

Benjamin John Coleman  
300 Parkview Drive Apartment 13  
Pawtucket, RI 02861

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pawtucket, Rhode Island, USA

**“Artist Develops Alternative to Plastic”**

Artist, author (“Origami Bonsai” 11/09 Tuttle Publishing) and now inventor Benjamin John Coleman of Pawtucket, Rhode Island has developed a composite material made from newsprint (newspaper) that can serve as an alternative to plastic in many applications. The material, which he calls “Makigami” is made by tightly rolling paper soaked in a water-based solution. It can be used to make various items such as disposable pens and toothbrushes.

The new material has many advantages over common plastic. Most importantly, it biodegrades quickly, and is less expensive to produce than conventional plastics. Because it is paper it can be disposed of in paper recycling bins. While the material does contain trace amounts of petrochemical (about 1/1000<sup>th</sup> the amount used in typical plastic parts), it is almost entirely paper, a renewable resource.

Coleman is seeking investors to fund patenting of the composite, marketing, and mass production techniques. He can be contacted through [www.OrigamiBonsai.org](http://www.OrigamiBonsai.org).

**The Story of “Green” Makigami Pens**

My first book “Origami Bonsai” (Tuttle Publishing), describes how to fold leaves and flowers from squares of paper. It then teaches the reader to assemble them onto dead branches obtained from walks in local forests. While the book hadn’t been released yet, I began receiving emails from people throughout the world asking how to produce my flowers and leaves.

I became worried about the ramifications of my book becoming popular. What if it became a best seller? Would this result in the stripping of trees, especially in urban areas? Certainly this would result in a wave of bad press, not to mention the esthetics of the forests that were stripped. I started researching ways to create branches from paper. I knew that lollipop sticks were made from tightly rolled and compressed paper, but was unsure if I could mimic the process.

After months of research and prototyping, I discovered that a mixture of liquid, at the proper temperature and consistency, would react with newsprint (the paper that newspapers are made from) and allow me to roll stems and assemble branches. I also developed molding techniques that produced graceful curves, and tapering techniques that made the paper stems look more realistic. A new art form was born.

(401) 256-3115 - [www.OrigamiBonsai.org](http://www.OrigamiBonsai.org) – [Ben@Benagami.com](mailto:Ben@Benagami.com)

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“Ori” means fold and “gami” means paper in Japanese. Therefore, origami means fold-paper. As my paper rolling was complimentary to origami, I felt it ought to have a Japanese name. After searching an English to Japanese dictionary, I came across the word “Maki,” which means “roll” in Japanese. I was already familiar with the word from one of my favorite foods, California Maki, the rolled mixture of rice and imitation crab you get at Japanese restaurants. I decided to name the new art form “Makigami.”

About a month ago, while shaving, I suddenly realized that my paper would make a fine substitute for the plastic razor handle in my hand. After a little research, I discovered my invention would have greater impact if I introduced it to the world in the form of a disposable recyclable pen. I did some research on the internet and discovered that more than a 100 billion disposable pens are made each year (5). If placed end-to-end they would circle the globe 348 times (5), and it will take approximately 450 years for them to degrade (1). The first two prototype “green” pens were made on March 17, 2009. They were very simple, “stick” pens without caps or pocket clips.

Applications for this new material are not limited to disposable pens. Virtually any product can be made either entirely from Makigami, or with some parts made from it. Possible future Makigami products include auto parts, aviation parts, marine parts, indoor furniture, sports equipment, children’s toys, toothbrushes, hairbrushes, mop, broom and other handles, and many more.

### **Benjamin Coleman Biography**

In 2006 my life came to a turning point. I had found success in the business world, turned to teaching as a creative outlet, but something was missing. My sister had no idea at the time that the two books she sent me on advanced origami techniques would change the direction my life was going.

