

Alumni and Friends News



Cogswell

Polytechnical College

March 2010 Issue

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RSVP To Founders' Day 2010 Now!



Join us for our annual Alumni celebration on March 20 from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. on our campus in Sunnyvale.

Each year alumni, staff and faculty gather to enjoy good food, great conversation, the chance to see old friends and make new ones and acknowledge the achievements of the past year.

Call up your old classmates now and plan to have a mini-reunion. There's plenty of free parking and the campus is close to highway 237 and 101.

Don't miss out on the fun! [RSVP now!!](#)

Student Project Makes A Difference



Cogswell College prides itself in providing students with the practical real-world learning opportunities and skills they need to be successful in industry. An innovative spirit is critical in the digital media and engineering industries and Cogswell focuses on preparing students to problem-solve and think as an entrepreneur. Cogswell graduates are unique in their ability to address the needs of society and employers by using a blend of science, technology and art.

Dean Sala graduated from Cogswell in 1994 with a Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering. He returned to Cogswell and completed his second degree in Electrical Engineering Technology in 2009. He represents what Cogswell's programs are designed to do - enable students to turn their dreams into productive careers.

Following he describes his senior project:

Briefly describe your project:

My project is a portable solar powered generator that tucks away into in a small brief case. When you open it up, there is a large solar panel inside that can be unfolded to an 80 watt sized solar array. The device includes an AC inverter, 12volt DC power, LED indicators and power switches.

What was the inspiration behind developing this particular project?

Well, I have always had a passion for solar energy. I am very fascinated how light can be converted to electricity. But my inspiration comes from long camping trips that my family and I go on every year with friends and where there is no grid power. I have a camper with 12volt batteries and it's a challenge keeping them charged when out in the wilderness. You can start the vehicle's engine to charge the batteries thus producing noise and eating precious fuel. I solved the problem when I installed a solar system I developed. I guess you could call it a mini, off-grid system. I

thought why not build a small portable version of this system.

What challenges did you encounter in bringing it to a marketable stage?

We are still being challenged with the marketing stage. It is very difficult to know if your product will sell. You get caught up trying to decide whether to purchase more materials, put them together and take a chance that you can sell the product. How many should we make? How do we find customers? How useful is our product really? These are hard questions. I am an engineer not a marketing professional. But I am steadily becoming better at it. Luckily my business partner is better at this than I.

I understand that the project started as your Cogswell Senior Capstone project. Did you originally plan to sell a product based on the technology?

Yes, I actually had the product idea before I came back to Cogswell. I guess you can say this was an incentive to finish my second degree. The fact that I had already figured out a lot of the technical details before starting Senior Project I made the process easier but not simple by any means.

Tell us a little about the company you and your partner have formed and your plans for the future.

We are now about one year into this. Our company is in the business of providing portable solar power solutions and perhaps solar panels themselves. We can make our own custom high quality solar panels. I think these solar panels are our greatest asset. They are different because they do not use glass. Instead, the panels use a special Teflon front sheet that is better than glass.

For now, we have taken a step back and decided to make a small product to get us off the ground quickly. We are currently producing a small, 5 watt, folding solar USB charger. With special circuitry, we have been able to charge many USB type devices like phones, GPSs, etc, including the iPhone and iPod!

Our big goal is to make small to medium-sized portable solar power generators that could be used for a variety of applications. One of which is disaster preparedness.

How do you feel running your own company?

I have been a software engineer for many years working for a big corporation. There have been good and bad times working in the industry. Although, our company has not made any money yet, I am very motivated. Failure is not in my vocabulary. Over the years many colleagues of mine have always discussed new ideas and products that could potentially form a new company. I am finally doing just that and loving it!

Please visit www.suntactics.com for more info on our future products.

Film Festival Update for The Offering





Newport Beach Film Festival Screening Sunday, April 25 at 7:15pm. Michael Huber will be present to discuss the film.



Sundial Film Festival Screening Thursday, March 11 at 8:30pm and Friday, March 12 at 6:00pm.

Michael Huber will be present to discuss the film.



LeapFrog Job Openings

LeapFrog has two positions open right now that they asked us to let our Alumni know about. Currently, the company located in Emeryville, is looking for a Director of Design and a Game Designer (open to mid to senior experience levels).

If you are interested in applying, please follow the embedded links.

LINKS:

[Director, Design](#)

[Game Designer](#)

Alumni Notes

Logan Ames (2005) is a Flash/Actionscript Technician for Phoenix Technical Publications and the Web Designer for Sew Beadazzled Bead Shop. **Kaine Apryss (2004)** is a Network Engineer at Datanamics in the Las Vegas area. He is moving into the role of a

Solutions Engineer, designing and surveying all aspects of IT infrastructure. **Sal Conigliaro (1991)** Owns [ACME Inc](#) where he is an independent PHP and iPhone App Developer. **Chris Corriveau (2000)** joined fellow Cogswell Alumnus, **Macbeth Soren**, at [StockTwits](#) as the company's CTO. **Phil Coulson (1986)** Owns Peaceful Software Test. His goal is to exploit new ways of conducting software test in the open source realms. **Trevor Darling (2003)** works at ATTIK in San Francisco as a Design Technologist. The company is an international global creative agency focused on developing integrated advertising, digital and branded experiences. **Matthew Dreisbach (1996)** is looking forward the arrival of his second child in May. **Brian Franz (1978)** is an Independent Associate at Pre-Paid Legal Services in the Sacramento area. **Felicia Giouzelis (2007)** wants to share that her film [My Sexuality: A Sensory Experience](#), is receiving recognition on the film festival circuit. It received an Audience Choice Award for Best Documentary Feature at the Cinekink Film Festival in New Your City on February 20. **Adam Hicklin (2007)** works at MagicLamp Networks in San Jose as QA Supervisor and Project Manager. **Greg Hurd (1986, 1987)** is a Principal at [BKF Engineers](#) in their Santa Rosa Office. **Karl Jakobsen (2000)** was just hired by Turtle Rock Studios where he is a Senior Environment Artist. **Robert Konves (1999)** works in the San Francisco office of McCann Erickson as a Sr. User Experience Planner. **Lisa Larson (2004)** is a Senior Artist at WMS Gaming in the Chicago area. **Nick Lowrie (1997)**, in addition to teaching at American River College is the Regional Operations Manager at SolarCity. **Kevin Magoon (2009)** is a Fire Captain with the Vista Fire Department in the San Diego area. **Gil Medeiros (2002)** is President and CEO at [Synergy Financial Solutions Group](#), a full-service debt settlement support company in Orange County. **Irvin Miller (2005)** is the Assistant Fire Chief for the Plugerville Fire Department in Texas. **Joe Montes (1988)** recently joined Solyndra as its Global Customer Service Business Manager. **Andy Robertson (1995)** is a Design Engineer at Anristu Company in Morgan Hill. **Gary Smith (1984)** is President at [Ammonia Safety and Training Institute](#), a company he Co-Founded while serving as Fire Chief for the City of Watsonville. **Keith Sorensen (1993)** works at Space Systems Loral as a Product Assurance Program Director. **Christian Stappers (2005)** is a Field Service Technician at Dish Network. **Paulette Trinh (2007)** is currently working on the *NBA 2K11* title at Visual Concepts. **Greg Viloría (1984)** works at TC International as a Marketing Consultant. **Joseph Woodall (1993)** is an Assistant Professor and Fire Science Program Director at Fayetteville State University in North Carolina. **Allier Zelaya (1998)** just joined the Mixamo team as a Mo Cap Coordinator.

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