leading him to safety. Santiago went back in a third time to rescue the boy's mother and a fourth time to lead the grand-

father to safety. Within five minutes, Santiago had gotten everyone out of the home. Police and fire officials arrived shortly thereafter, and Santiago gave them his name and phone number before climbing back into his truck to complete his round of midnight deliveries.

When asked why he kept going back into the house over and over again, Santiago said, "I would want someone to do the same for me if my family was in the same situation."

In a local television report later, neighbors who witnessed the event said the family would have perished if someone hadn't come by and forced the door open.

"Whoever he was, we thank him," the neighbor told the television station.



2009 Distributor Acquisitions in the Electrical Market

It's been quiet on the merger and acquisition front in 2009, especially compared to 2008, when Electrical Marketing newsletter reported on 27 distributor acquisitions.

Company

A.E. Petsche Co., Arlington, Texas
Delmo Electric Supply, Fisk, Mo.
Beck Electric Co., Kennett, Mo.
(Merger) Richardson Electric Inc., Chattanooga, Tenn.
Huge Electric, Shanghai, China
Berkeley Engineering Inc., Honolulu, Hawaii
Johnson Electric Supply Co., Cincinnati, OH
Gertz Electric, Indiana, Pa., Schaedler
Service Electrical Supply Co. Inc., Pittsburgh Schaedler
Sante Electric Supply, Florence, S.C.
Indianapolis branch of Richards Electric Supply, Cincinnati
Alliance Energy Solutions, Oxford, Conn.

Acquirer

Arrow Electronics, Inc., Melville, N.Y.
Cape Electrical Supply, Cape Girardeau, Mo.
Cape Electrical Supply, Cape Girardeau, Mo.
Creswell Industrial Supply, Chattanooga, Tenn.
Hagemeyer China
OneSource Distributors, Oceanside, Calif.
PEPCO Inc., Eastlake, Ohio
YESCO, Harrisburg, Pa.
YESCO, Harrisburg, Pa.
Shealy Electrical Wholesalers, Columbia, S.C.
Vision Control & Automation/Standard Electric Supply, Milwaukee
W.W. Grainger Inc., Lake Forest, Ill.

The New Unions

By Suzanne Hoppough, Forbes Magazine

Submitted by: Rex Funderburk



In the Middle Ages you couldn't be a baker unless you were admitted to the guild. In Louisiana you can't sell flowers.

Mortgage brokers passed along some bum loans, and now the subprime market is in tatters. What's to be done? Impose tougher license requirements on brokers. So declares one interested group.

Cynics and students of the history of occupational licensure will not be surprised where the call for the crackdown came from--the brokers themselves. Responding to criticism of the mortgage industry by Hillary Clinton, the National Association of Mortgage Brokers put out a statement reiterating its call for "an increase in professional standards, education requirements and criminal background checks." Mortgage brokers already must be licensed in 23 states, but if the requirements are tightened there won't be quite so many brokers fighting over what business is left.

So it goes in a lot of professions. In California you are not welcome if you're an out-of-state contractor looking to help rebuild the areas destroyed by last fall's fires. The government rushed out a press release while the fires still raged warning that working without a state license to remove debris, repair a roof or rewire a home is a felony. The punishment: a fine of up to \$10,000 or 16 months in prison.

In Ohio a parent was fined \$10,000 after the Cleveland Bar Association filed a complaint that he didn't hire a lawyer and instead represented his autistic son when he sued the Akron school board over the boy's education. In South Carolina dentists intent on protecting their turf blocked oral hygienists from examining the teeth of poor schoolchildren

without a dentist's supervision. The American Dental Association backed the move. Such occupations are the new unions. These modern-day guilds have replaced organized labor as the main vehicle for workers seeking to shield themselves from competition. As the economy has switched from manufacturing to services, some 28% of U.S. workers--or 43 million people--now belong to a licensed profession, according to a Princeton University/Gallup survey last year. That's up from 4.5% 50 years ago. Over the same period union membership has fallen from 35% to 12%.

