STRICTLY COMMERCIAL

By Richard Stetts

Richard Stetts is owner of Stetts Signs LLC (South Williamsport, PA).

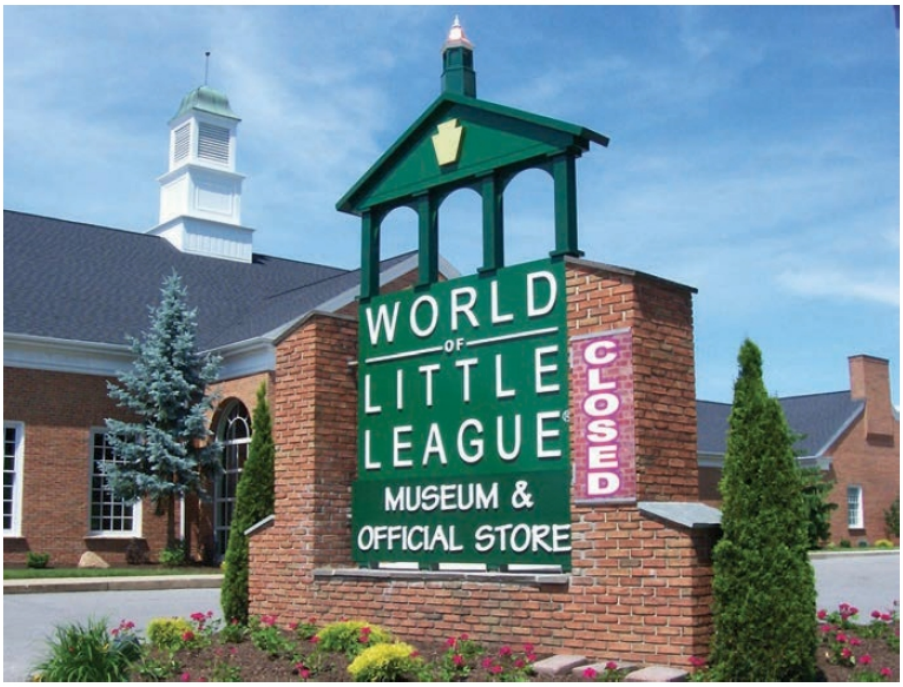
A Big Sign for Little League

The Little League World Series Museum gains a new monument sign.

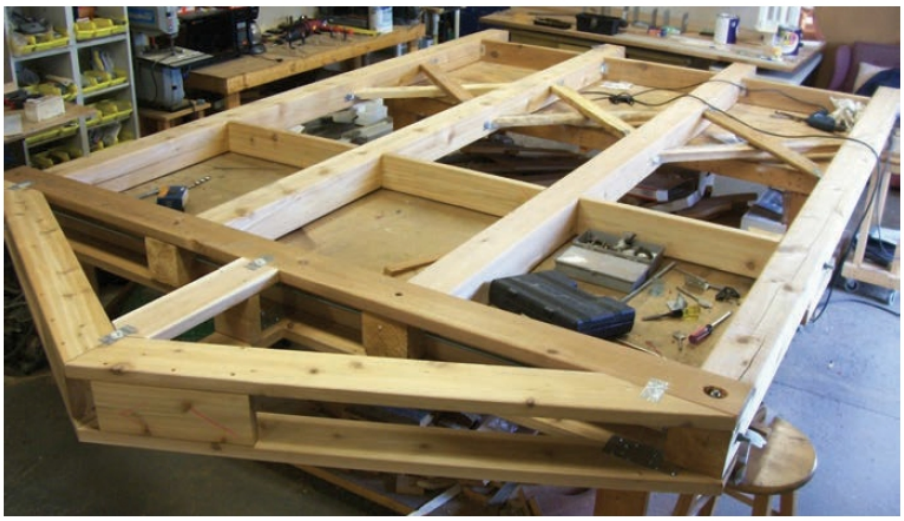
During most of the year, South Williamsport is a quiet central Pennsylvania borough on the banks of the Susquehanna River, with approximately 6,000 residents. But, every August, tens of thousands of fans flock to South Williamsport's Howard J. Lamade Stadium, which hosts the Little League World Series (LLWS). The LLWS pits the best 13-and-under teams against one another in an international tournament. This year's competition took place August 15-25.

Founded in 1947, the LLWS has grown into a worldwide phenomenon that draws millions of viewers on ABC and ESPN. Famous former participants in the LLWS include legendary former Baltimore Orioles first baseman Boog Powell, nine-time All-Star Gary Sheffield and longtime Boston Red Sox catcher Jason Varitek.

