

At present, a “beta” version of the revamped website is being reviewed by the SMART Board of Directors, while new content is being developed by staff and art work is being collected from numerous sources. Within the very near future, in fact, we expect to launch the revised website and, hopefully, give SMART members a portal that offers a single-source destination for insights on everything that the association offers and everything SMART is doing to promote our industry.

So, as spring continues to unfold outside, SMART is renewing and rejuvenating itself in numerous different ways as well, one of the key ones being the revamped website which we are very excited about and hope to launch in the very near future.

Setting the Record Straight

*By Bill Schapiro, President, Whitehouse and Schapiro
SMART Immediate Past President*

A few weeks ago, a broker/exporter was visiting my office and I did my inevitable pitch for SMART and received this reply:

"Can I be frank with you, Bill?" he asked. (Of course, I thought. I hope you are always frank with me!) "For me," he went on to say, SMART is a closed little group and what's more, it's a wiper organization."



Let me briefly address both of these claims!

First: "SMART is a wiper organization"

After controlling my frustration with my broker/exporter friend, I left the room and copied for him the September 2007 article I wrote in this space entitled: "Breath mint or candy mint". In that piece, I painstakingly pointed out how well S.M.A.R.T. represents both the wiper and grading chapters of our industry. Part of this success is a conscious attempt to do so, I wrote. The other reason is that these two segments of our industry overlap in their interests and causes.

My column went on to demonstrate how our board is well balanced between wiper and grader dealers; and how smart addresses with equal energy the various issues which affect both interests.

Now to the second misconception: last November in Houston at our regional meeting, the "this is a closed association" canard came up and, I must say, this one was met with such swift action, that it may have laid this nasty rumor to rest for good!

Sunny Khatra of GGS Wiping Products and I were driving to lunch with Aquil Khandwala of American Rags when Sunny said; "Bill, I love SMART. I look forward to SMARTTalk and I think it is so important that we have a trade association that represents our interests. I wish I could be involved but I have no idea how to do that. It all seems so elusive."

I cut Sunny off at that point and explained that his passion and his energy for S.M.A.R.T were precisely what we are looking for, and that involvement is not elusive at all. In fact anyone with ability and energy need only express a willingness to engage oneself to a board member and his or her involvement can be immediate and effective.

In fact, only a few months since our talk in Houston, a board position opened and Sunny Khatra (much to his amazement!) is now a very active and very engaged member of the SMART board. Several board members have remarked at how pleased they are to have such a new, good young mind working on behalf of our industry.

The point of my two stories is this: SMART is a great organization that accomplishes important goals for all of us. It is an open organization and if there are any more "Sunnys" out there who want to be involved, your involvement is no further than your nearest cell phone. The more energy and participation we get from our membership, the more all of us in this always fascinating and dynamic industry will prosper.

William Schapiro, President
Whitehouse and Schapiro LLC
2800 Quarry Lake Drive
Suite 120
Baltimore, MD 21209
www.webuyrags.com
e-mail bill@webuyrags.com
p: 410-356-8003
f: 410-356-9003

Strategic Planning Committee Report:

The Strategic Planning Process Is Nearing Completion

By Dennis Friedman, The Chesapeake Group

The full Board met in Baltimore earlier this month to review the “draft” Single-page Strategic Plan developed over the last few months by the Steering Committee consisting of Vice-President Larry Groipen, Immediate Past President Bill Schapiro, and Board members Lou Buty, Justin Marks, and Jeff Pearl. The first order of business was to consider the need to modify the existing SMART Vision as displayed on our website:

SMART is a dynamic international association which seeks to strengthen the economic opportunities of its members. It promotes the interdependence of all its industry segments by providing a common forum for networking, education, and trade.

There was a lot of discussion surrounding the need to add “purpose” to this statement, culminating in the following Vision Statement:

SMART members reduce solid waste by reclaiming, converting, and recycling textiles and secondary materials.