

CITY FEATURES

## Fun-Filled Innovation

CITY NEWS

The framework behind toys and games came instinctively to a young boy named J. David Schreiber.

COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

His mother often didn't have the cash to buy expensive toys so she inspired him to create his own. At age 7, Schreiber built a miniature airport using tape, scissors, and paper. He also began to craft his plan for the future: to be a toy designer.

CLASS NOTES

HOT JOBS

VELOCITY ARCHIVE

VELOCITY HOME

Schreiber, now 43, continues to fulfill a boyhood ambition. The City University of Seattle graduate owns and operates **Uncle Skunkle Toys**—a Beaverton, Oregon-based board game company that manufactures all products from second-generation materials. His idea evolved as a part of a thesis project while earning his master's of arts degree at CityU of Seattle in organizational design and improvement.

ALUMNI HOME

The Uncle Skunkle name came from Skunk Works—a business management term made famous by Lockheed Martin, which successfully managed several time-sensitive projects.

CITYU HOME

One of Schreiber's best-selling board games is Rapid Four—a marble maze through levers where players must get a specific combination of four to win. The game won several national awards and was featured among others at last month's **Toy Fair 2008** in New York City. Uncle Skunkle also has experienced success with Destruct Three—a game where players build and knock down towers using a tiny catapult, pendulum, and ramp.

***"They are fast-action family fun.***

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"They are fast-action family fun," says Schreiber of his innovations. "The eight year old to the grandparent can play our games. And they look good in your living room."

Schreiber and his business partner Rod Boutin strive to be environmentally-conscious, constructing board games from rubber tree wood and other green-friendly materials.

"For me it's been a terrific opportunity," says Boutin of working with Schreiber. "He has been completely committed in every essence."

Schreiber recently released a new game called Bambooga—a human puzzle exercise where players connect hands and feet using bracelets and must cross a finish line together. Schreiber developed it while living in Bangkok, Thailand with his wife. The couple relocated to the country for a time for her job.

"You start laughing the minute you play the game," Schreiber says of Bambooga.

The game also is a part of a social entrepreneurship project with the **Kids Ark Foundation of Thailand**. Uncle Skunkle Toys works with Kids Ark leaders to help children affected by the AIDS epidemic and provides people with jobs in their respective villages.

Schreiber's company assisted Kids Ark with manufacturing contracts, materials, and equipment. Some villagers sew and make Bambooga game pieces, such as wristbands and bamboo shakers.



"He's very serious about what he's building in his toy company you can tell he's driven," says Dave Harmon, a friend and colleague. "I was impressed with his detailed knowledge of the production process and the costs associated at each point in the game."

Prior to Uncle Skunkle, Schreiber worked several jobs before enrolling at CityU in 1993. They included a four-year tour of duty in the U.S. Coast Guard and a career as a small business analyst helping with operations in about a dozen western states.

Schreiber didn't have a bachelor's degree but his business world training helped him score a spot in CityU's leadership studies graduate program. He received special permission from the School of Management dean to enroll for classes. He was allowed to continue his studies if he received a 3.0 grade point average or higher during his first quarter.

Most of his classes were independent study and students would meet once a month in a classroom setting. He called it an "intense program" where students were able to speak with high level executives, some of them classmates. They also learned a management style that focused on positive goal management instead of negative problem solving.

"The one thing I got out of that was appreciative approach management. At the time it was one of the courses they were leading. It was probably the most valuable course I walked away with," says Schreiber, who drove from Portland, Oregon to Bellevue, Washington for classes each month.

Schreiber's commute wasn't the only obstacle between him and a master's degree. He struggled with lengthy reading and writing assignments because of his dyslexia. He also had less experience in the classroom than others, not having earned a traditional bachelor's degree.

"Lots of students were reference oriented. You really had to do more work to support your life experience," recalls Schreiber, who went onto to earn his degree in 1996.

He also gained the title of college graduate – an honor he'd waited to hear for many years.

"I definitely have respect from my family, especially my family," he said.

These days, he's also adopted the company name as a title.

Says Schreiber, "All the kids know me as Uncle Skunkle."

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