Understandably, Little League officials are very proud of the event's legacy, and have been recounting the organization's story through the World of Little League® Peter J. McGovern Museum and Official Store since 1982. However, after 30 years, the organization's officials decided to revamp its content to keep up with current museum trends. The museum closed from September 1 last year (immediately after the 2012 LLWS, which was won by the Kitasuna team from Tokyo) until June 6. When it reopened, World of Little League featured such new amenities as interactive video displays, artifacts and interpretive panels that depict great moments and personalities from the organization's history. According to www.littleleague.org, "The focus of the museum has shifted from simply telling the story of Little League's past to a more dynamic presentation of how Little League has intertwined with U.S. and world history, and even helped to shape it."



Every August, thousands of baseball fans flock to South Williamsport, PA to watch the Little League World Series. Many of these visitors frequent the World of Little League Museum, which is also located in South Williamsport. Museum officials closed the facility to revamp its exhibits to appeal to a contemporary audience. Concurrently, they asked Stetts Signs, also of South Williamsport, to build a new monument sign to highlight the revamped museum.

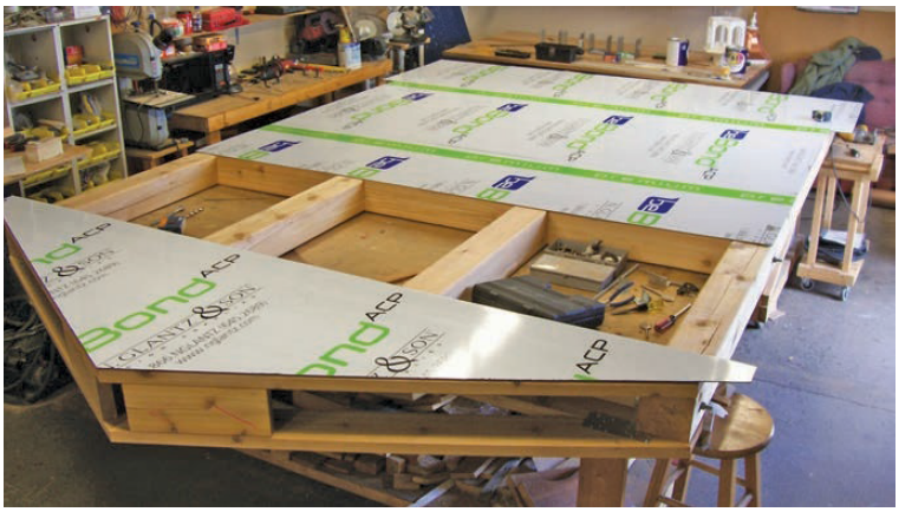


Museum officials eagerly approved Stetts' concept of arched windows, a Roman-style roof and a crowning cupola. The sign, which measures 16 ft. x 9 ft. 3 in., was the largest ever made in Stetts' shop; his landlord worried it wouldn't clear the entrance.

Stetts Signs proudly played a role in the museum's renovation by fabricating and installing a new monument sign for its primary entrance. Here's how we did it.

If you build it...

My wife, Christy, and I have worked in the sign business since 1990, and we founded Stetts Signs in 2005.



To ensure accurate layout, Richard and Christy Stetts made a mock-up with BeBond® aluminum-composite material.

Approximately half of our business involves sign repairs, but we handle a wide array of projects, such as carved, gilded cedar signs; post-and-panel signs; channel letters – and, of course, monuments.

While doing a 12-location survey for a signage changeover for Santander Bank (formerly known as Sovereign), I received an e-mail that requested a quote for a new sign for the Little League Museum from Nancy Grove, Little League Intl.'s materials-management director. I told her we were very busy, and I wasn't sure we would have time to take on the project, but that I would take a look at their request and see what I could do.

She followed with a message that included a rough logo concept for the sign, which gave us a great idea. That logo was similar to the sign we eventually produced, but their original design proposal included several flat features and white space. As I worked though the concept, I envisioned real, open-air arch windows and pillars supporting a Roman-style roof – to mimic the museum's architecture – with an authentic, bell-style cupola mounted atop the sign.

She appreciated my idea, and passed it on to her supervisor. The next day, she requested a quote. After business hours, I developed an estimate. Using Vinyl Express LXi master software, I developed 3-D drawings to help the customer envision fabrication. I worked through it quickly, and I wasn't sure if my quote would match their budget. To my pleasant surprise, they awarded me the job two days later. Grove told me they especially liked the windows and cupola!

