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August 2003

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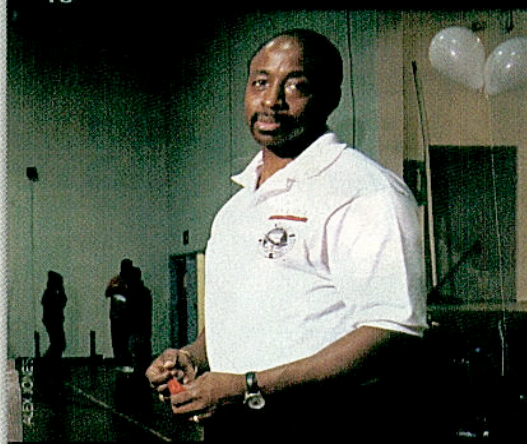


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YOUR GUIDE TO INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

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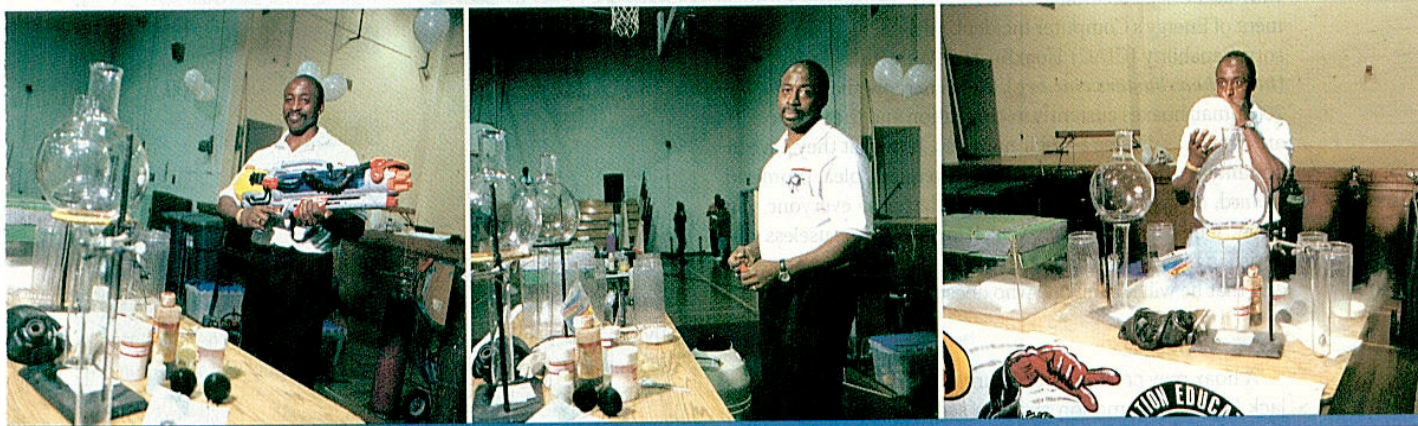
THE SCIENCE MAN CAN

Darryl Lee Baynes takes technology on the road

When the van with the Science Man action figure painted on the door pulls up to the curb, schoolchildren know they're in for a day of intensive fun and hands-on learning in subjects like aviation, biology, chemistry, and physics. The brainchild of Darryl Lee Baynes, 42, founder and president of Wheeling, West Virginia-based Minority Aviation Education Association Inc. (MAEA), the van is one of four high-tech vehicles that bring math and science lessons to schools nationwide, which often cannot afford the equipment to perform classroom experiments.

A licensed pilot, Baynes attended the University of Pittsburgh, where he obtained a B.S. in chemistry and math. After participating in the university's science outreach program for area schoolchildren, Baynes acquired \$10,000 for his own equipment, supplies, and vehicle. And with other equipment received from the university, MAEA was born.

Since he has no advertising budget, Baynes relies on word-of-mouth to keep demand for his programs high. "People hear about me and want me to come to their school—that's how it



BAYNES' SCIENCE VAN BRINGS TECHNOLOGY TO SCHOOLS NATIONWIDE.

Since founding the nonprofit organization in 1992, Baynes has been visiting schools in a van equipped with everything a scientist would use in a lab—from flammable gases to specialty glassware. Targeted at children K-12, MAEA's innovative programs reached 251 schools in 2002.

Baynes sees MAEA's programs and its proposed science center as particularly relevant for minority and inner-city students who might not otherwise view science, math, and information technology (IT) as viable career choices. "Many times people of color are given messages that they can't compete, and that some things are just hard to understand," says Baynes, who points to the IT industry as a good career source for children who are exposed early to science and math.

"If we can get kids excited about math and science early on, it will be much easier for them to get those high-paying [tech] jobs," he says.

Baynes' own love of science and math can be traced back to his boyhood love of science kits and trips to the airport and sci-

ence museums. A licensed pilot, Baynes attended the University of Pittsburgh, where he obtained a B.S. in chemistry and math. After participating in the university's science outreach program for area schoolchildren, Baynes acquired \$10,000 for his own equipment, supplies, and vehicle. And with other equipment received from the university, MAEA was born.

Since he has no advertising budget, Baynes relies on word-of-mouth to keep demand for his programs high. "People hear about me and want me to come to their school—that's how it all starts," says Baynes, whose company has four other presenters visiting schools nationwide. Some of the experiments MAEA conducts include "Bacterial Growth and Micro Worlds," in which students explore the world of microbes by collecting and developing cultures for microscopic examination, and "Egg Drop or Plop," in which students get to drop an egg out of a three-story window. The company has worked with the Davenport Community School District in Iowa and Westinghouse High School in Pennsylvania, to name a few.

Linda Baynes, Darryl's wife and MAEA's chief financial officer, says company sales were \$120,000 in 2002 and are expected to reach \$250,000 in 2003. The six-employee company generates revenues by charging \$600 to \$1,000 for professional development courses in which educators get half-day or full-day instruction on how to teach hands-on science in the classroom. Currently, Baynes is working on launching the first African American-owned science center in the United States. He recently plunked down \$65,000 of his own funds to purchase an 83,000-square-foot building and is looking to raise \$6 million to renovate it.

—Bridget McCrea

ALEX JONES