

Appleton's Arnold Grummer to be honored by Paper Industry International Hall of Fame

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Arnold Grummer is “the public face of paper making in the United States” according to a biography written by the staff at the Paper Industry International Hall of Fame.

It's an oversized description for a man who simply bills himself as “a PR man who had a front row seat to pulp and paper history.”

But it certainly fits.

Grummer, an Appleton resident, is one of six inductees in this year's class at the Hall of Fame. He will officially receive the honor in an Oct. 11 ceremony that recognizes his efforts to educate everyone from Richard Nixon to grade-schoolers to FBI forensic scientists on the paper making process.

“Clearly, America's widespread understanding of the wonder and science of paper would not exist without Arnold Grummer's entrepreneurial and educational efforts,” his Hall of Fame bio states.

He has reached millions, starting with his 16 years as faculty member and editor of general publications at the Institute of Paper Chemistry as well as curator of its Dard Hunter Paper Museum.

From 1976 on, after the Institute, he brought his love of paper to the masses through his traveling live paper making exhibit, The Great American Paper Machine. He founded the Greg Markim Inc. company that is the leading supplier of educational materials for hand paper making, including paper-making kits and books. Hundreds of thousands have seen him on cable TV and YouTube videos.

“I've told more people about paper than anyone else in history,” he said. “With my materials, I will give you a second grader who knows more than his dad who has worked in a mill for 20 years.”

“He launched a resurgence of handmade paper with his paper making kits that people use in schools and homes,” said Kathleen Lhost, executive director of the Paper Discovery Center.

The spirited 88-year-old Grummer doesn't believe in the word retirement and is just as enthusiastic today as he was in his days touring the country. His Great American Paper Machine invention, a “transparent hand sheet former,” made a sheet of paper right in front of onlookers. He loved the reaction from the audience.

“How often have you seen a piece of applauded?” he asked. “It tickles the heck out of me.”

He used his portable invention to make presentations at the Smithsonian and the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry. In his FBI forensics presentations on the characteristics of paper and watermarks, he could tell investigators how to make paper talk to them.

“The world is a richer place because of Arnie Grummer,” said David Lee, retired former executive director of the Paper Discovery Center. “His accomplishments following the Institute are what really propelled him into the Paper Hall of Fame. He's the paper version of ‘The Music Man.’”

Generations of school children and home crafters learned the wonders of paper making by using his invention, Arnold Grummer's Paper Making Kit, starting with a couple of kits sold to McKinley Elementary School in Appleton in the late 1970s. It turned into a family business called Greg Markim, Inc. (named for children Greg, Mark and Kim) that has sold more than 65,000 kits, mostly through school supply houses and cable channels like QVC. He's appeared on HGTV and The Learning Channel.

Grummer's daughter, Kim Schiedermayer, and son, Greg, now run the business side. His wife, Mabel, is compiling a history of the company and its popular kits.

“My dad is the creator of all these wonderful tools,” said Schiedermayer. “My mom has been the cheerleader who said this

could be a business. My brother and I have run with what they have come up with and believed in.”

The kit they sell includes instructions on how to rip up a sheet of paper, put it in a blender with water, pour the pulp into the enclosed mold and dry it into a sheet of usable paper.

“I can guarantee they’ll make a perfect or near perfect piece of paper the first time,” Grummer said. “I like dealing with disadvantaged kids best because these kids never have a success anywhere. With hand paper making, they have a success, a victory. The fact that I can give these people that kind of a feeling is unbelievable.”

Grummer set up the paper-making lab in the Paper Discovery Center in Appleton, and estimates more than 25,000 kids have made paper there.

“He’s charming, personable and sharp,” said Linda Werner, an educator at the Paper Discovery Center who has worked with Grummer on several occasions in the lab. “He’s an artist, storyteller and paper maker.”

Grummer also has produced five books on paper making including his latest, “Trash-to-Treasure Paper Making,” in 2011. They’ve sold more than 105,000 books.

In a revamp of the company’s website, www.arnoldgrummer.com, Grummer is now launching his own blog.

That begs the question: why would a paper proponent write about paper making using the electronic forum of a blog?

He smiles at the question. “I write it on paper first.”

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The Paper Industry International Hall of Fame will induct six paper industry notables at a dinner and ceremony Oct. 11 in the Radisson Paper Valley Hotel in Appleton. Through inventions and efforts, these individuals have improved the paper industry and its allied industries worldwide. The 2012 inductees are:

- Ernst Richard Behrend (deceased), president and CEO of Hammermill Paper in Erie, PA. Was responsible for development of a patented rubber roll process for watermarking writing paper on high-speed machines, which led to Hammermill Bond’s growth and dominance in the market.
- Arnold Grummer, president of Greg Markin, Inc., d/b/a Arnold Grummer’s Paper Making, Appleton. Promoted the resurgence of hand paper making in the U.S., and promoted the paper industry through the Institute of Paper Chemistry and as curator of the Dard Hunter Paper Museum.
- Erling Sven Lorentzen, chairman of the board of Aracruz Celulosa S/A, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Was instrumental in developing of the Aracruz project into a company that is now the world’s leading exporter of bleached eucalyptus pulp.
- Hannu Paulapuro, professor of paper technology, Aalto University, Helsinki, Finland. Made significant contributions in paper machine diagnostics, wet pressing, fiber physics and mechanical pulping.
- Nicolas-Louis Robert (deceased), Corbeil-Essonnes, France. Invented first machine to produce paper in a continuous manner in 1799.
- Juuso Walden (deceased) managing director and CEO of United Paper Mills, Valkeakoski, Finland. Was one of the most prominent leaders of the Finnish paper industry for two decades after WWII.

More information: www.paperhall.org. For event reservations: 920-380-7491

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