Although I prefer individual to team sports, we were very excited about the job.

Drilling down

Measuring 16 ft. tall x 9 ft. 3 in. wide, it was the biggest sign we've ever fabricated. Our facility's partner company and landlord, McCain Industrial Services, worried whether the structure would fit through the garage door. I had to constantly reassure them and our client that I'd taken measurements, and it would make it through at an angle.

Museum officials wanted the job completed in 4-5 weeks. This presented a major challenge. We had to work evenings, and I had to hire some temporary workers to meet the deadline. Our crew even worked on Memorial Day.

As we began work in our shop, a masonry contractor needed to rework the existing foundation at the site. The original sign was smaller and narrower, and the bottom slate was too thin to anchor the beams, as originally laid out. Also, the brick at the base was hollow, and the slate barely concealed the cavity. I wanted thicker slate added to hold

Equipment and Materials

Adhesives/Sealants: VHB bonding tape, from 3M Industrial Tapes and Adhesives Div. (St. Paul, MN), (800) 364-3577 or www.solutions.3m.com; 7610 and 406/19 adhesives, from Lord Corp. (Cary, NC), (877) 275-5673 or www.lord.com; white-latex caulk and clear silicone, available at hardware and building-supply stores

Coatings: Exterior-wood primer, from Sherwin-Williams (Cleveland), www.sherwin-williams.com; Helmsman satin clearcoat, from Minwax (Upper Saddle River, NJ), (800) 523-9299 or www.minwax.com; Urethane enamel, from T.J. Ronan Corp. (The Bronx, NY), (800) 247-6626 or www.ronanpaints.com; Frog Juice water-based clearcoat, from Far From Normal Supply (Moorhead, MN), (800) 332-1174 or www.far-from-normal.com

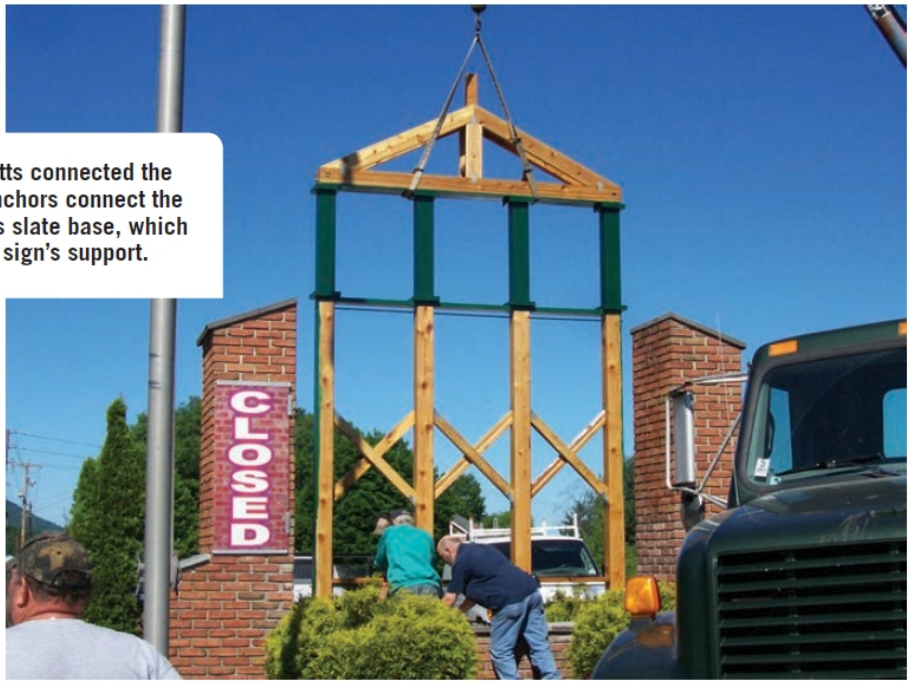
Hardware: Steel connectors; galvanized- and stainless-steel screws and bolts; stainless-steel allthread; concrete anchors; steel beam-base connectors; and, pine boards and pillar collars, available from building-supply and hardware stores

Letters: Flat-surface, formed-plastic, pad-mounted letters, from Gemini Inc. (Cannon Falls, MN), (800) 538-8377 or www.signletters.com

Metal: Prefinished aluminum sheet (0.04- and 0.06-in.-thick), available from metal-supply stores

Software: Vinyl Express LXi signmaking software, from Sign Warehouse (Denison, TX), (800) 699-5512 or www.signwarehouse.com

Substrates: BeBond 3mm, aluminum-composite material, available from N. Glantz (Louisville, KY), (866) 645-2689 or www.nglantz.com; 15-lb. SignFoam®, from Sign Arts Products (Laguna Hills, CA), (800) 338-4030 or www.signfoam.com



A crane hoists the components into place. Stetts connected the parts with screws, rivets and 3M VHB tape. Anchors connect the apparatus to the concrete below the masonry's slate base, which was filled with more concrete to reinforce the sign's support.

