

State-of-the-art Schumann Printers puts out *Garden Railways*, *Model Retailer*, *Scale Auto*, and *The Writer*

Kalmbach group enjoys a look at today's high-tech printing industry

If you think *you* face a challenge in staying up with new technology, be it iPods, high-definition TVs, BlackBerrys, or personal computers, you should try holding your own in today's printing industry. That's what a group of employees learned in a visit to the company that prints their magazine: Schumann Printers Inc., in Fall River, Wisconsin, near Madison.

Kalmbach Production Manager Annette Wall accompanied the editorial staff of *The Writer* magazine on the visit. Joining her on the informative tour were Editor Jeff Reich, Senior Editor Ron Kovach, Associate Editor Sarah Lange, and Editorial Associate Martha Lundin.

The Writer is not the only Kalmbach magazine printed by Schumann. It also handles *Garden Railways*, *Model Retailer*, and *Scale Auto*; the catalog for the annual Bead & Button Show; and most of Kalmbach's premium booklets.

Overall, Schumann prints 320 titles primarily from around the United States. These diverse publications include a host of special-interest magazines, notably *Downbeat*, *Life Extension*, and *Madison Magazine*.

Not long after the Kalmbach employees started their tour, hosted by Daniel C. Schumann, the president of Schumann Printers, he reminded them that printing is "a highly competitive field." For that reason, he runs a state-of-the-art company that invests heavily in new technology and clearly makes a major effort to stay abreast of any technological improvements that can further

automate procedures, speed production, or improve quality.

Proof of Schumann's excellence came when the company received the 2007/08 Goss International Innovation Award. That honor goes to the printer that most effectively adapts and integrates new technology.

If printing today is a sink-or-swim business,



Dan Schumann, president of Schumann Printers Inc., hosted a tour of his firm for Production Manager Annette Wall and the editorial staff of *The Writer* (one of four Kalmbach titles handled by Schumann). Checking out this state-of-the-art machine are (left to right) Associate Editor Sarah Lange, Editorial Associate Martha Lundin, Schumann, and Senior Editor Ron Kovach.

then Schumann is an unusually strong swimmer. Like Kalmbach, it started very small. Chairman Jack Schumann founded the company in 1963, when he installed a small duplicating press in his Fall River basement.

Schumann is now among the top 150 printers in America, with \$50 million in sales. Dan noted that the company has 200 employees working out of two buildings that total 330,000 square feet. Jack's son Mark is vice president.

"We are large enough to bring the advantages of the newest technology to our customers," Dan explained to *Web Offset* magazine. "However," he went on, "we are also a family business where the owners know every job and can be contacted by any customer, at any time."

At the time the Kalmbach employees were touring the plant, Dan's father was in Switzerland scouting out new saddle-stitching equipment, which staples and trims magazines such as *The Writer*.

"It's always been impressive to us the extent to which Schumann utilizes technology for the size of printer they are," Annette said. "It's been consistent in our relationship with them, which has been going on for 10 years now. They are very much in the forefront in their technology investments."

To this layman's eye, every new purchase at Schumann seems to be *very* expensive, *very* computerized, and *very* complicated, not to mention being built like a tank. Consider a few price tags: Schumann's latest printing press, \$12 million; its new plate machine,

\$750,000; robots with 20-foot swing arms, \$1 million a pop. Dan Schumann showed off about 12 million pounds of paper in storage, much of it in the form of, 9,000-pound rolls.

The press can produce 150,000 16-page magazines in an hour. That means that an entire monthly run of *The Writer* can be rolled out in a mere 90 minutes – one-third the time in a pinch. Now if only the editors could put together an issue in 90 minutes. – Ron Kovach