



MUSKEGON INVENTORS NETWORK

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 What Does an Inventor Look Like?
- 1 Using Agreements to Protect IP?
- 2 Upcoming Events
- 3 Useful Inventions?
- 4 Member Developments

Special thanks to our sponsors:



"Imagination is more important than knowledge."

■ **Albert Einstein**

What Does An Inventor Look Like?

By Orville Crain, MIN President

An inventor looks a lot like you! This is a word that describes someone who is a 'regular person' who has figured out a new way to solve a need or improve an existing product. Inventors come in all shapes, sizes, and colors, all walks of life, all ages, with or without education, and with or without financial means. Dyslexia is a common trait among inventors. Inventors come from all over the world but the United States has had far more inventors than any other country.

Some people stereotype an inventor as a crazy looking old white guy with wild hair, glasses, and a moustache (Einstein?). Others think of the word inventor and think geek, which is fine with me if they just give me the money. But, I think that is pretty funny when you realize that inventors are creative people and some of our societies most creative, hippest, hottest, fashion designers (yachts, buildings, etc.) are in fact creating new things all the time and are inventors, too. Many inventors have been white males, which I think is a reflection of our past society, but this is changing today and now they can be anybody. Because, you see, almost everybody can observe the world around them and have an idea to make it better.

Please see *Inventor* on page 2

Using Agreements to Protect IP

By Jeffery Jacobson, JD LLM

If you have an idea, are trying to develop a prototype, working with independent contractors or employees, or would like to do some market research prior to patenting your invention, there are ways to protect yourself. Most notably is the Confidentiality (or Non-disclosure) Agreement. This agreement can be used to allow you to discuss your idea or invention with individuals or companies that may want to license the invention or with whom you need help to develop your invention. The following are some important terms you should consider in your Confidentiality Agreement: identification of the parties should be clear and broad when dealing with entities (don't forget representatives); the purpose for the disclosure should also be clear; if you are providing materials, the agreement should provide for a time to return the materials to you or destroy them; "information" or the things to be kept confidential should be clearly defined; and the agreement should be

Please see *Protection* on page 3

Upcoming Events

The next meeting information is as follows:

DATE	SPEAKER	SUBJECT
March 20	Joe Finkler	Owner, As Seen on TV
April 17	Dan Girdwood	Patent Attorney, Price, Heneveld, Cooper, DeWitt & Litton, LLP

*"Lost time is never
found again".*

■ **Benjamin Franklin**

Meeting Location:

Muskegon Community College
Blue & Gold Room (January through March)
221 S. Quarterline Road, Muskegon, MI 49442
Directions to MCC: 231-773-9132
Reservations: 231-865-7010

General Meeting Format (unless otherwise noted):

6:00 - Registration and Networking
6:30 - 8:00 - Program

April, 2007 - The televised PBS documentary series, [Everyday Edisons](#), will begin in April. We hope the show will provide interesting and useful information about bring products to market as the Bouncing Brain Production's hand selected 7 inventors will work with product designers and marketers to bring their products from prototype to market.

Please see *Upcoming Events* on page 3

Inventor from page 1

Here are some interesting inventors:

- Mary Anderson - invented and patented the windshield wiper in 1903 for streetcars.
- George Washington Carver - a black man and former slave invented hundreds of products from peanuts, sweet potatoes, and soybeans. He greatly improved the lives of southern farmers whose main crop was cotton.
- Allen Grant of North Carolina -- invented pantyhose in 1959. As skirts got shorter he saw the need for something to replace stockings held up by garters.
- Stephanie Kwolek - invented a polymer fiber five times as strong as the same weight of steel. It is still called Kevlar and was first marketed by DuPont in 1971.
- Saul Palder - my personal favorite. Saul was a 78 year old man who saw the need for simple storage containers with the same size lids (I hate looking for the lid!). He invented the Smart Spin Storage System in 2003 and became a millionaire very quickly.

So what does an inventor look like? An inventor looks like anybody, or everybody, but somehow, in some ways, I think an inventor looks a lot like YOU!

Useful Inventions?

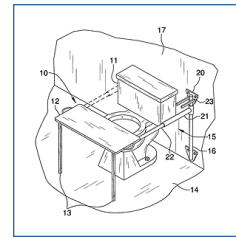
Great idea? Check out these “useful” inventions from <http://www.patentlysilly.com> that were issued patents.

Retractable Table Top for a Toilet - Patent#: [US 6983493](#)

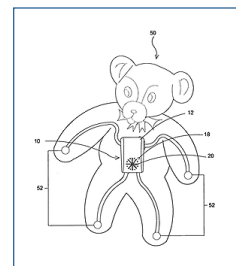
Rafik Shaumyan has at last conquered the “shortcomings” of standard facilities with his table top: “A device for providing a working surface while a user is seated on a toilet.”

Subliminal Recording Device- Patent#: [US 6940432](#)

This teddy bear can be “unnoticeably placed near a child’s bed” where it can then impart prerecorded “affirmations, self-hypnotic suggestions, or subliminal instructions” while the child is in “the subconscious state of sleep.” It’s perfect for the busy-body parent who doesn’t have the time for traditional brainwashing methods. Hey, this might also work for spouses (e.g. you want your husband to golf, not clean the garage).