Origami has been a family tradition since I was a child. A colleague of my father’s had published a book on origami. My father brought home his friend’s book to share with his family at Christmas in 1974. I began experimenting with designs with my father and we incorporated the art of origami into our family Christmas traditions.

Life pulled me away from family and the holiday traditions, but somewhere just underneath the surface of my analytical mind there lingered a desire to recapture the creativity I had enjoyed as a child. Origami had always been attractive to me because of its paradox of complexness and simplicity. Creating with paper is a natural art; a natural art that has been a part of me since childhood.

Over the past three years origami bonsai has become a way of life. From a few simple folds in 2006 that created a perfectly shaped flower from an eagle I have built an artist’s life. My current works include the published book entitled *Origami Bonsai*, I have just completed another book *Makigami and Origami Bonsai Ferns* that I am marketing and I am currently writing a magazine article entitled “Origami Bonsai in Zero G” that discusses art forms that can and cannot be performed by astronauts.

My revolutionary approach to the art inspires my continued creation of Origami Bonsai botanical sculptures. The beauty of origami bonsai is that you don’t have to be a professional artist or craftsman to create intricate beautiful botanical sculptures. With each page of my book “Origami Bonsai” you have the opportunity to create your own sculptures and to be an artist yourself.

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I consider myself fortunate to have discovered by own creative outlet in origami bonsai. My life has become focused on sharing the history, the beauty and the simplicity of this traditional art form with others. I have found personal enrichment in developing new and revolutionary approaches to origami bonsai and am living a life of sharing my insights into the art with others.

#### Qualifications

Northeastern University College of Engineering 1983-1986

As part of the co-op program, I worked at Fram Corporation (air/oil filters) in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, USA in the process engineering department. In this position I was exposed to mass production techniques for paper products.

Gigabyte Computer Stores, Inc. 1990-1999

President, CEO and founder of multi-million dollar computer retail sales company located in Milford, Massachusetts, USA

Worcester State College 2000-2003

Earned a BS in Mathematics and Economics.

“Origami Bonsai” 2008

Wrote a how-to book describing a new art form combining Origami flowers and leaves with real tree branches. Published by Tuttle Publishing and will be available November, 2009.

“Makigami and Origami Bonsai Ferns” 2009

Wrote a how-to book describing the construction of branches from paper using a technique called “Makigami” which means roll-paper in Japanese.

#### **Makigami versus Plastic Disposable Pen Bodies, Caps and Pocket Clips**

	Plastic	Makigami
Time to Decompose	450 years (1)	3 months
Renewable Materials	No	Yes
Recyclable	No	Yes
Energy to Produce	1 (2)	1/10 <sup>th</sup> (3)
Weight	1	½
Petrochemical Content	1	1/1000 <sup>th</sup>
Ink Leak Absorption	No	Yes
Cost to Mass Produce	1	Less than 1/10 <sup>th</sup> (3)
Non-Toxic	Yes	Yes
Digestible (4)	No	Yes
Mass Production Technique	Melted plastic resin is allowed to cool in molds of the desired shape	Paper is saturated with solution and then rolled into shape by 3 rollers.

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(1) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biodegradation>

(2) Setting plastic to “1” allows for comparison. In other words, paper pens require one one-hundreth (1/100) the amount of energy to produce as plastic pens.

(3) This is an estimated ratio. Both energy and cost to mass produce individual units are vastly less than plastic.

(4) Wildlife impact – plastic remains in the stomach, and has resulted in death by starvation, particularly among a species of bird in the South Pacific. <http://plasticisrubbish.wordpress.com/2009/02/25/2696/>

(5) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biodegradation>

High resolution photos suitable for publication are available for download by clicking “Press” at [www.OrigamiBonsai.org](http://www.OrigamiBonsai.org).



Coleman with his Origami Bonsai sculptures and his disposable/recyclable pen made from paper.



The new material was developed for use in his Origami Bonsai sculpture. “Green” paper pens are made by rolling newsprint around a ball-point pen refill.

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