University of Minnesota economist Morris Kleiner recently estimated what occupational licenses cost the U.S. through higher fees and the lost output of people excluded from the roped-off professions: \$100 billion a year. Some guilds are especially adept at keeping out new members even as demand balloons. The population has grown 22% since 1990, but the number of dentists and hairdressers hasn't budged. The shortage of dentists has pushed up their average real hourly pay 45% over that period.

Milton Friedman complained about the excesses of occupational licensing in his 1962 book, *Capitalism and Freedom*. Since then the phenomenon has only accelerated. Today there are 1,100 occupations--from secretaries and librarians in Georgia to wallpaper hangers in California--that require a license in at least one state, according to the Council of State Governments. That's up from roughly 80 in 1981. "These are monopolies created by the government," says William Mellor, president of the Institute for Justice, a nonprofit in Arlington, Va. that litigates on behalf of property rights and other civil liberties. "They have requirements so onerous that they deter everyone except the most well-heeled or persistent." Indeed, in Louisiana florists face a harder test to get their licenses than do lawyers: The pass rate for the bar exam in 2006 was 76%; for the florist test it was only 68%.

But tough rules protect consumers, don't they? Not necessarily. A 1981 study in the *Southern Economic Journal* found that in states that make it toughest to become an electrician--keeping the numbers low and the fees high--accidental electrocutions

happened more often because customers are tempted to do the work themselves. Strict rules in some states on the types of work that can be done only by doctors--protecting them from competition from nurse practitioners, for instance--help slow the spread of chains of low-cost medical clinics. Says Shirley Svorny, the economics department chairman at California State University, Northridge: "It's like the [unionized] entertainment industry, where only one guy can work the lights."

Licensing laws hit the poor particularly hard. They're often shut out of jobs that would hoist them onto the first rungs of the economic ladder--shampoo assistant, pipe layer's helper, home health aide--because they lack the time and money to take the classes and serve the apprenticeships to pass the exam. All consumers miss out on the creativity and added quality that entrepreneurs and other innovators would bring to many lines of work, says Mellor. In some states only funeral directors are allowed to sell caskets, so discounters such as **Costco** (NASDAQ: [COST](#) - [news](#) - [people](#)) are kept from expanding into those markets.

There are occasional victories for competitive markets. Without legal help Brian Woods, the parent of the autistic boy, won the case against the school board--and \$160,000--while the lawyers' group dropped its complaint after a storm of bad publicity. In June 2007 the dentists who were stopping hygienists from giving checkups to children settled a complaint from the Federal Trade Commission, allowing the checkups to resume. Last May Florida Governor Charlie Crist vetoed a bill that called for tougher requirements for nail salon workers and cosmetologists. New manicurists and pedicurists would have needed 350 hours of classroom training, 110 more than now. (California sets the highest bar, mandating 600 hours.)

But fans of licensing are winning more battles than they are losing. Accountants once needed 120 hours of college study; now they need 150 in most states. And it seems that states will get tougher on people who want to be interior designers.

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Winter & Spring Classes



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15-Hour NEC Code Update

Weekend Courses

March 13 & 14, 2010 (MECA Office, Dedham)
April 17 & 18, 2010 (Andover Country Club, Andover)
May 15 & 16, 2010 (MECA Office, Dedham)
June 12 & 13, 2010 (MECA Office, Dedham)
July 10 & 11, 2010 (TBD)
July 24 & 25, 2010 (MECA Office, Dedham)

Weekday Course

April 6, 8, 13 & 15, 2010 (MECA Office) (4:30-8:30pm)

Time: 8:00AM-4:00PM (Except Weekday Class)
Instructors: William Laidler & Charlie Palmieri
Member: \$130, Non-Member: \$160
Continuing Education

70-E: Electrical Safety in the Workplace

March 27, 2010

Time: 8:00AM-2:00PM
Instructors: William Laidler & Charlie Palmieri
Member: \$99, Non-Member: \$139
Professional Development

OSHA-10

April 3, 2010

Time: 7:00AM-6:00PM
Instructor: Bernie Greenwood
Member: \$155, Non-Member: \$185
Professional Development

Call Lisa at 781-320-9811 or lisa@mecanews.com to register today!
You can also log on to www.mecanews.com to register on-line.