Retractable Table Top for a Toilet.



Subliminal Recording Device..

Say What? Are you ready to be entertained? “Scrambled eggs on a stick” and “Prostate Warmer” are a couple of failed inventions. It’s hard to believe, I know! To see video clips about these and many more failed inventions, visit the History Channel website at www.history.com. On the home page, type “failed inventions” in the search box. On the results page, under the “Videos on HISTORY.com” heading, you will find a list of video clips to choose from. Note: If possible, view the clips with a high speed internet connection (DSL, cable, etc.) rather than with a dial-up modem, which takes a *really* long time to fully load the clips.

Protection from page 1

governed by the laws of Michigan if you are dealing with out of state individuals or entities. These are some of the important clauses to consider, but there are other parts that are just as important to discuss in the agreement such as to make sure the agreement fits the situation. For example, a confidentiality agreement for an employee is probably not well suited for a product review by a company or individual looking to market the invention.

Another important agreement used for protection is a “Work For Hire Agreement”. It is important to know that copyrights are created automatically upon the creation of the work, and are immediately vested in the creator of the work. This can cause problems when someone other than the creator has paid for the work and expects to own it. These situations can arise when the inventor subcontracts for packaging, graphics, manuals, software programs, instructions, and prototype design or drawings. These agreements are intended to clearly state that the work is “Work for Hire” and that the creator assigns all rights to the owner of the invention or the “contractor”. These agreements can also make it clear as to how the inventor is when outside development is used. As in Confidentiality Agreements, it is important to be clear as to what is covered, who the parties are, and who will own what.

Upcoming Events: from page 2

American Inventor Show Auditions: American Inventor show second season auditions are scheduled to take place starting March 2007, in the following cities: LOS ANGELES - MARCH 19TH ; SAN FRANCISCO - MARCH 25TH; CHICAGO - MARCH 30TH; NEW YORK - APRIL 4TH; ORLANDO - APRIL 9TH; HOUSTON - APRIL 13TH Check their website for any additions or changes and for the location.

Mothers of Invention Challenge: On February 10, 2007 Good Morning America Weekend kicked off its third annual Mothers of Invention Challenge, in partnership with Mom Inventors, Inc. If you’re a mom who has a great idea for a new invention, you can enter to win. One grand prize winner will receive \$10,000 plus a 5% royalty from the net sales of the invention. Promotion is open only to female inventors who consider themselves to be or to have been a mom, and who are 18 years of age or older. Entries should be postmarked by March 24, 2007. Please see contest rules for complete information and entry requirements. Go to www.abcnews.go.com/GMA/story?id=2863929

Member Developments

NOTICE: Send Us Your Stories or Needs. MIN would like to recognize in its Newsletter the accomplishments and needs of our members. If you have a specific development on your product that you would like to share with the group or if you have a specific need that you think the group may be able to help with, please e-mail the information to jaj@parmenterlaw.com. (For Example, a specific need might be -- XYZ, a member of MIN, needs to develop a certain type of metal to use in its product. If anyone knows of a materials engineer that can help, please contact Joe Inventor at XYZ, Inc).

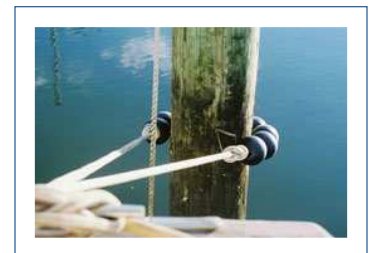
TIDEMIDERS: Larry and Judy Gray's product, manufactured and distributed right here in West Michigan, was recently featured at the *Hurricane Preparation Symposium For Marinas, Yacht Clubs and Boatyards* in Orlando, FL. Larry Gray, President of Go With The Flow Solutions, LLC, presented his new apparatus for control of boats and dock lines, called TideMinders™, at the two day seminar sponsored by Boat US and the Marine Industries Association of Florida, where eastern and gulf states were represented. Marine Underwriters, boat builders, yacht club and marina operators were shown, through lectures and demonstrations, new products considered to be the first line of defense against severe weather conditions.

The TideMinders have been touted as “a significant break-through, helping to reduce boat and dock-line damage in storms and tidal surges. There were numerous panel discussions led by noted experts in minimizing storm damage through better preparation. James DeSimone, General Manager of the Pensacola Yacht Club and Shipyard, stated that the self-adjusting ability of TideMinders made them the ideal equalizer for the floating docks in his facility. Gray cited other experienced boaters, including Bruce Bingham, veteran sailor and contributing writer for *Cruising World* magazine who said, “TideMinders are a necessity!”

Judy Gray, CEO of Go With The Flow Solutions, visiting with those at the social event, said, “We don't have tidal surges or hurricanes in the Great Lakes, but TideMinders are being used there to avoid line chafing, frequent adjustment of lines and damage to boats or docks caused by high winds and rough waters. Safety is a key factor.”

The high-density polyethylene “pearls” are manufactured by Camcar Plastics of Muskegon and marketed and distributed by Dr. Shrink, Inc., World-wide Distributor of shrink wrap supplies, located in Manistee, MI. TideMinders are available through most marine centers, including Torresen Marine and West Marine stores and catalogues.

Again Thanks to our sponsors for their support:



TideMinders