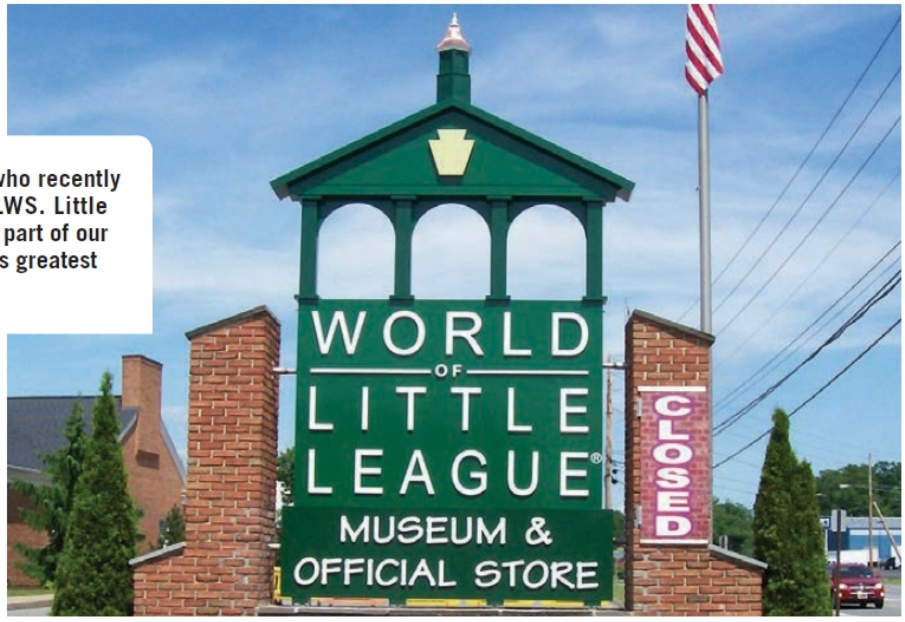
the sign's weight; the customer asked for another, less-expensive option. We decided to fill the cavity with concrete right up to the slate.

Then, we made a pattern for the masonry company to use a hole saw to drill holes in the slate to prevent the slate from cracking. Then, we attached ½-in., concrete anchors into the concrete below the slate. We then filled the holes around the anchors with epoxy caulk. For the side connectors, we used stainless-steel wood anchors with welded, stainless-steel pipe, and drilled plate connectors and redhead concrete anchors into the brick.

Under one roof

We made the roof hollow with prefinished aluminum sheet, and constructed the bottom half with 0.040-in., aluminum sheet with attached angle tabs. The top half comprises 0.060-in. sheet that's bent with metal-fabrication equipment into a "C" shape. The bottom section was thinner because it had a supporting truss under it. We connected the parts with screws, rivets and 3M VHB tape, and made C-shape endcaps and flat seam covers for the center-point seam.

In our shop, we had to do mock-ups and dry-fits with very tight tolerance points. We had some challenges aligning the parts correctly



A new, stately sign proudly awaited visitors who recently descended on South Williamsport for the LLWS. Little League baseball has become such an integral part of our social fabric, and a museum that chronicles its greatest moments deserves an attractive sign.

during the mock-up, but it made fitting parts onsite easier. For example, the bottom of the beams were between $^{3}/_{8}$ and $^{7}/_{16}$ in. off from level. However, the foundation brick was also out-of-plumb, and, surprisingly, the parts matched perfectly!

For the sign's letters, we installed 8.5- and 14.5-in., pad-mounted, formed-plastic Gemini letters. We fabricated the keystone from laminated, 15-lb. SignFoam® HDU that's coated with a 3mm, anodized-gold Polymetal® hardcoat. We formed the arches from 3mm BeBond aluminum-composite material, and built the cupola from 0.040-in. aluminum with a 12-in.-tall, PVC "copper bell" cap. To keep the copper shining for future visitors, we applied two coatings of Superfrog's Frog Juice liquid clearcoat.

