

October 4, 2008

My Trip to Redwood Falls

Now that we have entered the fall season I am reflecting on this past summer that went by so quickly. My fondest memory is of my visit to Redwood Falls to participate in The Invention and Idea Show held June 13 and 14. My schedule in Chicago, where I reside, was tight and everything for me was last minute. I calmly departed the day before the show with my display in a U-haul trailer thinking I had plenty of time to get there. Then, in Wisconsin, I was quickly met by a tornado, torrential rains which brought visibility to zero, a couple of detours due to construction, and flooding that was creeping onto the expressway. Yet, now, I must say the trip was well worth it.

As I drove into Minnesota I felt my luck was changing. The sky cleared, the stars were twinkling and the moon was bright only to be overwhelmed by the flashing lights of a police car. Apparently I was driving too fast. I explained to the police officer that I was on my way to the Invention and Idea Show. He replied, "well in that case be on your way, but be careful, and good luck." At that point I knew my luck had changed and I was only one half hour from Redwood Falls. As I like adventure I did not make hotel reservations in advance. My good luck proved to continue because I drove right up to Motel 71. The time was 3 AM. A woman, stretching but with a smile on her face, came up to the counter. I told her I was here for the Invention and Idea Show upon which she cordially welcomed me and informed me that I would be getting their newly renovated suite. Minnesotans were living up to their reputation of being very hospitable.

The morning light revealed a couple surprises. The signs at the Cenex gas station and at the Country Kitchen restaurant where I had breakfast announced the "Invention and Idea Show" and welcomed its inventors. I was also told there would be an annual parade held in conjunction with the Show. I realized I was part of something important. When I arrived at the Redwood Area Community Center the auditorium was filled with the excitement of inventors putting finishing touches on their booths as most arrived the previous day. I was faced with the formidable task of getting set up within two hours before the doors would open to the public. My head began to spin when a young voice asked, "Sir, do you need help?" Apparently the organizer of the show, Deborah Hess, had the foresight to make students ("rent-a-helpers") from the area available to assist the inventors. The young man introduced himself as Adam. He was the grounding pillar I needed and the room began to settle. I just pointed at my trailer and Adam was off. He placed components of my display onto a dolly and whisked them to my booth at lightning speed. Adam's efficiency was surpassed only by his politeness and words of encouragement. At my direction he helped arrange everything and I was set. The auditorium was filled with a recipe of inventors with their inventions and a lot of excitement mixed with a touch of anticipation. Now the fun was ready to begin.

While I put finishing touches on my display the crowds poured in with judges who would decide on various awards that would be presented at a dinner ceremony later in the evening. By noon I was able to mingle with passersby. Meanwhile, I hired rent-a-helper Stacey to take up the slack. I kept her on for both days. Whether collecting surveys or

selling and collecting money for samples of my invention, The Paint Glider™, Stacey was there so that I could concentrate on answering questions. The two days were filled with great interaction that gave me valuable feedback on various aspects such as function versus need, quality versus price, and need versus price. While folks answered my survey questions and were entered in a contest to win a Paint Glider, I answered others' questions and demonstrated the Paint Glider as they bought them.

The crowning point of the event came at the end of the second day. With two hours of sleep I was too tired to attend the awards ceremony presented after a dinner party at the end of the first day. On day two I was having such a good time that I did not think about it. So, I was completely surprised, when Deb informed that I was awarded a gold medal. John Calvert of the U.S. Patent office presented me with the medal in front of a gathering of all the inventors. After the show Adam recruited his brother Andrew and his friend Jason who were equally as helpful and polite in helping me pack up.

The following day I headed back to Chicago with my gold medal swinging on my rear view mirror, my heart filled with satisfaction, and my thoughts filled with confidence. Soon after, mention of my award appeared in the Redwood Gazette and recently an article was printed in my local paper. I am showing this press coverage to buyers now interested in selling the Paint Glider and potential investors should I need additional funds before The Paint Glider becomes profitable. Also, TV media are now looking at featuring The Paint Glider.

I want to thank rent-a-helpers Adam, Andrew, Jason and Stacey for their help. The boys helped without hesitation and Stacey anticipated what was needed without being told what to do. That's what leaders are made of. Very well done. Certainly the character of your youth reflects the example set by the adults in your community. Last but not least I want to thank Deb Hess for organizing the show and participants for their feedback. Thank you all for a great experience. I am looking forward to returning to Redwood Falls next year with more innovation and new ideas for the Paint Glider.

Sincerely,
Tom Pasinski
President,
The Paint Glider Co.