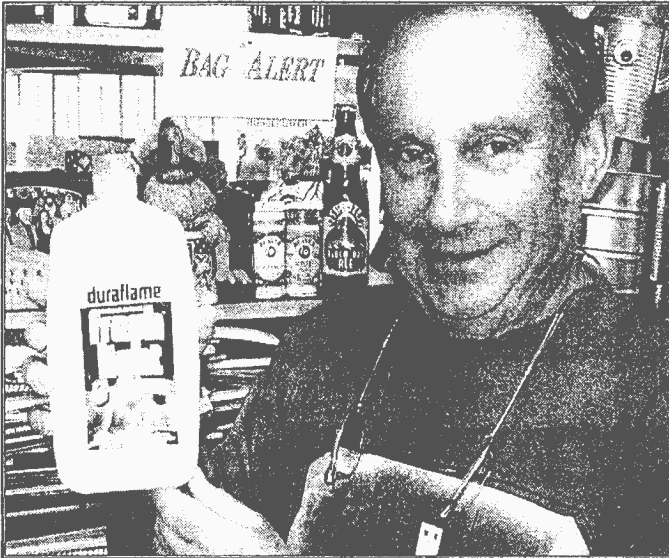




BUSINESS: Success • Views & Facts



STEVE SCHNEIDER PROVIDING INSPIRATION AND HANDS-ON GUIDANCE FOR REGIONAL INVENTORS

By S.A. Jernigan

During his upbringing in San Francisco, like many sons, Steve Schneider looked up to his father, an entrepreneur who owned a men's clothing store on 6th Street. Not only did his father tailor a suit perfectly for his customers, but he learned the craft from his father before him who worked alongside him at Schneider's Clothes for Men.

Not surprising then that after completing his schooling, Steve too was drawn toward a career in retail. Along with partners, he

founded a wholesale division of a consumer electronics store involved in manufacturing, importing, and distributing such well-known brands as RCA, Sanyo, Panasonic, et al. This initial pursuit proved such a good fit that Steve stayed for over 25 years in the South San Francisco business, retiring in '88.

With his wife, Jeannie, he was ready for a change as he prepared to enter the next chapter of his life. While helping friends move to Santa Rosa, he became charmed by the weather locally as well as the quaintness of the town and, after a few more visits, he and Jeannie decided to relocate. Settling in and wanting to become involved with their new community, Steve began dropping in on past customers of his audio business. It was during one of these visits that he was encouraged to apply for a new position running the Sawyer Center, established by a donation from Bruce Sawyer and designed to create an inventor's workshop, now hosted by Santa Rosa Junior College in affiliation with the State of California's Small Business Development Center program.



This too has proven an excellent fit for Steve who took to his new duties in 1996 like his father took to a needle and thread. Creating a broad range of innovative services, the Sawyer Center provides one-on-one counseling as well as regular workshops and, to date, Steve has personally met with over 22,000 budding entrepreneurs. His office brims with prototypes from his clients ranging from pumpkin carving kits now sold in Wal-Mart, to Clic@ Goggles and Readers (sold in Longs) and Bag Alert™ -- an anti-theft device designed to protect your golf clubs. In fact, a pair of his proteges, Tom & Tammy Galt, were runners up in the nationwide "Great American Toy Search" and were interviewed on the Early Show by Bryant Gumbel (CBS) in New York where they proudly showcased their soft, collapsible child's wagon.

And Steve's been in the spotlight too. An article in INC Magazine profiled his contributions to the invention and patenting process. Shortly thereafter, he created a unique weekend-long opportunity for would-be inventors via a work-

shop featuring staff from the United States Patent Office. Invited as a guest on KGO-AM radio (ABC) to promote the 2-day event, he was interviewed by Pete Wilson who was so engaged by Steve's regaling of stories of the Sawyer Center's creative clients and their myriad inventions that he contacted him 6 months later and asked him to come on the show again. Even after 8 years, Steve's enthusiasm is still demonstrably contagious -- a quality that continually invigorates and inspires the budding entrepreneurs he's dedicated to serving. The workshop itself also proved so popular that the USPTO staff has agreed to a repeat engagement, currently slated for Fall, 2004.

Unique in all the country, the innovative Sawyer Center, under Steve's stewardship and guidance, is dedicated to creating jobs by assisting people in bringing their products and/or services to market just as Steve has successfully "invented" this 2nd career for himself. Steve Schneider and the Sawyer Center -- tailor made for each other indeed...

(The Sawyer Center is located at 606 Healdsburg Avenue, Santa Rosa, 707.524-1773, email: sbdc1@ap.net).

S.A. "Sam" Jernigan is a member of the National Writers Union and owns a marketing and PR firm in Santa Rosa, Renaissance Consultations, www.MarketingAndPR.com. She & her husband were helped by Steve in the invention of their own patented gizmo, available online @ www.3in1Bookmark.com