We sealed the cedar posts with Minwax Helmsman satin clear, and prepped the exposed areas' pillar beams with Sherwin-Williams wood primer before we applied two coats of TJ Ronan medium- and dark-green enamels. The skin panels were built from 3mm BeBond panels and painted with the Ronan enamels.

We're excited to help South Williamsport look its best for the most recent LLWS, and we're confident that sign will really help the museum and the Little League organization put its best foot forward when it celebrates its 75th anniversary next year. ■

Product Reviews: DGS 3D POP System, KIP C7800 Poster Printer pp. 46, 48

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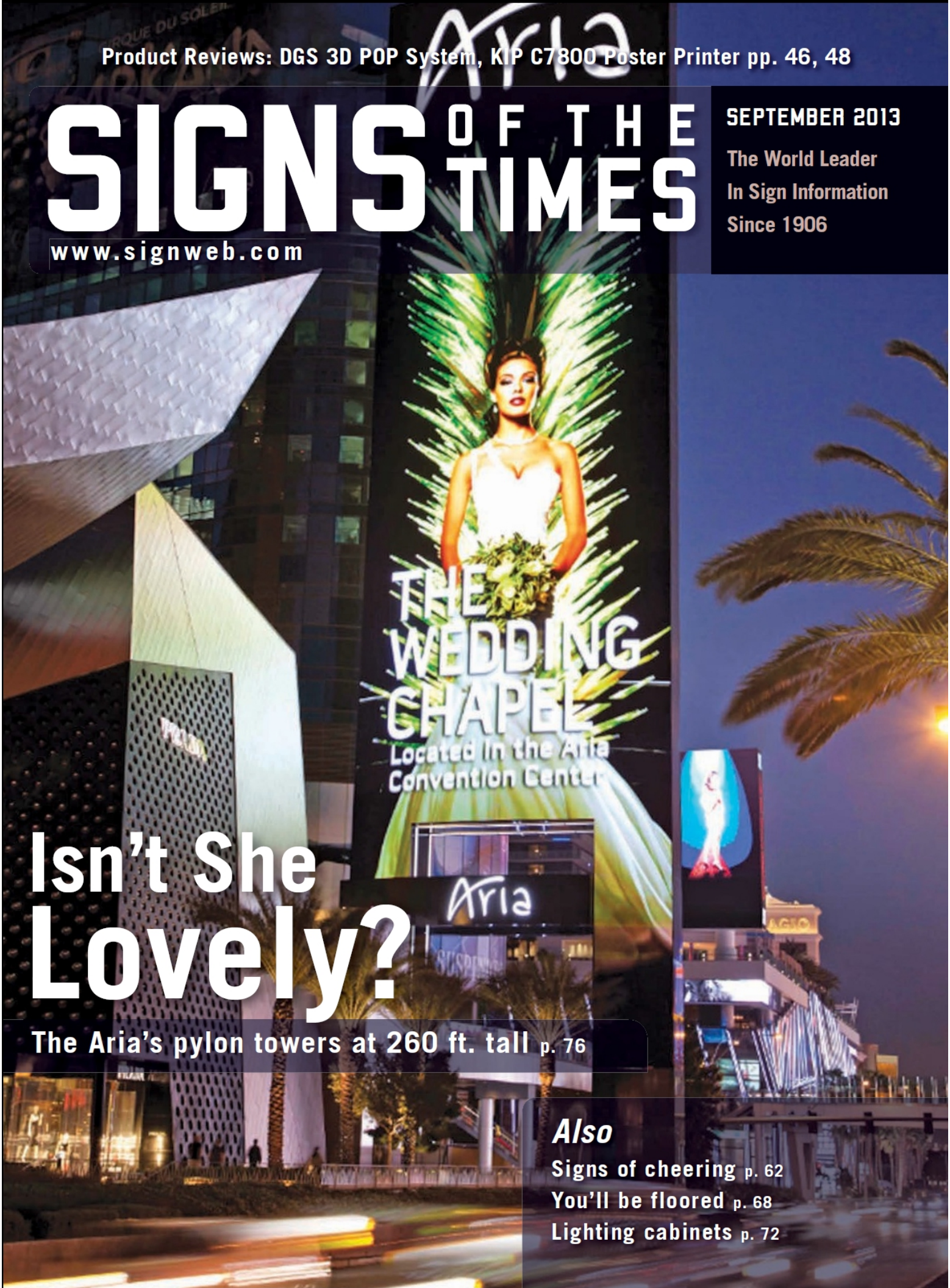

Isn't She Lovely?

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Also