The New Unions, Continued

Rose Botti-Salitsky, an interior design professor at Mount Ida College in Newton, Mass. spends her free time lobbying the state to license interior designers, as 23 other states do. The proposed requirements: a four-year college degree, a two-year apprenticeship and a \$720 fee to take an exam that only 49% now pass. She's irked that the little-known occupation--which involves picking the location of ramps for the handicapped, as well as plumbing and other fixtures inside buildings--is often confused with interior decorating. That's why the bill would prohibit decorators from using the title Registered Interior Designer. "Students leave for other states after graduating, and it's discouraging," she says. "I owe it to the next generation."

Botti-Salitsky's campaign helps explain why licensing laws proliferate. Her bill was getting nowhere until she called on the American Society of Interior Designers for help and went to its symposium for prospective lobbyists, in Minneapolis. With its coaching and funding, she rewrote the bill, recruited senators as cosponsors and hired a

professional lobbyist. Last year the society and Botti-Salitsky's coalition hosted a reception honoring the chairman of the Joint Committee on Consumer Protection & Professional Licensure, her bill's first stop. Nationwide the society imposes a \$15 annual fee on top of its dues for its 38,000 members to fund lobbying efforts such as Botti-Salitsky's.

Her students pitch in, too. Colleen Anderson, a senior, created a database to track each legislator's constituents who have signed an online petition for the bill; 2,000 have signed so far. In 2006 she placed second in the society's nationwide contest to pick the best student lobbyist, winning a \$1,500 scholarship. Getting the bill passed "is going to make a difference in my career," she says. "It's huge."

"Occupations are politically powerful," says economist Kleiner. "Members get together and say, 'We need to protect the public.' If you oppose it, they campaign against you." Often there is no one lobbying against the bills. So with all the pressure and contribu-

tions coming from one side, it's an easy bill for governors to sign. "It would be nice if there was an American Clients Association protecting the people," says Larry E. Ribstein, a visiting law professor at New York University.

Is this country going to get tougher on mortgage brokers? It seems that way. Massachusetts says it's hiring 50 more people this year to beef up its oversight of the profession. Is that going to help home buyers? Probably not. A National Bureau of Economic Research paper in December by Kleiner and Richard Todd of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis showed that there is no relationship between tough education requirements for mortgage brokers and better outcomes for borrowers. But financial hurdles (a requirement for bonding or a minimum net worth for brokerage firms) appear to have an impact. The result, the economists found, is fewer brokers, fewer subprime mortgages, higher foreclosure rates and more high-interest-rate mortgages.

License Renewal FAQ's

Do all licenses need 21 hrs of Continuing Education?

Yes, licensees must complete 21-Hours of Continuing Education before the renewal date 7/31/2010. A 15-Hour Code Class taken with a Board approved provider and 6 Hours of Professional Development

Should I mail a copy of my 15-Hour Certificate?

No, the approved provider will electronically submit your continuing education information to the Board. Do not mail any other documents with your renewal form.

Do I need to submit proof of completing the 6 Hours to the Board?

No, a record in the form of a certificate of completion must be kept by the licensee for three renewal cycles and must be furnished to the Board only upon request.

When will I get a renewal form?

Renewal forms will be mailed in May of this year. If you have moved you must ensure that the Board has been notified or you will not receive a renewal form. Address changes may be made online at www.mass.gov/reg/boards/el or by faxing your request to 617-727-9932. You may also mail your request to the address of the Board on your current license.

Resources

Massachusetts Department of Professional Licensure, 239 Causeway St., Suite 500, Boston, MA
Phone: 617-727-9931, Fax: 617-727-9932